

**INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC  
CONFERENCE ON THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN  
SCIENCES & ARTS, RELIGION & EDUCATION**

**MCDSARE 2019**



**IFIASA**

**Ideas Forum International Academic and  
Scientific Association**

**Number 3, Year 2019  
May 22-23<sup>th</sup>, Galati & 20-21<sup>th</sup> June, Târgoviște,  
Romania 2019**

**INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON  
THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SCIENCES & ARTS, RELIGION & EDUCATION**

**INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

Gerard **WEBER** Prof. Ph.D., Bronx Community College Of the City University of New York, USA  
Gene **FENDT**, Albertus Magnus Prof. Ph.D., University of Nebraska, Kearney, USA  
Gheorghe **VLĂDUȚESCU**, Academician Prof. Ph.D., Bucuresti University, ROMANIA  
Gheorghe **ANGHELESCU**, Ph.D. Prof., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
John R. **GILHOOLY**, Prof. Ph.D., Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH, USA  
Hyun B. **CHOO**, Ph.D. Lecturer, Stony Brook University, New York, USA  
Walter **GOMIDE**, Prof. Ph.D., Federal University of Mato Grosso, BRAZIL  
David K. **GOODIN**, Prof. Ph.D., McGill School of Religious Studies, McGill University, CANADA  
Ion **CORDONEANU**, Prof. Ph.D., University Dunarea de Jos Galati, ROMANIA,  
Encarnación Ruiz **Callejón**, Prof. Ph.D., University of Granada, SPAIN  
Spiros **MAKRIS**, Prof. Ph.D., University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, GREECE  
Marian **VILCIU**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Florea **STEFAN**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Pablo **ARGARATE**, Prof. Ph.D., Graz University, AUSTRIA  
Daniel Alberto **AYUCH**, Prof. Ph.D., University of Balamand, LIBAN,  
Georgios **METALLINOS**, Professor Emeritus Ph.D., University of Athens, GREECE  
Ion **CROITORU**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Marina **KOLOVOPULU**, Prof. Ph.D., University of Athens, GREECE  
Spyridon **KAKOS**, Prof. Ph.D., University of Athens, GREECE  
Nicolae **XIONIS**, Prof. Ph.D., University of Athens, GREECE  
Aleksi **KSHUTASHVILI**, Prof. Ph.D., Tbilisi University, GEORGIA  
Gustaf Hans Gunnar af **HÄLLSTRÖM**, Prof. Ph.D., Åbo Akademi University, Vaasa, FINLAND  
Lucian **TURCESCU**, Prof. Ph.D., Concordia University, Montreal, CANADA  
Alexandru-Corneliu **ARION**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Cosmin **SANTI**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Mariana **DOGARU**, Prof. Ph.D., Polytechnic University of Bucharest, ROMANIA  
Daniela **JEDER**, Prof. PhD, Stefan cel Mare University, ROMANIA  
Emil **LAZĂR** Prof. Ph.D., Craiova University, ROMANIA  
Esther **NIETO MORENO DE DIEZMAS**, Prof. Ph.D., University of Castilla-La Mancha, SPAIN  
ANTONELLA **NUZZACI**, Prof. Ph.D., University of L'Aquila, ITALY  
Anna **SIRI**, PhD. Prof. University of Genoa, ITALY  
Luminița **DRĂGHICESCU**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Gabriela Alina **ANGHEL**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Claudia **VLAICU**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA  
Ramona **NEACSA**, Prof. Ph.D., Valahia University, Târgoviște, ROMANIA

**Conference Chair(s):** Marin **BUGIULESCU**, Ion **CORDONEANU**, Florea **STEFAN**,

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Marin **BUGIULESCU**, Prof. Ph.D., President of IFIASA, Ideas Forum International Academic and  
Scientific Association, ROMANIA

*Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association*

Web: <https://www.mcdsarejournal.com/>

Email: [ifiasa@yahoo.com](mailto:ifiasa@yahoo.com)

## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS CONTENTS

EDITORIAL.....	9
----------------	---

### \* SECTION HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY

1. <b>THE DECLINE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY IN THE UNITED STATES: SOME CAUSES AND POTENTIAL REMEDIES</b> , Prof. PhD. Gerard WEBER, Bronx Community College Of the City University of New York, USA.....	11
2. <b>MARCUS AURELIUS – A POSSIBLE PARADIGM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING</b> , Prof. PhD. Ion CORDONEANU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	18
3. <b>CONCEPT OF FREEDOM IN PHILOSOPHY AND IN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY</b> , Prof. PhD. Alexandru-Corneliu ARION, “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania.....	23
4. <b>AGAINST THE FALLACY OF EDUCATION AS A SOURCE OF ETHICS</b> , PhD. Spyridon I. KAKOS, National Technical University of Athens, Greece.....	33
5. <b>ENS, VERUM AND BONUM. AQUINAS ON EPISTEMOLOGY AND ETHICS</b> , PhD. Augusto T. WERNER, University of Malaga, Malaga, Spain.....	42
6. <b>THE IMPLICATIONS OF WITTGENSTEINIAN CRITICISM OF CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS FOR THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT</b> , Kadir KILIÇ, Boğaziçi University, Turkey.....	49
7. <b>VISUAL SYMBOLISM IN THE POETIC DOCUMENTARY</b> , PhD. Candidate Vlad Alexandru, Faculty of Theater and Film, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,.....	56
8. <b>FAMOUS CRIMINAL PHRASES: LIMPIEZA DE SANGRE</b> , Prof. PhD. Ivlampie IVAN, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	64
9. <b>HEALING MIRACLES PERFORMED BY CHRIST – A SYMBOL OF MAN’S REDEMPTION</b> Prof. PhD. Leontin POPESCU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	69
10. <b>THE ECLESIOLOGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL DIMENSION OF SPIRITUAL EXELLENCY</b> , Ph.D. Candidate Constantin -Valentin BUGIULESCU, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Buchares, Romania.....	75
11. <b>THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS – A HUGE CHALLENGE</b> , Prof. PhD. Adrian Ignat, “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania.....	80
12. <b>MANAGEMENT OF 1977 SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS EVENTS IN ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH</b> , Prof. PhD. Ovidiu Dănuț SOARE, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	86
13. <b>CREATION, BETWEEN POTENCY AND ACTIVATION, VERSUS EVIDENCE AND EVOLUTION AT RICHARD DAWKINS</b> , Prof. PhD. Ionel ENE, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	94
14. <b>THE LIMES THEORY. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATIONS</b> , Prof. PhD. Mihaela Denisia LIUȘNEA, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	101
15. <b>EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM IN OUR SOCIETY</b> , Associate Prof. PhD. Andreea Elena MATIC, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	115
16. <b>THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND SOCIETY FROM THE EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE; THE "EVOLUTIONARY WAGER OF RELIGION"</b> , Prof. PhD. Viorel ROTILĂ, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	122
17. <b>REVELATION, COMMUNION AND COMMUNICATION - THE COORDINATES OF LIFE AND HAPPINESS IN CHRISTIANITY</b> , Prof. PhD. Marin BUGIULESCU, Romania.....	132
18. <b>LOCALISM AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY – LIBERTARIAN PERSPECTIVES</b> , Prof. PhD. Alexandra TEODORESCU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	138

19. <b>THE BYZANTINE HESYCHASM AND HUMANISM AND THEIR REFLECTION IN EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY</b> , PhD. Cristian GAGU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	143
20. <b>THE CONCEPT OF LIFE BETWEEN GADAMER AND RICOEUR</b> , PhD. Candidate Ramona Nicoleta ARIEȘAN, Faculty of Philosophy and History, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,.....	149
21. <b>GOD-OF-THE-GAPS ARGUMENTS IN LIGHT OF LUTHER'S THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS</b> , Eugen Spierer, University of Haifa, Israel .....	153
22. <b>SPECIFIC TOOLS OF ACTING: THE CONCEPT – A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING AND APROACHING CHARACTERS</b> , Prof. PhD. Florin TOMA, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania .....	161
23. <b>POLITICAL TOLERANCE VERSUS MORAL TOLERANCE</b> , Prof. PhD. Rarița MIHAIL, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	167
24. <b>THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF THE DANUBE AND ITS EARLY PUBLIC HEALTH POLICIES, 1856–1860s</b> , PhD. Constantin ARDELEANU, PhD. Alexandru DRĂGHICI, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	174

**\* SECTION EDUCATION SCIENCE & HUMANITIES**

25. <b>MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION AND TEACHER'S INFORMATION SOURCES. CASE STUDY: ROMANIAN SCHOOLS</b> , Prof. PhD. Mariana Dogaru Polytechnic University of Bucharest (a), Mirela Cristina Negreanu, Polytechnic University of Bucharest (b), Romania.....	179
26. <b>LEARNING BY STORIES</b> , Prof. PhD. Monica Valentina Șerbănescu, Babeș Bolyai University(a), Mariana Dogaru Polytechnic University of Bucharest (b), Romania.....	186
27. <b>THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS</b> , Prof. PhD. Vlaicu Claudia, “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania (a), Haidu Felicia Aurica, Ion Creanga University, Chisinau, Republic of Moldavia (b).....	192
28. <b>SPIRU HARET-REFORMER OF THE ROMANIAN SECONDARY EDUCATION</b> , Cristina-Mirela Popescu BARABAȘ, Ph.D. Student, Doctoral School of Humanities Sciences ‘Ovidius’ University, Constanta, Romania .....	201
29. <b>BEST PRACTICES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF THE FABLE USING THE WALDORF METHOD</b> , Maria-Gabriela DRĂGHICI, Ph.D. Student, Doctoral School of Facultatea de Psihologie și Științele Educației, University of Bucharest, Romania .....	206
30. <b>MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM</b> , Prof. Luminița Preda, Romania .....	211
31. <b>INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE -COMPONENT OF THE TEACHER' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY</b> , Prof. PhD. Luminița-Mihaela DRĂGHICESCU (a), Prof. PhD. Ioana STĂNCESCU (b), “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania, “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania.....	218
32. <b>BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT</b> , Prof. PhD. Luminița-Mihaela DRĂGHICESCU (a) PhD. Ioana STĂNCESCU (b), “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania....	225
33. <b>STEREOTYPES ABOUT BLINDNESS AND PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS</b> , Lecturer, PhD. Daniela RUSU MOCĂNAȘU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	242
34. <b>CURRENT TRENDS IN EUROPEAN POLICIES ON THE RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE</b> , Prof. PhD. Felicia CORDONEANU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	242
35. <b>SOCIAL PHENOMENON AND THEATRE. ECONOMIC MIGRATION IN CATINCA DRĂGĂNESCU'S PLAY „ROVEGAN”</b> , PhD. Elena HORGHIDAN ANGHEL, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	251
36. <b>APPROACHES OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING IN PSYCHOLOGY</b> , Prof. PhD. Cristina-Corina BENȚEA, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	257

**\* SECTION SCIENCE & ARTS**

37. <b>MUSICAL-PERFORMING ELEMENTS IN THE SONG CREATION OF COMPOSER NICOLAE BRETAN</b> , Prof. PhD. Adelina DIACONU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	265
38. <b>COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS OF HAPPINESS METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN</b> , PhD. Corina DOBROTĂ, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	272
39. <b>DEVELOPING INTERVIEW SKILLS IN ENGLISH: HOW TO HANDLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b> , Prof. PhD. Carmen OPRIT-MAFTEI, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	279
40. <b>HOW TO KEEP YOUNG LEARNERS OF ENGLISH HAPPY AND FOCUSED. GRAMMAR THROUGH STORIES</b> , PhD. Student Iulian Mardar (a) Lecturer PhD. Antoanela Marta Mardar (b), Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Galati, Romania.....	285
41. <b>A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH</b> , PhD. Lecturer Antoanela Marta Mardar (a) PhD. Student Iulian Mardar (b), Dunarea de Jos University of Galati PhD Student, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Galati, Romania .....	295
42. <b>(UN)QUESTIONABLE USE OF ANGLICISMS IN ROMANIAN COMPUTERESE</b> , PhD. Iulia COCU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	303
43. <b>STYLISTIC LANDMARKS IN THE OPERETTA THE LAND OF SMILE BY FRANZ LEHÁR. STAGE DIRECTING CONCEPT</b> , PhD. Adrian MĂRGINEAN, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	308
44. <b>DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN SOCIAL MEDIA</b> , Lecturer PhD. Delia OPREA, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	315
45. <b>BREXIT FRAMING IN BRITISH MEDIA</b> , Lecturer PhD. Oana GHEORGHIU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	321
46. <b>CONSIDERATIONS ON THE HUMAN BODY</b> , PhD. Candidate Liviu NEDELICU, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	326
47. <b>A QUESTION OF METHOD: READING WAR POETRY AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL</b> , PhD. Isabela MERILĂ, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania.....	331

# **MCDSARE 2019**

**INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC  
CONFERENCE ON THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN  
SCIENCES & ARTS, RELIGION & EDUCATION**

**May 22-23<sup>th</sup>, Galati & 20-21<sup>th</sup> June, Târgoviște,  
Romania 2019**



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.9-10>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### EDITORIAL - International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

**Marin Bugiulescu (a)\***

(a) President of IFIASA, Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association,  
Professor, PhD. Member of Dumitru Stăniloae Scientific and Interdisciplinary Research Center, Valahia  
University, Târgoviște, Romania, email: [m\\_bugiulescu@yahoo.com](mailto:m_bugiulescu@yahoo.com)

#### *Abstract*

In the context of the current international framework, *Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association* - IFIASA Journals and Conferences joins the effort in bringing together researchers and scientists from all over the globe, facilitating the professional development and encouraging dialogue, creativity and exchange of ideas. The aim of IFIASA Conferences is to create and develop a scientific network, provide the framework for improving and shaping methodologies while continuously exchanging connections and establishing partnerships.

**Keywords:** IFIASA; Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association; researchers, international scientific conference, transdisciplinarity; life; world;

#### INTRODUCTION

The 4th edition of *Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association* - IFIASA was an event with multidisciplinary character, whose general objective was to promote scientific excellence, encouraging original research.

Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association (IFIASA) provides a platform for the latest scientific, social sciences, theological, philosophical and moral-educational research, encouraging approaches from different areas and points of view.

*Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association* is an independent academic publisher with an editorial team that comprises many of the world's leading researchers. IFIASA organizes conferences, workshops, and publishes high quality academic international journals.

The Proceedings Volume of the 4th IFIASA International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education MCDSARE 2019 contain scientific articles in the social sciences and humanities fields, without a precise disciplinary border. The main topics covered by the IFIASA researchers are: Philosophy, Sociology, Communication, Social Work, Theology, Anthropology, Applied Philosophy, Ethics, Applied Ethics, Bioethics, History, Religious Studies, Arts & Architecture, Psychology, Educational Sciences, Politics, European Studies, International Relations, Public & Private Law, Management, Marketing, Economy.

## **ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES ON THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SCIENCES & ARTS, RELIGION & EDUCATION**

Since 2015, International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education by Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association (IFIASA) has become one of the most important conference on social sciences and arts in Romania. IFIASA organizes conferences, workshops, and publishes high quality academic international journals.

Conferences organized by IFIASA: The 4th *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education*/ Theme of the Conference: *Questions, Life and Happiness- QLH For You 2019*, May 22-23th, Galati & 20-21th June, Târgoviște, Romania 2019; The 3rd *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education*/ Theme of the Conference: Identity, Harmony and Reality- IHR For You 2018 May/June, 2018, Targoviste/Galati, Romania, Volume 2/2018; The 2nd *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education*, Theme of the Conference: Relationship between Man, World and Technique / 20-21 November, 2017, Targoviste, Romania, Volume 1/2017; The 1st *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education*, Theme of the Conference: Relationship between Man and Cosmos from Science and Religion perspectives / 10-11 May, 2016, Targoviste, Romania, Volume in Icoana Credintei.

## **REPRESENTATIVITY AND COLLABORATIONS**

Within the IFIASA Conference, our co-organizers and partners – University Dunarea de Jos Galati, and Valahia University from Targoviste, Romania, organised the sessions of the International Conference *Questions, Life and Happiness- QLH For You 2019*, May 22-23th, Galati, 20-21th June, Târgoviște, Romania 2019 coordinated by Professors PhD. Marin BUGIULESCU, Professor PhD. Ion CORDONEANU, and Professor PhD. Florea STEFAN. During the 3 days of the Conference, participants presented their papers in scientific sessions, plenary presentation, symposia and thematic, and one member of the International Council of IFIASA presented the brief papers of the virtual participants.

The *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conferences on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education- MCDSARE* in 2019 succeeded in gathering scholars, professors, theologians, philosophers, or people eager to align themselves with the trends of a knowledge-based society and the dialogue between science, art, religion and education. The modern tendency of our contemporaries, regardless of the field in which they operate, is to discredit fields such as philosophy or political science and to give a growing power to science. Because the discrediting of some study branches like the ones quoted (just because the short term seems to have a low utility) is a dangerous path, we have proposed to redefine such an approach.

The scientific papers in this book provide a paradigm on the relationship between different branches of science, the relationship between religion and science, or between religion and education. The current publishing volume only invites to a presentation of the importance of these links among different scientific or artistic branches, the argumentation of each participant regarding his position in his own field, a greater deepening of the connection between different scientific fields, the trans disciplinary approach of some themes or theories that may seem scientific but are also part of a type of art (such as, for example, the work of a theologian, or philosopher or thinker).

The academic and scientific content presented in the *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conferences on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education 2019* presents the opportunity to examine the altogether truth-claims found in academic spaces, as well as the methods laid out by every discipline and the meanings that derive from them. This is both the aim and the scientific mission of our IFIASA.





<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcfsare.2019.3.11-17>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### THE DECLINE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY IN THE UNITED STATES: SOME CAUSES AND POTENTIAL REMEDIES

Gerard A. Weber (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Bronx Community College, City  
University of New York, USA, E-mail: Gerard.Weber@bcc.cuny.edu

#### *Abstract*

Life expectancy in the United States declined in 2015 for the first time in nearly a century, a trend that continued in 2017. This paper explores three central reasons for this reversal: a spike in fatal opioid overdoses; the long-term public health implications of overweight and obesity; and an uptick in suicide. The causes behind each of these are considered. Increased fatality due to the consumption of narcotics is linked both to practices of the pharmaceutical distribution industry that have made opioids widely available and to broad transformations in the US economy over the past forty years that have generated chronic insecurity in many people's lives. Multiple reasons for the overweight and obesity epidemic are presented, including changes in people's work lives as the US economy has shifted from manufacturing to service employment; advertising and widespread availability of unhealthy food; and influence of industry on national policy governing the food supply. The troubling spike in suicide is attributed in part to the relative ease with which people in the United States are able to gain access to firearms and bullets. The paper concludes with some suggestions on how this decline in life expectancy can be turned around.

**Keywords:** life expectancy; opioids; obesity; suicide; pharmaceutical industry; food industry; firearms;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2018, The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that in the previous year life expectancy in the United States had dropped for the second time in three years. In 2017, the average American could expect to live 78.6 years in contrast to the 78.7 years that had been the case in 2016. Although this decline appears infinitesimal, it is in reality significant because it was only the second time in nearly a century that a drop in life expectancy occurred in the US. Prior to a decline in 2015 as well of 0.1 years, the last time life expectancy went down was in 1918 due to an influenza pandemic (Devitt 2018). (As of this writing, statistics for 2018 had not been release.)

Determining the causes of the recent declines is very challenging. In this brief paper, I probe three probable sources: a spike in fatalities as a result of drug overdoses; the negative health implications of the overweight and obesity epidemic; and an increase in suicides partly attributable to the ease with which people in the US have access to firearms. In addition to providing some statistics on these public health crises, I consider potential reasons for their development and ways in which they might be

remedied. The manifold consequences of this drop in life expectancy are not examined in this paper in part because further research is needed in order to fully bring them to light.

## **2. OVERDOSE FATALITIES**

In 2017, 70,237 people – or more than 192.43 per day – died of drug overdoses in the US, which was a nearly 10% increase over 2016. Alarming enough on its own, the growth in overdose fatalities is even more troubling when viewed with a deeper historical perspective: 21.7 out of 100,000 people died of drug overdoses in the US in 2017 while the figure for 1999 was 6.1 out of 100,000. There was significant regional variation in the number of fatalities, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio being, in that order, the states with the highest frequencies and Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota, as well in that order, having the lowest frequencies – this geographical variation is not without significance, a point to which I return (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2018a). Furthermore, these fatalities are not only urban but also suburban and rural and have grown among most social classes and races (Realuyo 2019). In regards to age of fatality, people 25 to 54 were more likely to die from drug overdoses than people of other age categories, meaning that loss of life was greatest at ages at which the majority of people are typically their most productive.

47,600 of the deaths resulted from the consumption of opioids, a class of drugs that includes heroin; synthetic substances such as fentanyl, carfentanyl and tramadol; and pain relievers that can be composed of natural and/or synthetic substances, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and numerous others. In 2017, the greatest number of people – approximately 28,500 – died from overdoses of synthetic opioids, a figure that is, however, imperfect because synthetic opioids are at times mixed with heroin in order to make them more potent, but they also as a result become potentially more lethal (Scholl et al. 2019).

## **3. PHARMACEUTICAL DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY**

The multiple social and economic forces behind this loss in human life are prompting considerable investigation. One about which we are increasingly learning is white-collar crime within the highest echelons of the corporate world. In April of this year – for the first time in US history – felony drug-trafficking charges were brought against the sixth largest pharmaceutical distributor in the US – Rochester Drug Cooperative – and two of its executives, Laurence F. Doud III and William Pietruszewski. (In the past, civil suits have been brought against drug distributors, all of which have been settled out of court at sums that were of little financial consequence to these corporations.) Prosecutors argue that the executives distributed tens of millions of oxycodone pills and fentanyl products to pharmacies that they were aware were illegally selling the drugs (Sanders 2019, Mulvey 2019).

In another recent example, on May 2, 2019 a federal jury found high-level executives, including the founder and former chairperson, of Insys Therapeutics Incorporated guilty of racketeering. Specifically, the chairperson, John Kapoor, and four of his colleagues, were found guilty of bribing doctors to prescribe Subsys, a fentanyl sublingual spray, and defrauding insurers who did not want to pay for the drug. The drug was approved by the FDA for use by cancer patients suffering from severe pain, but the company pushed for it to be prescribed much more broadly (Raymond 2019).

Other civil suits by the attorneys general of New York, Vermont and Washington are pending against other major players in the pharmaceutical distribution industry, including Cardinal Health, McKesson and AmerisourceBergen, all of which are by revenue among the 15 largest American companies. They distribute greater than 90 percent of drug and medical supplies within the United States. The suits allege that these distributors created means by which federal regulation could be avoided. For example, they are accused of alerting pharmacies of the possibility of being reported to the Drug Enforcement Administration; of assisting others in raising and getting around stipulated limits on the number of opioids they could purchase; and of informing yet others about impending audits (Hakim, Rashbaum and Rabin 2019).

Underlying these cases – and thus the opioid crisis itself – is at best piecemeal regulation of industry by state authorities, a common practice in the US, where freedom from regulation is championed as central to fostering a viable economy. This ethos has in the long run repeatedly had gravely damaging side effects, the Great Recession, which nearly led to an economic depression in the US and slowed

global economy activity, being a particularly striking, but hardly unprecedented, example of this. The New York Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement that was ultimately responsible for supervising activity at the Rochester Drug Cooperative was therefore poorly equipped to do so. It had fewer than 20 trained employees to scrutinize not only its activities but also the actions of other distributors, manufacturers, over 5,500 pharmacies and approximately 120,000 prescribers. Legislation has typically entrusted oversight of opioid sales to the distributors, essentially giving the responsibility of safeguarding the sale of pharmaceutical drugs to a part of this highly lucrative commodity chain that generously profits from it.

These practices of encouraging doctors to widely prescribe opioids without concern for their addictive qualities and of allowing even dubious pharmacies to purchase large quantities of the drugs have been rewarding to the distributors because of the presence of a sizeable number of vulnerable people in the United States, especially in certain parts of the country. Here we return to the geographical variation in cases of overdose deaths. A drugstore in rural West Virginia, for example, was at one point inundated with opioids, 4,000 pills a day from Cardinal and 5,000 from McKesson (Hakim, Rashbaum and Rabin 2019). As noted earlier, West Virginia is the state that has seen the greatest number of fatalities. It and the other two states with the highest rates of fatality (Pennsylvania and Ohio) not only have comparatively large working-class populations – people who perform jobs that are more likely than white-collar occupations to lead to injuries that result in chronic pain – but they also have large numbers of people who have served in the military, in some cases performing multiple tours in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan, work that as well can lead to bodily harm that causes persistent pain.

#### **4. ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION**

There are other ways in which some sectors of the American population have been made susceptible to the use of opioids that are perhaps less well understood. They include fundamental changes to the American economy since the 1970s. That is, we need to call attention to how neoliberal capitalism has transformed the American economy in ways that have negatively affected many people's lives, stimulating a market for opioids.

One change has been the evaporation of well-paid occupations with ample benefits in broad segments of the economy. True, employment is at record levels now and recently we have even heard about increases in wages in the United States. Yet we need to look closely at what kinds of jobs people have and how much they earn from those positions, including in entitlements such as retirement benefits. What we discover is that a lot of the work is low or modestly paid service employment, and we also learn that we remain below the wage peak of January 1973 when average hourly wages were \$4.03, an amount, when adjusted for inflation, which comes to \$23.68 today. But even when wages have increased, they have largely gone to the highest earners. Since 2000, for example, usual weekly wages have risen 3% (in real terms) to \$426 per week among workers in the lowest tenth of the earnings distribution while among people in the highest tenth of the distribution, real wages have risen 15.7%, to \$2,112 a week – an amount that is nearly five times greater than that of the lowest tenth (Desilver 2018). This trend matches a broader one of increasing economic inequality across the United States in this period.

No single explanation can be isolated for this decline in well-paid work. One is likely the drop in union membership since the 1970s – while in that decade approximately a third of all workers were represented by a union, today the figure is around 10%. Consequently, the vast majority of American workers do not benefit from collective bargaining and therefore hold limited power to raise their income, not to mention to improve their working conditions, schedules and more. Another likely explanation as already noted is the loss of manufacturing employment over this period and its replacement by service sector work that is chronically poorly paid.

Continuous cutbacks in the public sector of the economy have as well played a role. One place where this is sharply evident is in education. Recent organizing and striking by teachers' unions – e.g., the Los Angeles Unified School District strike of January 2019 and a second strike in two years by West Virginia teachers in February of this year – in many parts of the country provide insight into this reduction (Goldstein 2019).

The City University of New York, the second largest public university system in the country, also provides evidence of the impact of this. CUNY was essentially free-of-charge until the 1970s, and even though there are now a number of programs – The Excelsior Scholarship and Accelerated Study in

Associates Programs – that for some students reduce or even eliminate the costs of getting an education at CUNY, the expense can be a deterrent for others. And even for those who do get support the challenge to complete a degree can be insurmountable because there may be pressure within families – many of which are made up of recent immigrants to the country who are non-native speakers of English – to work for wages and to provide social support to other family members. For example, I have encountered students who need to look after younger siblings because childcare services are too expensive or no afterschool programs exist – this work cuts into their class attendance and ability to study and complete assignments. For those who do complete a degree and in fact for many who do not, an added burden can be the debt that has to be paid off, which typically has very high interest rates. This has had an impact on both the housing and the labor markets, making it difficult for many to pay for rent or a mortgage, both of which can be exorbitant, and consequently to move to different locations for work.

There have been other fundamental changes to the economy as a result of neoliberalism (Harvey 2005, 2010), but I believe these alone give a sense of the matter. What are the connections between these “antisocial” transformations since the 1970s and the opioid crisis, however? As an anthropologist who is interested in studying the work lives of people in different societies, I inevitably see the opioid crisis in relation to employment prospects that exist within an economy. It is important to recognize the role that the production and distribution of opioids plays in filling an employment gap left by the changes to the economy on which I have only touched here. Producing and selling opioids is a form of work, however illegal and discredited, that for some can be undeniably profitable and for others minimally fills a void. We can consider here the dissipation of well-remunerated blue-collar employment in places such as West Virginia that has not been replaced by gainful options, or, if we move beyond the borders of the US, we see processes such as heroin production and distribution filling vast employment chasms in places such as Mexico that were created, for example, by free trade agreements such as the former NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement).

We need also to weigh the psychosocial implications of transformations to the US economy in order to fully understand the emergence of the opioid crisis. Opioids are not only powerful and addictive, but they can also serve as an escape from a harsh reality for some people. Unable to find decent-paying, meaningful work; to afford an education that would lead to secure employment; to pay for essential medical and dental services; and to do much else, at least some people can be drawn into using narcotics for the break, however temporary, that they provide. This has become even more likely with the ease of access to opioids, and their relatively low cost, in many parts of the country.

## **5. POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

What are some potential solutions to this crisis? First, wages need to be raised and entitlements need to be expanded in the jobs that currently exist in the economy. We also need to invest much more heavily in education and to make access free or at least inexpensive to the entire population. Furthermore, greater investment in technology, including for example renewable forms of energy, would provide employment to many people while also addressing other costly problems, such as climate change. Meanwhile, we need to make a better effort at requiring corporations and the superrich to make financial contributions to the economy. A recent report showed that many major corporations paid no taxes on their wealth in 2018 or that they even received rebates (Saul and Cohen 2019).

Research has shown that the idea that all of this wealth ultimately leads to innovation and job creation is a falsehood. Instead, what we have been witness to is a small class of people accumulating vast sums of wealth for personal consumption and aggrandizement while many sectors of the US population go without – or turn to opioids.

## **6. PUBLIC HEALTH AND OBESITY**

Obesity and overweight have also played a role in the decline in life expectancy. Obesity is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as having a BMI (Body Mass Index) of greater than or equal to 30. Overweight is defined as having a BMI within a range of greater than or equal to 25 to 29.9. Data that the CDC have accumulated on obesity show the following: From 1988 to 1994, 22.9% of Americans were calculated as obese. From 1999 to 2002, the figure was 30.4%; from 2003 to 2006, it was 33.4%; from 2007 to 2010, 34.7%; and from 2013 to 2016, 38.8%. (The differences in number of

years represented by the figures results from a change in the way in which the CDC recorded its statistics.) Hence, we see a continuous uptick, so much so that by 2016 close to 40% of adults in the US were obese. The same trend exists for overweight in the United States (Hales et al. 2017, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2017).

As with the opioid epidemic, there are significant differences in the incidence of obesity and overweight in the US. The problem is most acute in the southern states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas, but Iowa and West Virginia also have very high rates, while Colorado and Hawaii have the lowest rates. There is also much variation according to social class, one indication of this being that the likelihood of a person suffering from obesity goes down with increases in education. At the same time, considerable difference in rates of obesity and overweight exists racially and ethnically, non-Hispanic blacks reporting from 2015 to 2017 that they suffered from obesity at a rate of 38.4%; Hispanics at a rate of 32.6% and non-Hispanic whites at a rate of 28.6%. Obesity and overweight are also significant problems within Native American populations (See CDC Overweight & Obesity: Adult Obesity Maps available at <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/prevalence-maps.html>).

A number of illnesses have been attributed to overweight and obesity, including type 2 diabetes mellitus, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, some forms of cancer, poor health-related quality of life and disability (Haomiao Jia, Matthew M. Zack and William W. Thompson 2016). Statistics show, for example, an increase in diabetes in the US over this period. According to one published article, “Between 1990 and 2010 the number of people living with diabetes tripled” (Rowley, et al. 2017). Diabetes in itself has myriad health implications, including kidney disease, neuropathy, skin and eye complications, high blood pressure, disability and much more. (See the American Diabetes Association at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) for further information.)

## **7. SOCIAL CONTEXT OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY**

It is not unusual for people who are obese to be ridiculed and blamed for their weight or for it to be associated with cultural practices. These reactions fail, however, to appreciate the numerous social, economic and political forces that have led to the current epidemic. We need to understand, for example, how much sodium, sugar, hydrogenated oil (such as palm oil) and other potential threats to public health are in the global food supply, and how industry gains from our consumption of them. The power of advertising to shape our consumption patterns and the often low cost of poor-quality food and drink – consider carbonated beverages filled with high-fructose corn syrup – as well demand our attention. We need also to measure the impact of changes in people’s work lives as a result of the transformation through which the US economy has passed. This includes the kinds of work Americans perform and the schedules they maintain. In general, work today is much more sedentary than it was in the immediate post-World War II decades, and today people are more likely to have work schedules that can make it comparatively difficult to exercise and to prepare their own meals, which makes eating out attractive. And let’s not forget that today many people spend considerable amounts of time sitting in their cars getting to work or other locations sometimes because the housing costs near the places where they work are too expensive. Then there is the issue of how well society properly educates the population about healthy eating habits, the degree of access that people have to healthy food options and other factors. For further details, see Albritton (2009) and other scholarship.

There is no single solution to this epidemic given its multiple sources. However, greater control by the government of the food supply would arguably move us in a more positive direction. This has of course already taken place with considerable success on many occasions throughout history. One prominent recent example was the ban imposed by the federal Food and Drug Administration in 2015 that went into effect about one year ago on the use of artificial trans fats in food. Along with this approach, it would likely be effective to also raise prices at the national level on unhealthy foods. Local measures, such as the recent decisions in Berkeley and Philadelphia to raise taxes on sugary carbonated beverages can be ineffective. Although declines in purchases of these products occurred in those localities, reportedly some people also began shopping outside the city limits purportedly to avoid the sugar tax. Still, a decline in sales was recorded (Ducharme 2019).

## 8. INCREASE IN SUICIDE

In addition to the impact of opioid overdoses and obesity and overweight on life expectancy, the US has seen a very troubling increase in suicides over recent years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the suicide rate in the US went up 30% from 2000 to 2016, an increase from 10.4 people out of 100,000 to 13.5 out of 100,000 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2018b). Viewed differently, 47,000 people committed suicide in 2017 or approximately 129 per day, more than twice the number of homicides. The increase has occurred among men and women, among all racial and ethnic groups and among people of all ages, except the very old. Among girls and women, the increase has been particularly dramatic, from 4 to 6 per 100,000. This made suicide the tenth leading cause of death in the US in 2016. Among people aged 10 to 34, it was the second leading cause of death after unintentional injuries (Winerman 2019).

As with the obesity epidemic and the increase in opioid usage, there is no single explanation for the rise in suicide within the US. A reasonably accurate one emerges, however, when we observe the methods people use to take their own lives. Suicide by firearm is the most common means: According to the National Institute of Mental Health, in 2017 nearly 24,000 suicides (23,854) – or about 50% – involved the use of guns, while about 13,000 (13,075) were suffocations, about 6,500 (6,554) were poisonings, and the remaining nearly 4,000 (3,690) were by other means. Among men, the use of firearms was especially common at 56.0%, while among women it was 31.2%, only slightly lower than poisoning. (See National Institute of Mental Health 2019). Ease of access to firearms means people can act on impulses that may be triggered by economic duress to a greater extent than would be the case were it not so simple and affordable for people to obtain a weapon and bullets. Thus, we can make a compelling argument that access to guns and bullets is a public health dilemma in the US, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should have the power to control. In fact, suicide is a far greater concern than mass shootings, which, although alarming and horrifying, do not take nearly as many lives annually as suicides.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

These are very destabilizing times in the United States as evident from data we have accumulated on drug overdoses, obesity and overweight and suicides. Gone appears to be the dream that each new generation would be better off than the previous one. Instead, we appear to be moving backward if these data on life expectancy are accurate and if they persist. I have already given some specific suggestions on how these crises can be abated. On a more general note, I strongly believe that we need to make the US a much more balanced society economically. This involves addressing the fact that decent-paying work is elusive to a portion of the society, that many families have difficulty paying for basics such as food, a mortgage or rent, transportation, medical treatment, childcare services and more and that education comes at a steep cost for many families. Only by admitting that these problems create an unhealthy society can we move toward improvement and perhaps even greater happiness in the US.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Albritton, R. Let them eat junk: How capitalism creates hunger and obesity. New York: PlutoPress; 2009.
- [2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Table 58. Normal weight, overweight, and obesity among adults aged 20 and over, by selected characteristics: United States, selected years 1988–1994 through 2013–2016, 2017. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/2017/058.pdf>
- [3] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Opioid overdose: Drug overdose deaths. 2018a, December 19. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>.
- [4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vital signs: Suicide rising in the US: More than a mental health concern. 2018b, June 07. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/index.html>.
- [5] Desilver, D. For most U.S. workers, real wages have barely budged in decades. Pew Research Center. 2018, August 7.

- [6] Devitt, M. Data show U.S. life expectancy continues to decline: Suicides, drug overdose deaths named as key contributors. 2018, December 10. Available at <https://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20181210lifeexpectdrop.html>.
- [7] Ducharme, J. Soda taxes are a ‘no-brainer’ public health, says the author of a new study on them. Time Magazine. 2019, May 19. Available at <https://time.com/5588227/soda-taxphiladelphia/>.
- [8] Goldstein, D. West Virginia teachers walk out (again) and score a win in hours. New York Times. 2019, February 19.
- [9] Hakim, D., W. Rashbaum and R. C. Rabin. The giants at the heart of the opioid crisis. New York Times. 2019, April 22.
- [10] Hales, C. M., Carroll, M. D., C. D. Fryar, and C. L. Ogden. Prevalence of obesity among adults and youth: United States, 2015–2016. NCHS Data Brief 288, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Center for Health Statistics. 2017, October.
- [11] Haomiao J., M. M. Zack and W. W. Thompson. Population-based estimates of decreases in quality-adjusted life expectancy associated with unhealthy body mass index. Public Health Reports 2016, January/February 131(1):177-184.
- [12] Harvey, D. A brief history of neoliberalism. New York: Oxford University Press; 2005.
- [13] Harvey, D. The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism. New York: Oxford University Press; 2010.
- [14] Mulvey, E. Manhattan U.S. attorney’s office and DEA announce charges against Rochester drug co-operative and two executives for unlawfully distributing controlled substances, 2019, April 23. Available at <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2019/04/23/manhattan-us-attorneys-office-and-dea-announce-charges-against-rochester>.
- [15] National Institute of Mental Health. Suicide. 2019, April. Available at <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>.
- [16] Raymond, N. Founder, execs of drug company guilty in conspiracy that fed opioid crisis, Reuters. 2019, May 2.
- [17] Realuyo, C. B. The new opium war. Prism: Security in the western hemisphere 2019(1):132-142. Institute for National Strategic Security, National Defense University.
- [18] Rowley, W. R., Bezold, C., Arian, Y., Bryne, E., Krohe, S. Diabetes 2030: Insights from yesterday, today, and future trends. Population Health Management. 2017, Feb 20(1):6-12. doi: 10.1089/pop.2015.0181.
- [19] Sanders, D. For first time, pharmaceutical distributor faces federal criminal charges over opioid crisis. New York Times. 2019, April 23.
- [20] Saul, S. and P. Cohen. Profitable giants like Amazon pay \$0 in corporate taxes. Some voters are sick of it. New York Times. 2019, April 29.
- [21] Scholl, L., P. Seth, M. Kariisa, N. Wilson, and G. Baldwin. Drug and opioid-involved overdose deaths – United States, 2013-2017. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report(MMWR); January 4, 2019; 67(5152):1419–1427.
- [22] Winerman, L. By the numbers: An alarming rise in suicide. American Psychological Association 50(1), 2019.



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### MARCUS AURELIUS – A POSSIBLE PARADIGM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING

Ion Cordoneanu (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: theosisro@yahoo.com

#### *Abstract*

In "To Himself", Marcus Aurelius prescribes a set of moral rules for his own use, a kind of "daily account of life" for self-concern. Self-concern is the attitude by which the individual shapes his self and which involves both a way of being characterized by reflection on the self and a series of practices by which the individual takes care of himself, trying to change, purify, to turn to achieve the rectitude of his moral actions. In this paper, I will show how Stoic self-concern is, from the perspective of philosophical counselling, an important instrument used in philosophical practice, being conceptualized as a philosophical meditation and re-grounding the premise of discovering philosophy as a way of life.

**Keywords:** Marcus Aurelius; self-concern; stoicism; philosophical meditation; philosophy as a way of life;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the history of European thinking and order of ideas on which the European civilisation was founded, To Himself by Marcus Aurelius can be placed at the early stage of the evolution of a dissociation that the political, cultural and spiritual European space had capitalized on until the dawns of modernity, through Augustine's City of God, Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises and Pascal's Pensées, being subsequently turned upside down by Voltaire's Letter XXV (Philosophical Letters) or Nietzsche's Antichrist. This dissociation is between the inner and the outer man or, better said, between the spiritual and material man, one that, in the twentieth century, Existentialist Gabriel Marcel synthesised as Etre et Avoir [To be and to have] (1935).

In this paper, I intend to show how Marcus Aurelius' self-concern can be exploited in the context of this inner-outer dissociation, in an attempt to re-establish the valences of philosophy as a mind and soul subject, and implicitly, as a way of life, thus recovering a tradition that comes all the way from Plato and embraces the present with Pierre Hadot. Within one's reach is the instrument of philosophical counselling, an emerging practice in the Romanian area that has all chances to grow, if we consider that there are available both a professional association of philosophical counsellors, and accredited researchers in the field.



## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT – THE NECESSITY OF PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING**

Does contemporary man need philosophical counselling? Is the ethical and philosophical counsellor a different kind of ‘apprentice wizard’ meant to help the man of the present to overcome their discontents and crises, to put order in their inner life, to integrate the conflicts that are part of their own world and, why not, to be happy? Isn’t this type of counselling, as a matter of fact, a newly induced necessity by which people find out that what they are and have is not sufficient, that they must request more from their lives, or that they are helpless and in need of yet another prosthesis? (Mihăilescu, 2014). The short answer – I think it is not. Philosophical counselling is not yet another ‘acquired incompetence’, simply because this philosophical practice brings forth the imperative of regaining balance and rediscovering the authentic being (Frunză, 2018) that breathes inside each and every one of us. Philosophical counselling does not provide the recipe of a form of happiness imposed by collective or personal development standards, meant to ensure one’s success. Quite the opposite, when resorting to this practice, one must stop from the race one is part of in their day-by-day reality (consumerism, social media, all kinds of dynamics, from the labour market to geopolitics, social, political or economic crises, etc.) and be ready to have a dialogue with oneself.

If we accept the premise that the globalizing society we live in is one of patterns increasingly dominating our lives, imposed through various channels and accepted for different reasons (the need for integration and belonging being one of our features as primates and social beings), that we live in societies determined by technology, then we can probably note that the inner-outer paradigm is unbalanced by the latter term to such an extent that happiness itself has a pattern to which man must circumscribe, and that not reaching it leads to despair (Ștefănescu, 2017).

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS – A SUITABLE PARADIGM?**

Is the inner man-outer man paradigm suitable for building a justification of philosophical counselling? I think it is. If “so much technology, as much philosophy”, then “transformations are so complex and profound that affect even the man’s way of being in the world in general and one’s way in particular. They draw in both reflections on the human condition in general and novel ways of thinking of man and his humanity which lead towards the necessity of redefining the postmodern human being. Therefore, they require an increase in the importance of philosophical reflection, impose a re-enclosing of the entire matter of man within the philosophical space, and challenge one to take on a reflective and active attitude in the assumption of one’s own life (Frunză, 2019: 8). This kind of attitude related to one’s own person has all the chances of leading to a rediscovery of the role played by philosophy during the Antiquity and the Middle Age, when it was a subject of the mind and soul, interiorized as a way of life. According to Pierre Hadot, philosophy is firstly a peculiar way of life and only secondarily a type of theoretical discourse. In the 1970s, he would note an increase in the readership’s interest in Epicureanism and Stoicism. It is thus how the philosophy professor converts to philosophy and writes *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (1981). Philosophy itself is an act of conversion – this notion “pervades the totality of Pierre Hadot’s works” (Bădiliță, 1997: 17). Hadot identifies, up to 20th-century philosophers, the survival of this tradition that construes philosophy “as a concrete and practical activity and a transformation of the way of living or perceiving the world” (Hadot, 1998: 293), after the publication, in 1992, with Fayard, of *La citadelle intérieure. Introduction aux Pensées de Marc Aurèle* [The Inner Citadel. The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius].

In the Romanian area, it was Nae Ionescu who brought philosophy near individual practice. According to him, metaphysics – just another name for philosophy, as a matter of fact – represents “a total vision of existence” suitable only for the one who has reached the extreme limits of existence through personal experience. This way, philosophy becomes “a sort of disclosure, a sort of confession of faith of the one resurrected from the dead” (Ionescu, 1999: 18). The spiritual meaning is obvious in this characterisation, but the separation from religion emphasises the therapeutic role of philosophy more clearly: “It stands to reason that metaphysics has been a purely human concern of those who failed deliverance and who try to balance in existence, in this human condition, by the total and harmonious understanding of existence. Metaphysics does not lead to redemption, as the religious experience would do; it only leads to reconciliation” (Ionescu, 1999: 18-19).

Naturally, one cannot disregard the Păltiniș School, where the ritual would constantly accompany the way of life built around the essential books of philosophy and would provide intimacy for the group gathered around Constantin Noica. “Those who, in the Diary (but also in fact, as the author of these lines may testify), visit Noica at Păltiniș and entertain him – especially Gabriel Liiceanu, Andrei Pleșu, Victor Stoichiță, Sorin Vieru, Petru Creția – submit, alongside the magister – to rituals meant to ‘get them in shape’: ‘the Păltiniș tour’, which takes exactly one hour and five minutes, lighting the fire in the stove, chipping the wood, presenting their work and future plans, methodically critiquing past or present philosophies, daily discussions and ‘vivisections’ of the intellectual activity of each participant (‘trials’). They use a quasi-esoteric language, almost unintelligible for the profane (‘becoming unto being’, ‘the fringe that does not fringe’, ‘individual-determined-general’, ‘the expanded self’, etc.). It is “a ritual without a dogma”, as Andrei Pleșu perfectly described the genius of the place” (Cornea, 2004: 1999). The road to Păltiniș is a rite of passage to an upside-down world, a place of salvation, an island – all, equivalent to the interiority of a paideia model described by rules, restrictions, schedule and exercising – at any rate, a kind of intellectual and corporeal askesis well crystallised in a life experience.

#### **4. THE SELF - MARCUS AURELIUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL MEDITATION**

Marcus Aurelius’ stoicism is one approach that can respond to the philosophical interrogations of contemporary man and that can be, implicitly, useful for ethical and philosophical counselling. Resorting to interiority and re-establishing its dignity in the context of a technological and communicational society can be initialised by openness towards the Aurelian way of discovery and ‘authentication’ of the self. To Himself is evidence of late Antiquity that philosophy was construed as a practice and as disciplining the personality, a work on the territory of man’s inner citadel.

The hermeneutics of Marcus Aurelius’ stoic text reveals the fact that this kind of introspection/spiritual exercise is suitable as a method in philosophical counselling, equating the philosophical meditation that goes back to Socrates, Plato or Epicurus. Assumed by Christianity, but forgotten in the age of modernity, philosophical meditation is shaped the way advocated by Marcus Aurelius in view of secluding within oneself, a way described by Pierre Hadot in *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*:

Cette méditation peut prendre la forme d’un exercice écrit, qui sera un véritable dialogue avec soi-même : eis heuton. Une grande partie des Pensées de Marc Aurèle correspond à cet exercice : il s’agit d’avoir présents à l’esprit d’une manière vivante les dogmes fondamentaux du stoïcisme. Ce sont des morceaux du système stoïcien que Marc Aurèle se redit (( à lui-même ». À cette c mémorisation )) des dogmes s’ajoutent, chez l’empereur philosophe, d’autres exercices spirituels écrits, tout à fait traditionnels eux aussi. Tout d’abord, il y a l’examen de conscience dans lequel on observe son progrès spirituel. Et puis, il y a l’exercice de la *premeditatio malorum* destiné à éviter que le sage soit surpris inopinément par l’événement. On se représente donc très vivement les événements fâcheux qui pourraient arriver, tout en se démontrant à soi-même qu’ils n’ont rien de redoutable. Les Pensées de Marc Aurèle sont donc un document extrêmement précieux. Elles nous conservent en effet un remarquable exemple d’un genre d’écrit qui a dû être très fréquent dans l’Antiquité, mais qui était appelé, par son caractère même, à disparaître facilement: les exercices de méditation consignés par écrit. (Hadot, 2002: 150).

This meditation can take the form of a written exercise, which will be a genuine dialogue with oneself: eis heuton. A significant part of Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* corresponds to this exercise: it is a matter of presenting in the spirit of a living manner the fundamental dogmas of stoicism. These are the pieces of the stoic system that Marcus Aurelius submit (to his memorization). Dogmas are added, in the Philosopher Emperor’s case, to other written spiritual exercises, also traditional. First of all, there is an examination of conscience in which one sees one’s spiritual progress. Then, it is an exercise in *Premeditatio malorum* (“the pre-meditation of evil”) meant to prevent the sage from being taken by surprise by the event. The unfortunate events that may take place are thus vividly represented, while proving to oneself that there is nothing dangerous about them.

Therefore, Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* are an extremely valuable document. Consequently, they preserve for us a remarkable example of a writing genre that must have been very frequent during the Antiquity, but which was meant, by its own nature, to disappear easily: the meditation exercises recorded in writing (Hadot, 2002: 150).

Practising meditation is considered an exercise on inner freedom specific to all philosophical schools of Antiquity: “A shared feature of all ancient schools of philosophy is that the practitioner of a meditation exercise learns to focus his attention to the present moment, which is later labelled as a genuine secret of spiritual exercises” (Hațegan, 2019: 20).

In Pierre Hadot’s view, the starting point of Stoicism is Socrates’ claim that “no evil can come to a good man either in life or after death, and God does not neglect him. So, too, this which had come to me has not come by chance, but I see plainly that it was better for me to die now and be freed from troubles” (The Apology of Socrates 41d. In Plato, 1974: 43). If good and evil are just moral, for the stoic, happiness consists in “the exigency of good, imposed by reason and transcending the individual” (Hadot, 1997: 154). The only aspect that depends on us is the will to do good and act according to reason.

The radical opposition of what depends on us, as object of our own decision, and what transcends our decision leads, on the one way, to the discovery of the inner citadel, where man finds freedom and harmony, and on the other hand, to the discovery of the external reasoning in which the reason of human action is grounded. This is way physics has ethical finality to stoics and “the stoic option of life postulates and requires, at the same time, that the universe be sensible” (Hadot, 1997: 156). Pursuant to Marcus Aurelius’ rhetorical question “Or think you that order subsisting within yourself is compatible with disorder in the All?” (IV 27, 1977: 110), Hadot adds: “Human reason that wishes logical and dialectical coherence with itself and institutes morality must be grounded in Reason of All, of which it is nothing but a part. Living according to reason would be, therefore, living according to nature, to the universal Law that transforms the evolution of the world from inside out” (Hadot, 1997: 156). The stoic emperor expresses the eulogy to law and order of nature, while asserting the spirit’s harmony with them: “I am in harmony with all, that is a part of thy harmony, great Universe. For me nothing is early and nothing late, that is in season for thee.” (IV, 23).

## 5. CONCLUSION

Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations represent the author’s spiritual exercises. Writing itself is a practice of meditation, as vouched by the repetitions of ideas and formulae that keep appearing in the text every once in a while. These repetitions are catalyst for the association of ideas, for bringing back to memory inner representations and practices. He writes only with a view to always keeping in mind the doctrine and rules of stoic life. It is thus obvious that writing itself is an exercise in meditation. But if it is so, then reading the text written by the stoic emperor also acquires the function of philosophical meditation (Hadot, 1997: 48-50).

Philosophical meditation was one of the most important practices of ancient philosophies. The comparison to Cartesian meditation highlights the huge difference between two types of philosophy and implicitly, two different worlds: one that did not ignore interiority and could establish a balance with the exteriority hypostatized in political, economic and juridical organisation, and another, in which interiority was exiled to the private dimension of life, ending up being either ignored or disregarded.

Today, the rediscovery of interiority promoted by philosophy brings forth the development of philosophical practices that contemporary man needs in order to re-establish the harmony between himself and the others. Thus, philosophy, by its specific practices, must regain its place in the agora, not just as a theory belonging to a specialised academic space, but also as therapy, communication, critical thinking or ethical expertise in various environments. The harmony, balance and freedom that it can promote may represent as many contributions to a reality at the same time globalising and atomising, which depersonalises each and every one of us to various extents.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- [1] Bădiliță, Cristian: Prefață: Împăcarea cu filosofia [Preface: Coming to Terms with Philosophy]. In Hadot, Pierre: Ce este filosofia antică [What Is Ancient Philosophy], Iași: Polirom; 1997.
- [2] Cornea, Andrei: De la Școala din Atena la Școala de la Păltiniș [From the Athenian School to Păltiniș School], București: Humanitas; 2004.
- [3] Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius: Manualul. Către sine [The Manual; To Himself], București: Minerva; 1977.
- [4] Frunză, Sandu: Comunicare și consiliere filosofică [Philosophical Counselling and Communication], București: Eikon; 2019.
- [5] Frunză, Sandu: Ești o ființă autentică [You Are an Authentic Being], București: Eikon; 2018.
- [6] Hadot, Pierre: Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique, Paris: Albin Michel; 2002.
- [7] Hadot, Pierre: The Inner Citadel. The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press; 1998.
- [8] Hațegan, Vasile: Meditația filosofică – instrument în consilierea filosofică [Philosophical Medication – An Instrument of Philosophical Counselling], București: Eikon; 2019.
- [9] Ionescu, Nae: Tratat de metafizică [A Treatise of Metaphysics], București: Roza Vânturilor; 1999.
- [10] Mihăilescu, Vintilă: Incompetența învățată [Acquired Incompetence]. In: Dilema veche, 553, September; 2014.
- [11] Plato: Opere I [Works I], București: Editura științifică; 1974.
- [12] Ștefănescu, Cătălin: Disperarea de a fi fericit [The Desperation of Being Happy]. In: Dilema veche, 683, March; 2017.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcfsare.2019.3.23-32>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### CONCEPT OF FREEDOM IN PHILOSOPHY AND IN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Alexandru-Corneliu Arion (a)\*

(a) Lecturer PhD, Faculty of Theology and Sciences of Education, "Valahia" University of Târgoviște,  
Romania, E-mail: alexcoarion@yahoo.co.uk

*Motto:* „Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”  
(John 8: 32)

#### *Abstract*

Freedom is an original and existential attribute of man. Christianity asserts that every man, as a person, has freedom in nature, since it is an image of God. Even Hegel had argued that the principle of freedom was born along with Christianity. From a philosophical point of view, there are two mutually exclusive visions: that of free will and of determinism. If the first one postulates that man is able to choose and to act according to the dictates of his own will, the other affirms that all events, including human actions, are predetermined. In Christianity, there is an extraneous reality but through which man's natural strength and deeds are supported continuously: that is the divine grace. Freedom by which God exalted man is freedom as a state, not only as an attribute of an approach of choice accompanied by indecision's anxieties; it is freedom based on knowledge of good when that good belongs appropriately to the human person and to God as well. "If you abide in my word, then you are truly my disciples. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." (John 8, 31-32). The authentic freedom of human personality is revealed only in the divine Revelation, which reaches its climax in the Incarnation of the divine Logos. The ancient world did not know the personal freedom; it used to know only public freedom. The various philosophical concepts on freedom, but also other various ways of manifesting freedom over the time, have only proved their precarious and ephemeral character..

**Keywords:** freedom; nature; person; free will; determinism; divine grace; truth.;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the concepts that characterizes and defines the modern world is undoubtedly that of freedom. The man of nowadays has become a slave to sin, falsehood and illusion. However, the original freedom of the human being has not been totally annulled. Therefore, the concept of freedom itself being misunderstood, the ideal of freedom to which man tends is not the one revealed, but one invented by man.

Freedom is an original and existential attribute of man. This means that freedom is a giving from the beginning. But man does not have absolute freedom nor is it given to him, once and for all, from his

inception as a being. That is why we can say that man has only availability to freedom, which he must cultivate through his own strenuous effort.

Over time, each ideology claimed to defend and promote freedom, but also defined it differently. The significance of a classic conservative on freedom differs from that of a traditional liberal, for example. Christianity affirms that every human, as a person, possesses freedom in his nature. Also, Christianity was the first to look at each person as to God's image (icon). Thus, for Christianity, freedom is by no means a foreign term. One of the great philosophers of the modern age, G.W.F. Hegel, stated that the principle of freedom was born along with Christianity. (Hegel, 1997, p. 173) Due to the "image of God" in him, man goes beyond earthly life and tends infinitely to get into a personal union with the Archetype. He is called to live theocentrically, and if he rejects God through free consent, he refuses and destroys himself. Therefore, in order for man to preserve this original giving, that is to say, the divine "image", there must be, between him and God, a continuous communion, a living relationship in which not only God but also man should be active. True freedom is the freely accepted bondage of the good, the love of another, and the benevolent obligation to the good of the neighbor, of God who asks us to serve the good of others and our true good. Because only under the conditions of true freedom there is true ministry. There is also the "bondage" of love, which is at the same time true freedom.

## I. THE PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUE OF FREEDOM

In the theoretical debate on the problems of freedom, several types of solutions have been proposed in the history of philosophical thinking.

1) A first interpretation is the one of freedom-spontaneity (J.S. Mill, 1996, p. 67). It is present at thinkers who identify freedom in unique, unrepeatable acts, stemming from vital or emotional impulses, evaded from external constraints. It is the so-called freedom-whim/caprice, the freedom of the good-liked, so much commented by the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941): "The feeling of freedom is inter-grown within our very essence to such an extent that neither the efforts nor the most severe analyzes would destroy it." (Henri Bergson, 1992, p. 49)

Analyzing the phenomenon of freedom, Bergson defines the conditions of a free act as follows:

"The act is free only when it is produced by the deep self as a whole. It is generated by the qualitative multiplicity of the pure duration, which contains within it the whole past of the self in its unity" (Ramona Elena Bujor, 2008, p. 178)

After examining several situations, the French philosopher concludes that only if we live in pure duration and not in space-time, we are able to perform a free act, which means that only under these circumstances we can make a decision from the depths of our whole being. In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson's doctoral dissertation, he emphasized the importance of regarding time as an inner state of pure duration rather than as a measured quantity, its customary conception.

Freedom in Bergson's conception is portrayed with two essential attributes: spontaneity and originality. First, freedom is spontaneity. Man is free if his action is not constituted through weighing up of reasons, but comes directly from the intimate development of consciousness. The philosopher distinguishes on different degrees of freedom. An act appears the more freely, the better its roots go deeper and grows out of rich series of intimate duration. Man frees himself the more perfectly, the better his acts expresses and pulls their power out of the richer and deeper layers of his soul. "Freedom is not at all reduced to sensitive spontaneity". (Clara Dan, 1996, p. 74)

For man – a pensive being – the free act represents a synthesis of feelings and ideas. Freedom does not exclude reason, but includes it and it constitutes that as an essential part of its ripe fruit, according to Bergson's philosophy. As per originality in the quality of attribute of freedom, Bergson so characterizes it: "We are free when our acts emanate from our entire personality when expressing it and when they have that indefinable similarity to that we sometimes find between the opera and the artist" (Henri Bergson, 1998, 144 sq). Free is the man who cancels within his self all that he has been able to borrow and all that is imposing, all the automatisms and conventions that limit him, in order to pass to the center of his being. Thus characterizing freedom, the philosopher concludes: "Free acts are rare." (Henri Bergson, 1998, p. 190).

2) A second way of interpretation is freedom-indifference. We find it anticipated by the Stoics and resumed in the 13th century in Duns Scott's formula: "liberum arbitrium indifferentiae" (Paul M.

Cohen, 1997, p. 103). The Stoics discuss a notion of freedom that is rather more moral than metaphysical. This sense of freedom involves 'the power to live as you will' (Cicero, Stoic Paradoxes 5, 34). To the essential question of all time: how far goes the freedom of action of men and what are their limits?, the Stoics respond: because the world is rational, divine, human freedom must exist; man is able to maintain the contact between his inner fire and the one that animates the universe and obey cosmic reason. Freedom and obedience coincide in free adhesion to supreme good. We find on several occasions, in varying forms and with different accents, this scheme of thinking to the greatest philosophers. Because freedom does not amount to an arbitrary choice. At the limit, it consists in recognizing a perfect necessity and in obeying it. (Jeanne Hersch, 1993, p. 70)

3) The third interpretation of the concept of freedom treats liberty, including as an existential freedom. It is a dominating of extensive analyzes carried out by thinkers with heterogeneous spiritual formation but who, by and large, can be subsumed up to one of the most significant currents of contemporary philosophy: existentialism. The starting point of the existentialist conception of freedom is man, with his features, his life experiences. The man in the conception of existentialist philosophers becomes an emotionally tense being and with a complete, global composition.

Thus, for existentialism, freedom becomes an "ontological giving", a constitutive and inalienable structure of man, centered on the lived experience of the human being. What positively has existentialism, even in the form represented by Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre, is the recognition of man as freedom, therefore, as a spirit. But the thesis that man as existence, as freedom "does not imply any essence, does not imply any prior nature, that certain values and obligations are not contained in freedom, cannot be supported" (Dumitru Stăniloae, 1956, pp. 343-344) from the Christian point of view.

According to existentialist opinions, man opens before God the ways of good and creation, with a view to rehabilitating himself. The struggle between spirit and matter, between good and evil is given on an unstable background that is not ready-at-hand, but is a state of tension with a pronounced tragic character. Only the contact with God, who means truth and love, eternity, can save the man (Martin Heidegger, 2006, pp. 66-70).

In our age, Sartre would say:

If God exists, then man, as freedom, no longer exists, and if freedom exists, then God does not exist. Here the soul is conceived as totally outwardly to God, and God as totally outward of the soul, the relationship between them being thought of as a relationship of strength (Jeanne Hersch, 1993, pp. 86-87).

However, in Christian theology, at Augustine, for example, we meet the very opposite: God is within the soul; He is interior *intimo meo*, meaning more inward than my innermost self. God is more central to me than I am myself. He's more at the center of my own self than I could ever be myself. The moment for the believer God becomes more inwardly than his own self, the alleged conflict between liberties loses any meaning: what God wants, what I want. On the contrary, what God wants is more inward than what, for the moment, I thought I wanted (Jeanne Hersch, 1993, p. 87).

Sartre is an existentialist atheist, that is to say, he rejects the existence of God and considers that man receives his existence from his parents and that its "appearance" is an accident. The fact that there is no transcendence makes it impossible for someone to prescribe to man an essence; thus Sartre emphasizes that man is ontologically free, that he gives himself an essence. Therefore, according to the French philosopher, "existence precedes the essence, essence which is characterized by human acts." (Jean Paul Sartre, 2000, p. 261)

4) The fourth interpretation of freedom is freedom of action. Freedom no longer appears as an original faculty, belonging equally to all men, but as a privilege of the one who freed himself from external constraints and inner servitudes (i.e. ignorance, blind passion, instinctive impulses, and prejudices), being able to freely realize the conscious tendency to the accomplishment of the assumed goals.

Freedom is choice, and by that it always has a moral quality. "There is freedom only in the act, in choice, and so liberty is bound to color in good or bad." (George Remete, 2005, p. 57). As "Spirit and Freedom" (Nikolai Berdiaev), man is the one being who can decide: for good or for evil. Thus, freedom means understanding and conforming to nature, to the spirit as the essence and purpose of being.

"Man must prove to himself the whole activity of the spirit, the entire intensity, so to fulfill what God expects from him. God, through the work of grace, helps man, who has lost his freedom by falling into sin, in order to save himself, to overcome sin. God expects from man a free answer to His call, the

reciprocity of love and creative cooperation in the victory over the darkness of non-being.” (Nikolai Berdiaev, 1996, p. 253).

Generalizing, there are two seemingly opposite philosophical concepts: free-will and determinism. If the former postulates that man is able to choose and act according to the dictates of his own will, the other asserts – sometimes trenchantly – that all events, including human actions, are predetermined. From here there are perplexities for both the religious skeptic and the theologian. We are, on the one hand, forced to admit that on many occasions in everyday life we are free agents, able to do certain things or abstain from them, depending only on our choice. On the other hand, sciences – and here we are particularly interested in the humanistic ones – seem to have as a presumption, and as an implication of their results, the idea that such alternatives do not exist and that everything, including human behavior, happen in reality with absolute inevitability. (Antony Flew, 1999, p. 199).

This fundamental concept of freedom has various evaluations also in the socio-political field, which is intrinsically linked to the philosophical and ethical one. By and large, political freedom consists in the absence of external constraints. “The free man – writes Helvetius – is one who is not in chains, is neither imprisoned nor terrorized, like a slave, for fear of punishment”. (Antony Flew, 1999, p. 200). No one is free in all respects. Someone might be free in a certain respect but lacks the ability or desire to exercise that freedom, or be unfree, but still content with his or her lack of freedom. As the word “freedom” sounds pleasant to many (while authoritarian spirits hate its reality) and because political freedom is indeed, like peace, essentially negative, some praise positive, true freedom, the effective promotion of a favorite line of conduct, and not the freedom to do or not to do a certain thing.

Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor pointed out the preconditions on which political freedom is built:

“We will succeed in convincing them that they will not be able to truly become free unless they voluntarily renounce their freedom in our favor and when they will obey us completely. ... Oh, we will even allow them to sin, knowing them as faint of heart and nerveless, and, in their turn, they will love us like children.” (F.M. Dostoevski, 2011)

„The great Inquisitor is going to prove that Satan is right, that people are infantile, that the purpose of their own lives must be induced from the outside. They do not need their freedom. Having that, it is bothering them. Because the need for freedom belongs to the few and the chosen, it would follow that Jesus' doctrine is one of the elite, not-crowd-loving and oblivious to their only real need: the need for bread.” (Gabriel Liiceanu, in: Dostoevski, 2011). True freedom is not experienced in a worldly political regime, but it is lived through its change or metamorphosis and through its transcendence, because freedom belongs to the Kingdom of God (Corneliu-Dragoş Bălan, 2006, p. 166).

## II. THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

Within the two religious hemispheres (Eastern and Western), human freedom is a rather elusive concept, too few are the religions that deal with it and give it the right of citadel. All the more so since when we use the word “religion” we make an invitation to the terminological rigor, for the Latin etymon „relego,-āre” (to link, to unite) – accepted by most scholars of the religious phenomenon – indicates the restoration the relationship between man and God in a personal relationship, that is, between two people. This is why for Oriental people, for example, the idea of a God-Person is a vulgar one or, at least, inferior, inconceivable. And in some oriental religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, etc., there does not exist or operate at the human plane the reality of God, appealing to substitutes or surrogates, in the person of teachers or gurus who promote the concept of “liberation”.

That is why the obsession of liberation in this religious hemisphere is a philosophy or therapeutic practice (i.e. Buddhism), in contiguity with Greek philosophy or, later, Nietzschean, but not a religion. In their turn, Muslims who practice faith in a God-person have one day per year, the feast called “the night of prayer,” when Allah descends from the seventh heaven to listen to their prayers. (Alexei Galiţ, 2009, pp. 244-245). Within this religion, man is not conceived as a friend of God, as is found in the Christian model, in which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, becomes Son of Man and brother with all humanity, who fulfills his commandments.

Of course, philosophically speaking, everyone is free to have a personal definition of freedom. The surrealist Salvador Dali, for example, was of the opinion that “to be free you have to be a little multimillionaire”, or Friedrich Nietzsche, for whom freedom is the power to say “no!” (apud Alexei



Galiț, 2009, p. 245). Others claim that being free means owning everything you want, whenever you want. But, on the other hand, an old Greek saying warns: “when gods want to punish man, they send him whatever he wants.” (Savatie Baștovoii, 2008)

The condition of freedom proposed by Christianity does not imply either the meditation techniques of the yogis or of Oriental liberation (Buddhist, Hindu or Taoist), nor the money of Salvador Dali. For the Christian, the words of the Savior are more than an exhortation; they are the very essence of the human condition, disenthralled (freed) by sin: “You will know the truth, and the Truth will set you free” (John 8:32). For, built in the image of God, man has imprinted upon himself the calling and the freedom to be born with the will of the Spirit and to be like Him through living. Because of the presence of divine grace in the intimacy of the human nature, the powers and natural works of man and his movement consistent with His eternal reason are sustained by the divine grace incessantly.

The theological concept of freedom is the concept of God's trinitarian history: God constantly wants the freedom of his creation. God is the inexhaustible freedom of His creatures. So, to will what God wants is to be ourselves, to will the strengthening of our nature for eternity in God. Therefore, freedom is given us to choose what leads to the growth of our nature. And what truly promotes our nature is its harmony with God, its archetype, and with the will of God, who wants man to reach eternal happy existence. (Corneliu-Dragoș Bălan, 2006, p. 170)

Ascetic theology proposes first and foremost that man renounce his own will, that he free himself from any constraint that comes from the sphere of nature. For precisely in this renunciation of the will of nature is the freedom, which belongs to the person; it frees human person from any individual and natural limitation and makes it “universal”, extended to infinite, “all-encompassing”. Finally, the truly free person tends to encompass all the human nature, according to the model of the Divine Person, that contains the entire Trinitarian life, for Christianity, according to St. Gregory of Nyssa, is “an imitation of the nature of God” (St. Gregory of Nyssa, 46, 244 C) and the supreme goal of the saints is not only “to unite with the Holy Trinity, but to express it and imitate it in themselves”. (St. Maximus the Confessor, 1983, p. 148)

Man is free, because he is the image of divine freedom and therefore has the power to choose. St. Maximus the Confessor believes that the very need to choose (St. Maximus the Confessor, 91, 16 B) is an imperfection: free will is more a lack rather than independence; it is the inevitable consequence of the fall; from the intuitive, as it was, the will becomes discursive, whereas the perfect one immediately follows the good; he is beyond choice. (Louis Lavelle, 1991, 428) Our spirit of discerning chooses between several possibilities to realize the truth. But almost all of them always define freedom by choice, or, in its highest form, it is “an activity that creates its own reasons, and they do nowise stand it.” (Louis Lavelle, 1948, pp. 155-156)

The human person is achieving in freedom; it freely opens to the grace that secretly endures every soul without somehow constraining it. “Spirit does not generate any will that opposes it. He does not transform, by virtue of deification, but only the one who wants” (St. Maximus the Confessor, 1994, 45). The grace of the Holy Spirit does not carry out any charisma, without the faculty and power proportional to each. The man oscillates every moment between the essence of his own realization and the return to the nothingness from where he was brought into existence, between “emptying” or “fulfilling” himself: this is the great and noble risk of any existence as well the highest tension of hope. “Divine power is able to uncover hope where there is no hope and a path where the impossible appears.” (Teofan Mada, 71)

It is a *locus communis* in theology to say that the power and wisdom of God were before the existence of man, and that every man carries in him a “guiding image,” that is, his own wisdom, being a living foreshadowing of God. Man must decipher himself this divine foreshadowing of him and ought to freely “conquer” his own meaning, building his destiny. Thus, existence is a tension towards his own truth, which must be discovered and lived: “I know the truth only when it becomes to life in me,” said the existentialist philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (Paul Evdokimov, 1996, p. 80). There is no static perfection in life, no possible repetition; strictly speaking, there is never a precedent, but an eternal beginning of always unique facts, “never twice”, because they are mine. Each morning of human life emerges as “morning” of the creation of the world, a pure divine plan, and the faith I carry in every moment leads me to a new spring, to what is worthy of desiring and absolutely untainted.

The connection with the transcendent is not expressed in terms of the heteronomy of Immanuel Kant, precisely because there is no “hetero” in the theonomy. He who has a close connection with God receives the revelation from within him, for he perceives the conjoining of the Word: “I call you no more servants, but call you friends” (John 15:15).

On the contrary, any autonomy “encapsulates” the man closed in himself. In the ascetic sphere, St. Anthony the Great highlights the three wills that are confronting one another in man: 1. that of God, who works inwardly and saves, and this means the theonomy to which man adheres freely through an absolute synergy, and he appropriates it; 2. that of man, which, without being inevitably vicious, is changeable and problematic, and that means autonomy; Finally, 3. the demonic will, alien to man, and this is heteronomy. (Saint Anthony the Great, 1992, pp. 18 sq.)

The freedom wherewith God has honored man is freedom as a state and not only as an attribute of an approach of choice naturally accompanied by the anxieties of indecision; is freedom based on the knowledge of good, when good belongs to the human person as well as to God. “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8: 31-32). There is no freedom outside the consciousness of truth, and the Truth is the Son: “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36). But what is to be reckoned with and understood as a depth of the secret of liberty is that man takes part in the eternal freedom of God not in the «*posse non peccare*» of the primordial state, but only in the «*non posse peccare*» of grace and glory. This is freedom towards good, and so freedom comes to its divine truth by love.

If freedom is but a mere obedience that fits within the divine act and does nothing but reproduces and copies, in this case, to be free, in the form of divine freedom, does no longer mean anything. But, as St. Maximus says, “man was created by the Holy Spirit according to liberty, and the power to determine himself” (St. Maximus the Confessor, 1983, 167 sq.). Above the ethics of slaves and mercenaries, the Gospel sets the ethics of God's friends (Nikolai Berdiaeff, 1935).

Berdiaev notes that the traditional principle of free will, far from raising man, diminishes him, for it cannot create anything for its intercession, but only to accept or reject whatever is proposed from outside. It could even establish a paradox that has played a significant role in the history of religious ideas: free will, always being ahead of the cruel necessities to make a choice imposed on it from outside and from “above”, had enslaved and oppressed man. That is why true freedom comes only through grace, and man is free when he is not obliged to choose. Under this report, there is a truth at Luther, though he did not state it correctly. N. Hartmann, who argued that the teleological point of view in ethics leads to the denial of man's moral freedom and to the assertion of necessity, was right, although he did not completely overcome this point of view, in his doctrine of ideal values. (Nikolai Berdiaeff, 1935, p. 109).

Christian freedom is based on the new ontology of grace, which is revealed in Christ. What God offers from the beginning as a gift, man, in turn, cultivates through a Christocentric life, through which he is raised in the Church to the quality of a pneumatic ontological nature. For the Church is the space for the development of true freedom.

\*\*\*

There are, however, in the Holy Scriptures a few passages that are taken as grounds for those who support either the predestination conception or a serious limitation of the man's call to freedom. We will stop on two of them, which are for many a true stumbling block.

Thus, the first, which engages the theme of choice and alternative, is that from the very creation reference, embodied in the divine commandment: “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Gen. 2, 16-17). Many interpreted the commandment of God in the sense of forbidding knowledge, although this attribute is constitutional to man, taking on his own faculty of thought, intrinsically linked to the primordial giving, which is the divine image of man. That is why we cannot accept the idea of God proposing the agnostic dimension, since knowledge is a divine gift. In this sense, we have a strong scriptural argument, from which we can see how knowledge is a gift – one out of the seven – of the Holy Spirit: “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord – and he will delight in the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11: 2-3).

In fact, the words of our Savior from the Gospel of John are more than apodictic: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John

17, 3), because knowing Him means, implicitly, to know the entire creation, His own realization, since “through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” (John 1: 3). Therefore, it is not the fact of banning knowledge, but of stopping ambiguous knowledge. But we must also insist on the original significance of the term “knowledge”, for it has suffered a true deterioration over time. Thus, the Scripture gives it the meaning of union: “And Adam knew Eve, his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain/Seth” (Gen. 4:1; 25). So, the natural sense of knowledge is union with the good, because only with good and truth one can have communion into existence. The Holy Fathers arguably note that “he who sees the good, the truth, is brighter than the one who is to choose.” (Părintele Galeriu, Andrei Pleșu, Gabriel Liiceanu, Sorin Dumitrecu, 1991, pp. 91-92)

St. John of Damascus teaches that when God commanded to Adam to taste all the trees of heaven, only not that of the knowledge of good and evil, lest they die, He wanted to say:

“Ascend, through all creatures, to Me, the Maker, and reap from all one fruit, Me, the true life. All things bear your life, and make the fellowship with Me the strength of your existence! In this way you will be immortal. [...] It is therefore impossible to stay incorruptible for the one who commune with sensitive food.” (St. John of Damascus, 1993, p. 58)

But what God has forbidden to man was precisely the inner tearing, the ambiguity. And one must not ignore a capital fact, namely that related to good and bad: when these two alternatives appear, the halving, and the loss of unity occur immediately. (Galeriu et alii, 1991, p. 93). Knowledge, affirms the same well-known Romanian theologian, Father Galeriu, is discernment, but not necessarily between good and evil, but between distincts, as it is in the Godhead, in what there is communication, advice, because it is Trinity, so a unity of distincts. Therefore, it is necessary to understand deeply the truth that man is called to be free, this aspect getting clear in the creational grid, by the very fact that he is created by a Trinity of Free Persons; and person is but “spirit and freedom”. „Freedom”, argues the renowned Russian religious thinker, Nikolai Berdiaev, “is the only solution to the theodicy problem. The problem of evil is the problem of freedom. If we do not understand freedom, the irrational fact of the existence of evil in the world cannot be understood.” (Galeriu et alii, 1991, pp. 199 sq.). God, therefore, Trinity of People, reveals to us as spirit, love and freedom and creates the whole creation in love and freedom.

The second scriptural point in question is the parable of those invited to the supper in the gospel of Luke (14: 16-24). In particular, the Emperor's command words: “compel/force them to come in, that my house may be filled.” (14, 23), seem incomprehensible to the absolute liberty of man, namely that of accepting or not Jesus Christ and to desire or not the Messianic Kingdom founded by Him.

Noting that there are still places at the feast, the Master orders to the servants, as they go out into the streets and to fences, to “compel” those whom meet to enter the dinner. “To compel” means “to force someone to do something, to constrain”. But the verb also has the connotation of “determining,” “convincing,” “relenting.” The latter is the real meaning out here, that is of bringing the most serious arguments wherewith mentally persuade, sentimentally relent and to bring into action the will of the one “who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing he might have life through His name” (John 20: 31).

This commandment was addressed to the Holy Apostles by Christ before His ascension to heaven as a true missionary testament: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matth 28:19-20). The Lord's command obliges all the followers of the Apostles to address with competence and persuasion the present generation in order to be able to participate at the great feast of the Christian faith. In support of this, we argue that the command: “compel them to enter” does not imply an obligation, nor does imply the establishment of an inquisition that would constrain someone by repressive means, as unfortunately happened in the Western Middle Ages. For the Savior proclaims, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matth. 16:24). And whenever he would heal a sufferer, he firstly asks him/her, “Do you want to be healthy?” Or “What do you want me to do?”, which proves that He does not harm the personality, the integrity and the freedom of the human being through His Calling. Through solid argumentation, convincing speech and authentic Christian living, man must “compel” the mind and the soul to recognize the existence of God and His Kingdom; to determine his will to want and to work in order to gain the citizenship of Heaven. (Leon Arion, 2013, p. 396). In fact, it translates in terms of apostolic work: “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (1 Corinth. 9:22).

From a theological or dogmatic point of view, we must avoid any confusion between the psychological term of “will” and the metaphysical term of “freedom.” Freedom is the metaphysical foundation of the will. The will is also related to nature, it is subject to immediate needs and purposes. Freedom depends on spirit, on person. When freedom reaches its peak, it desires, freely, only the truth and the good. In its future fullness, when it takes on the image of divine freedom, then good and truth will fully correspond to its desire; this shows that truth is the act of freedom. (Evdokimov, 1996, pp. 80-81)

This is the supreme meaning of the paradoxical identification, at the celebrated Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (†1855), of subjectivity and truth, and which shows that truth is the act of freedom. For Kierkegaard, man, as a spirit that has its foundation in God, must be fulfilled by faith. However, when faith fails to root man in God, the disease of death arises i.e. despair. He distinguishes three fundamental types of despair: the despair of one who is not aware that he has a self; the despair of the one who does not want to be himself; the despair of the one who wants to be himself. From this analysis, Kierkegaard will deduce the “scandal of Christianity”: every man feels scandalized by this religion, because the Christian view of man is so extraordinary, so elated such that only the thought that it might be true frightens us. Christianity, concludes the Danish thinker, is a religion too noble for an ignoble being as man! (Søren Kierkegaard, 1998, p. 145)

## CONCLUSION

The problem of freedom, an essential condition of human nature, is such a thorny one, with “philosophical volutes” that, most of the times, gets frozen in aporia, because, through an exercise of autonomous thought – however developed –, man cannot harmonize his existential state with the most precious gift of freedom. From here, the agnostic or atheistic revolt or cries of despair of J.P. Sartre, E. Cioran or Fr. Nietzsche, who see in freedom simply a burden. Hence, it is doubtless that the contemporary, secularized man feels God as an enemy of freedom. In the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic we have the reference between Master and slave; Freud talks about the “sadistic Father” complex that incites to parricide; for Nietzsche, God is the “celestial spy” whose gaze embarrasses and reifies. The usual idea of the divine omnipotence and omniscience turns history into a puppet theater. Or, as a philosopher put it: “The drama is written until the last act and no actor can change it as little as possible.” Only God is free within this determinism and, therefore, He alone seems guilty of the existence of evil. “If God exists, I am free no more; if I am free God does not exist.” This is the atheistic syllogism spoken through the anarchist Bakunin or that of Jean-Paul Sartre. (Evdokimov, 1993, pp. 143-144). Even if we do not justify it, we can understand this reaction because the idea of God has suffered, throughout history, a frightening deviation. The terrible Old Testament’ Judge sacrifices his Son to chill out his anger; he is omnipotent, he manifests himself through rogueries and miracles; he is omniscient, he foresees and orchestrates the whole of existence through his historical interventions of a “providential” nature. But, according to Shakespeare, history seems to be “a fairy tale told by an idiot”. (Evdokimov, 1993, p. 144)

The true freedom of the human personality is revealed only in the frame of the divine revelation, which knows its climax in the Incarnation of the Divine Logos. The ancient world had not known personal freedom, but only public freedom. The different philosophical conceptions of freedom, but also different modes of manifestation over the time of it, have proved their precarious and ephemeral character only.

Man freely adheres to God. St. Maximus the Confessor develops the idea that our extension to God is peculiar to us, though it is accomplished through the Holy Spirit. Romanian great theologian Dumitru Stăniloae puts it so eloquently: “The Spirit is not mastered of any will of domination. He does not want to rule over any person, but he desires to free that from everything that limits and rules her so that she can activate all her powers, advancing in the infinity of divine life, in free and loving dialogue with Christ.” (D. Stăniloae, 1978, pp. 315-316)

If Christ achieved through His work of salvation, objectively the personalization of the human nature, and created the conditions that every human, in an actual manner, assert himself as a person, the Church – in relation to the whole world – is the space for the full manifestation of man.

The human person, in its horizontal dimension, is capable of encompassing all that is human; it is truly a person, *prosopon*, only through this unlimited openness of its being. But its hypostatic foundation is in the vertical dimension, in its theandric structure: “That Christ be formed in you” (Gal.

4:19), and man grows up to reaching “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephes. 4:13), only in this completely new creation, which develops in itself. The subject of freedom and of every form of knowledge is therefore never merely the man, but man as a member of the integrated Body in Christ, proving conspicuously that the nature of human consciousness is not at all individual, schismatically isolated, but a Catholic and theandric one. (Evdokimov, 1996, p. 83)

True freedom is the freely accepted “bondage of good”, of another's love, of love for another, of benevolent obligation to neighbor's love, to love of God, Who requires us to serve the good of others and our true good, for only in true freedom it is the real ministry. (D. Stăniloae, 1956, pp. 316-317). In preserving this freedom, which is equivalent with the bondage to God, the One who truly sets us free, St. Peter the Apostle urges us, by his famous exhortation: “Live as free people, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” (I Peter 2:16).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] ANTHONY, the Great, St., *Învățătură despre viața morală* (Teachings about the moral life), in: *Filocalia sfințelor nevoițe ale desăvârșirii* (Filokalia of holy labors of perfection), vol. 1, trans., introd. & notes by Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Harisma, București, 1992.
- [2] ARION, Pr. prof. univ. dr. Leon, *Dați-le voi să mănânce! Cuvinte de învățătură la Evangheliile duminicale și la unele Praznice Împărătești* (Give them to eat! Words of teaching at the Sunday Gospels and at some Royal Feasts), *Preface* by Nifon, Archbishop and Metropolitan, Parenesis, București, 2013.
- [3] BAȘTOVOI, Savatie, Libertatea înseamnă a nu avea piedici în calea dragostei (Freedom means not having obstacles in the way of love). See: [http://ramurainflorita.blogspot.ro/2008\\_11\\_01\\_archive.html](http://ramurainflorita.blogspot.ro/2008_11_01_archive.html)
- [4] BĂLAN, Corneliu-Dragoș, „Omul modern între libertatea creștină și libertatea filosofică” (The modern man between Christian freedom and philosophical freedom), in: *Analele Universității „Ovidius”, Seria Istorie*, vol. 3, 2006.
- [5] BERDIAEFF, Nikolai, *De la destinația de l’homme*, Paris, 1935. See also the Romanian translation: *Despre menirea omului. Încercare de etică paradoxală* (The Destiny of Man. Attempt at a Paradoxical Ethic), by Daniel Hoblea, Aion, Oradea, 2004.
- [6] —. *Spirit și libertate. Încercare de filosofie creștină* (Spirit and freedom. Christian philosophy attempt), Afterword by Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, trans. by Stelian Lăcătuș, Paideia, București, 1996.
- [7] BERGSON, Henri, *Cele două surse ale moralei și religiei* (The two sources of morality and religion), Institutul European, Iași, 1992.
- [8] —. *Eseu asupra datelor imediate ale conștiinței* (Essay on the immediate data of consciousness), 2nd edition, trans. by Diana Morărașu, The Collection „Eseuri de ieri și de azi”, *Introductory Study* by Anton Adămuț, Institutul European, Iași, 1998.
- [9] BUJOR, Ramona Elena, *Sartre – Un filosof al libertății umane* (Sartre - A philosopher of human freedom), Lumen, Iași, 2008.
- [10] COHEN, Paul M., *Freedom’s moment. An essay on the French idea of liberty from Rousseau to Foucault*, University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- [11] DAN, Clara, *Intuiționismul lui Henry Bergson în lumina contemporaneității* (Henri Bergson's intuitionism in the light of contemporaneity), Științifică, București, 1996.
- [12] DOSTOIEVSKI, F.M., *Frații Karamazov* (The Brothers Karamazov), Trans. and notes by Ovidiu Constantinescu and Isabella Dumbravă, Polirom, Iași, 2011.
- [13] EVDOKIMOV, Paul, *Iubirea nebună a lui Dumnezeu* (Crazy love of God), trans., preface & notes by Teodor Baconski, Anastasia, București, 1993.
- [14] —. *Ortodoxia* (The Orthodoxy), trans. from French by Dr. Irineu Ioan Popa, Arhiereu vicar (Bishop vicar), IBMBOR, București, 1996.
- [15] FLEW, Antony, *Dicționar de filosofie și logică* (Dictionary of philosophy and logic), 2nd edition, trans. by Drăgan Stoianovici, Humanitas, București, 1999.
- [16] GALERIU, Părintele; PLEȘU, Andrei; LICEANU, Gabriel; DUMITRESCU, Sorin, *Dialoguri de seară* (Evening dialogues), Harisma, București, 1991.

- [17] GALIȚ, Alexei, „Libertate și responsabilitate – puterea de a răspunde oricând chemării lui Hristos” (Freedom and responsibility - the power to respond to Christ's call anytime), in: *Libertate și responsabilitate. Inițiative și limite în dialogul religios* (Freedom and responsibility. Initiatives and limits in the religious dialogue), International Symposium (VIII-th edit.), Faculty of Orthodox Theology of Alba Iulia, May, 4-6, 2009, Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2009.
- [18] HEGEL, W.F., *Prelegeri de filozofie a istoriei* (Lectures on the philosophy of history), trans. by D.D. Roșca, Collection *Paradigme*, Humanitas, București, 1997.
- [19] HEIDEGGER, Martin, *Ființă și timp* (Being and Time), trans. by Gabriel Liiceanu și Cătălin Cioabă, Humanitas, București, 2006.
- [20] HERSCH, Jeanne, *Mirarea filosofică. Istoria filosofiei europene* (Philosophical wonder. History of European philosophy), trans. by Vasile Drăgan, Humanitas, București, 1993.
- [21] HUISMAN, Denis, *Dicționar de opere majore ale filosofiei* (Dictionary of major works of philosophy), trans. by Cristian Petru and Șerban Velescu, Enciclopedică, București, 2001.
- [22] JOHN, of Damascus, St., *Dogmatica* (Dogmatics), chap. XI: *Despre Paradis* (On Paradise), trans. by Rev. Dumitru Fecioru, 3rd edit., Scripta, București, 1993.
- [23] KIERKEGAARD, Søren, *Conceptul de anxietate (angoasă)*, Scrieri, I (*The concept of anxiety*, Writings, I), trans. from Danish by Adrian Arsinevici, Amarcord, Timișoara, 1998.
- [24] LAVELLE, Louis, *Traité des valeurs, I: Théorie générale de la valeur*, PUF, Paris, 1951; 1991.
- [25] —. *Les Puissances du moi*, Flammarion, Paris, 1948.
- [26] MADA, Teofan, *Comuniune existențială întreită la Părinții Capadocieni* (*Triple Existential communion at the Cappadocian Fathers*). <http://teofanmada.ro/publicatii/patristica/parintii-capadocieni/comuniune-existentiala-intreita-la-parintii-capadocieni/>
- [27] MAXIMUS, the Confessor, St., *Ambigua. Tâlcuiri ale unor locuri cu multe și adânci înțelesuri din Sfinții Dionisie Areopagitul și Grigorie Teologul* (Interpretations of places with many and deep meanings from the Saints Dionysius Areopagite and Gregory the Theologian), in: The Collection *PSB*, vol. 80, trans., introd. and notes by Dumitru Stăniloae, IBMBOR, București, 1983.
- [28] —. *Răspunsuri către Talasie* (The Responses to Thalassios), in *Filocalia sau Culegere din scrierile Sfinților Părinți care arată cum se poate omul curăți, ilumina și desăvârși* (The Philokalia or Collection from the writings of the Holy Fathers that show how one can cleanse, enlighten and complete), vol. 3, trans., introd. and notes by Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Harisma, București, 1994.
- [29] —. *Theological and polemical Treatises*, P.G., 91, 16 B.
- [30] MILL, J.S., *Despre libertate* (*On Liberty*), trans. by A.P. Iliescu, Humanitas, București, 1996.
- [31] REMETE, George, „Spiritualitate și consumism” (Spirituality and consumerism), in: *Altarul Reîntregirii*, X, 2005, no. 1.
- [32] SARTRE, Jean Paul, *Căile libertății II: Amânarea* (Paths of Freedom II: Postponement), trans. by Sanda Oprescu, Rao, București, 2000.
- [33] STĂNILOAE, Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru, „Starea primordială a omului în cele trei confesiuni” (The primordial state of man in the three denominations), in: *Ortodoxia*, no. 3, 1956.
- [34] —. *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*), vol. II, IBMBOR, București, 1978.



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## AGAINST THE FALLACY OF EDUCATION AS A SOURCE OF ETHICS

Spyridon I. Kakos (a)\*

(a) Ph.D., National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Athens, Greece,

E-mail: skakos@hotmail.com

### *Abstract*

For centuries, the major story of enlightenment was that education is and should be the cornerstone of our society. We try to educate people to make them respectable members of society, something which we inherently relate to being 'better persons', firmly believing that education makes humans less prone to evil. Today, modern research seems to validate that premise: statistics verify that more education results to less crime. But is this picture accurate and does this mean anything regarding morality per se? This paper tries to examine the facts with a more critical eye and determine whether education is indeed a source of ethics or not. The results of the analysis show that what we understand as education is not only unrelated to ethics but can also be a factor resulting in the degradation of morality in humans. Rousseau's arguments against science and arts are re-enforced with arguments stemming from other great philosophers and from modern experience itself. Using modern statistical analysis regarding the correlation of crime and education and through the examination of the modern regression in ethical issues, it becomes evident that education cannot and should not be a source of ethics. Knowing what is ethical is not as important as living an ethical life. Pharisees were the first to be denied the entrance to the kingdom of God. As Oscar Wilde once said, "Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught".

**Keywords:** education; enlightenment; ethics; morality; source of ethics;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Many people today postulate that philosophy is dead. That couldn't be further away from the truth. In fact, in today's era of enlightenment, we are more and more bombarded with certainties that only philosophy has the ability and the power to genuinely question. And this questioning of the obvious is what every free-thinking man should do, if only he wants to remain a free-thinking man. This paper will examine and deconstruct one of the greatest dogmas of modern society: That paideia (as expressed mainly through education) is the main prerequisite of a human being good (ethical) as a person and as a member

of society<sup>1</sup>. I will argue not only that education is not a prerequisite for an ethical living and is not related at all with ethics, but that there could be even a negative correlation between education and morality, as Rousseau once argued. Some of the vilest people in history were people with culture and paideia, while some of the most ethical men in human history were men with almost no trace of what modern society categorizes as education. All in all, the great stories of enlightenment are false; what we need as society is not more education but living according to ethical standards. And this can only be achieved through awakening people to wonder once more as Wittgenstein postulated. We need to rediscover the true source of ethics outside the shallowness of education and base our society on that. Only with solid foundations can we build a truly moral cosmos.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to determine the correlation between education and ethics and to determine the nature of this correlation. The results of this analysis will be used to provide an insight on the true source of ethics, a topic probed up to the depth allowed by the limited extent of this paper. This analysis is of great importance in today's society where education is the major – if not the only – tool used to cultivate young people, especially in the wake of the decreasing influence of religion in modern western societies.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The problem under analysis was examined with the help of two tools: Philosophy and statistics. The latter was the tool which provided evidence for the correlation of education and ethics. The former was the main tool used to determine the causality relationships – if any – between education and ethics. Through that analysis, philosophy provided the final critical views on the modern stories of enlightenment and proposed a way forward a more ethical society.

## **4. FINDINGS**

Examining the results of education is not an easy task, especially today where the benefits of education are so obvious for everyone that any hint of stating otherwise activates automatic reflexes of disagreement enhanced by decades of dogmatic thinking. Everyone today believes education is something inherently good; saying otherwise would be the same as doubting our own self who has grown to be educated and value education in others. However true philosophy has nothing to do with upholding the views of the many; most philosophers followed paths far away from what was considered as “obvious” for most people. The questioning of education started many years ago, from the age of Rousseau. Today, modern statistics of education seem to validate the intuition of the great philosopher: we have given too much trust to our mind and have forgotten what our heart cries out. More educated people are not more ethical per se, and vice versa: unethical people are not necessarily less educated. At the end, philosophy provides the way forward: the true source of ethics must be found in places which education currently blatantly ignores.

### **4.1 In the midst of enthusiasm, silent voices...**

In the midst of the enthusiasm instilled by the scientific progress from 17<sup>th</sup> century and onwards, few people paid any attention to some skeptical voices dimly spoiling the perfect notion of the new era of logos and progress. However, as history has taught us more than once, the majority of people was never good at grasping the essence of things when it comes to philosophy. In the desert forest of existence, it is the voices of the few standing aside silently that one should pay attention to. These few but important voices, tried to hint that the new direction of the European intellect might be wrong, nevertheless they were not enough to hold back the tide of change taking place in society back then. The modern era of “knowledge” was on the rise and science and education played an important role: Science being the tool through which knowledge was acquired, while education being the official tool which would transfer that knowledge to the masses. Knowledge was important for man to fulfill his potential as ruler of the cosmos,

---

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Dimitri Lalushi for his inspiration – through his through-provoking articles – for this paper.



an integral part of the anthropocentric philosophy which was first founded in Renaissance (Zabulionite & Monakhov, 2018). This was supposed to be the start of an 'enlightened' world, however as usual, phenomena deceived. Only a handful of people provided hints of some of the foundational problems of the new enlightened worldview.

#### **4.2. Blaise Pascal**

With the works of Galileo, Descartes, Bacon and De Groot, the new theoretical spirit of Europe grew to a glory of renewed puberty, a puberty that would grow into a full philosophical mature adolescence with Spinoza, Locke, Leibnitz and Newton later on. Only one person stood by the side of this river of enthusiasm, even though he could well be in the front lines; Blaise Pascal (Papanoutsos, 1978). Pascal spoke about the heart when all other people were astounded by the brain gaining new knowledge via science every day, spurring enthusiasm to all. At a time when logic was starting to gain ground as the basis of all progress, Pascal insisted on speaking of the irrational faith. His abstention from the general spirit of the times cannot be put more eloquently than himself: When other philosophers were too much involved into saying much, he claimed that "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone" (Pascal, 1670). And if something can be the sole characteristic of modern scientific era is the endless chatter of the possibilities of the (scientific) tools man has discovered. And this was exactly the reason one of the leading mathematicians of that time was unwilling to share the general enthusiasm of his peers.

*Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor illis*

*(They consider me a barbarian because they do not understand me) ~ Ovid*

#### **4.3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Just a year before the French Revolution outbreak, a revolution which helped spread the idea of education as the main solution to the problems of society, one of the greatest theorists of the revolution and at the same time one of the greatest critiques of modern 'cultivated' society passed away. Rousseau is known for many things, but one of the most important works he published was one essay against sciences and arts with regards to ethics. In this essay the philosopher was asked to speak for the relationship between science and ethics. And he did, but not in the way people thought he would. Instead of arguing that science and arts help people be more ethical, the renowned philosopher argued for the opposite. His main argument was that science (and knowledge acquired via science) not only does not make a man ethical, but to the contrary turns a man more unethical because it focuses on the analysis of knowledge and not on living an ethical life (Rousseau, trans. 2012).

Even though this seems like a radical opinion, the truth is that Rousseau was trying to pinpoint the obvious: When someone is too much focused on learning good manners, he is mainly focused on the surface of things and not on the essence of being actually what he learns about. Analyzing the characteristics of an ethical person not only does not make you an ethical person, but it also somehow draws you away from the effort you need to apply to actually become one. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's account against science and arts tried to point towards the evil which lies at the end of the path of knowledge for knowledge, the main motto of modern age. As with Pascal, no matter how eloquent the criticism of Rousseau was, his warning was not heard. The fury of the revolution and the enthusiasm of the new era of 'science and knowledge' was too intense to be disrupted by lonely voices of wisdom.

#### **4.4 Friedrich Nietzsche**

Well within the modern scientific age, one of the greatest philosophers of all time, Nietzsche was best known for his famous quote "God is dead" (Nietzsche, 1883). People around the world are using this quote as proof that the great mystic was an atheist, but the true meaning of the great philosopher's works was gravely misunderstood. The announcement of the death of God; a death which is solely the responsibility of humans, was not a cry of triumph but a grave warning. The God being dead was not a matter for celebration, but a matter to be concerned about. Papanoutsos was one of the few who pinpointed this discrepancy in our understanding of Nietzsche (Papanoutsos, 1978). Nietzsche's desperate cry of agony reflected his desperation for the new nihilistic godless era which humanity had to face. It is well known that Nietzsche was very much against science and its promise of a better world and also against logic and its utopia of understanding everything. (he was the founder of irrationalism anyway) However his warning was misinterpreted to a huge extent; as the writing of many other philosophers back

then; remember the way Wittgenstein's Tractatus was used to support a materialistic idea based on his calling for silence for the things we cannot talk about, while what he was trying to say that those things for which we cannot speak are the most important ones ("Ludwig Wittgenstein", 2018).

Nietzsche's main ideas were both anti-scientific and anti-rational, a typical product of the decadence of European culture and in general of the decadence of the philosophy which originated with positivism and culminated in the modern anti-intellectualism ("Nietzsche and Science", 1945). This decadence was a result of the failure of science to hold up on its promises<sup>2</sup>: It did not manage to solve the problems of mankind in the way it was supposed to. The new shiny "toy" of man had contributed nothing towards the solution of the great human problems, which had nothing to do with calculations or scientific models. This harsh truth is something we experience every day. Behind the thin veil of progress (another great story of enlightenment), the life today is in many ways crude, cold, harsh and – dare to say – more evil than it was hundreds of years ago. This inconvenient truth is what fueled the rise of irrationalism and the post-modern schools of thought which tend to criticize everything the man of the 19<sup>th</sup> century held in high esteem. Modern education is based on that science which Nietzsche criticized so intensively; the importance of this criticism will be more evident when we reach the problem of the source of ethics at the end of this paper.

## 5. ARE EDUCATED PEOPLE LESS EVIL?

When Rousseau spoke against science at the dawn of the science era, not even he could predict how right he would be proved to be. Back then, at the beginning of the 'enlightenment' era, no one could see the darkness hiding behind the hollow promises of a 'progressed' world based only on materialistic ideas. We now have the luxury of knowing better.

This modern era of progress and education not only does not seem to be any different than any previous era regarding the evil perpetrated the cosmos, but from some perspectives it even seems worse, a rather surprising result on its own. Despite any apparent epidemic progress in terms of education, crimes are still part of everyday life. Even though places like Europe and the US seem improved with regards to human rights and the behavior of the official states towards the weakest of their citizens, other side-effects of modern civilization blur the idealistic picture of modern society. The solution of many problems of modern societies happens at the expense of developing countries, a side-effect we like to ignore. Depression and psychological problems have been rising ever since we have "solved" all our problems, abortions even at latest stages of pregnancy are a 'human right' (Zamps & Gher, 2008) (just imagine the reactions to a medieval religious society killing inferior children), mass murders of women and children in the context of great wars with the use of advanced weapons<sup>3</sup> (again, imagine what modern people would say if in the split of a second a whole city was obliterated during a war in the Middle 'dark' Ages), eugenics as part of modern medicine in many 'civilized' countries well before Hitler (the United States and Sweden for example had advanced eugenics programs from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and those programs did not stop until very recently see Currell & Cogdell, 2006; Kevles, 1999), unethical medical experiments like the Tuskegee Study<sup>4</sup> ("U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee", 2015) are just some of the dirty little secrets of our modern polished society.

---

<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche also pointed out the failure of Christianity to solve the problems of mankind. As he eloquently put it "The first and last Christian died on the cross".

<sup>3</sup> And no, there is no way an honorable warrior would justify dropping a nuclear bomb to kill thousands of innocent children, women and elderly people so as to make the enemy surrender.

<sup>4</sup> In 1932, the Public Health Service, working with the Tuskegee Institute, began a study to record the natural history of syphilis in hopes of justifying treatment programs for blacks. It was called the "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male". The study initially involved 600 black men – 399 with syphilis, 201 who did not have the disease. The study was conducted without the benefit of patients' informed consent. Researchers told the men they were being treated for "bad blood," a local term used to describe several ailments, including syphilis, anemia, and fatigue. In truth, they did not receive the proper treatment needed to cure their illness. In exchange for taking part in the study, the men received free medical exams, free meals, and burial insurance. Although originally projected to last 6 months, the study actually went on for 40 years (U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee, 2015).

In other words, even though modern society is more educated in all accounts in relation to a medieval society, there are many issues which make the interpretation of that fact problematic: more education does not seem to have made us more humane. But what does the data say?

## 5.1 Going to the data: Does education reduce crime?

Leaving aside philosophy or subjective comments regarding the quality of modern civilization, it is important to see the facts. And this entails going to the hard data and try to see whether there is a pattern revealed that can help us determine if our perception of today's society is solid or not. This section will summarize some of the most important statistical findings regarding the correlation of crime and education and will try to shed some light on the underlying causes of this correlation. The results of this analysis seem to very much be in accordance with the concerns the three great philosophers mentioned in the previous chapter, regarding the true benefits of education and science in our modern world of progress.

### Negative correlations

In general, research regarding the effects of education on ethics is mainly related to the effects of education on crime, since the latter is the only actual measurable thing we can have in hand (it is difficult to measure how 'kind' a person is). Overall, statistics show that an increase in education (which usually means increase in schooling) results in a reduction of the probability for conducting a crime (which is usually interpreted as probability for incarceration in most researches).

Lochner and Moretti estimate that a one-year increase in average education levels in a state reduces state-level arrest rates by 11 percent (Lochner, 2008). Other data sources (based on arrest rates but also on self-reported crimes) reach similar conclusions: schooling significantly reduces criminal activity. According to other researchers, one extra year of schooling results in a .10 percentage point reduction in the probability of incarceration for whites, and a .37 percentage point reduction for blacks (Lochner & Moretti, 2004).

Machin estimates that a one-year increase in average schooling levels reduces conviction rates for property crime by 20-30 percent and violent crime by roughly one-third to one-half as much, though the latter estimates are statistically insignificant (Hjalmarsson & Lochner, 2012). Meghir found a negative effect of the Swedish compulsory schooling reforms on the likelihood of conviction (5% reduction) among males directly affected by the reform, while Buonanno and Leonida estimates suggest that a ten-percentage point increase in high school graduation rates would reduce property crime rates by 4 percent and total crime rates by about 3 percent (Hjalmarsson & Lochner, 2012).

Merlo and Wolpin estimate that, on average, attending school at age 16 reduces the probability of a black male ever committing a crime over ages 19-22 by 42 percent and the probability of an arrest over those ages by 23 percent (Hjalmarsson & Lochner, 2012). Data for men from the US Census of Population also suggest that incarceration rates are monotonically declining with education for all years and for both blacks and whites (Moretti, 2005).

The results above are pointing to one direction but they are not univocal. Some investigators deny the correlation at all and suggest that in some cases statistical results, even after controlling for measured family background and neighborhood characteristics, do not necessarily imply that education reduces crime (Hjalmarsson & Lochn, 2012). For example, Witte and Tauchen (1994) found no significant relationship between educational attainment and crime after controlling for a number of individual characteristics (Lochner, 2008). Last but not least, it is interesting that research has shown that in some cases there is even a positive (re-enforcing) correlation between education and crime<sup>5</sup>. Participation in terrorism and political violence is apparently unrelated, or even positively related, to individuals' income and education (Krueger & Maleckova, 2003). On the demand side, terrorist organizations may prefer educated, committed individuals. Well-educated individuals are better suited to carry out acts of international terrorism than illiterates because the terrorists must fit into a foreign environment to be successful (Krueger & Maleckova, 2003).

---

<sup>5</sup> Note that education may also lower the probability of detection and punishment or reduce sentence lengths handed out by judges. Mustard finds little evidence of the latter (Moretti, 2005).

## 5.2 Education-Crime causality analysis

As in any other similar case, the data say nothing per se. It is the interpretation of that data that needs our special attention and this interpretation highlights a picture which is far more different than the picture we want to believe in. Even though all the sources agree that education does reduce crime, there is an important question which needs answering: Why? Why does more education result in less crime? Is it because the person has become a better person? Is it because education increased his morality? Or is it because of other reasons unrelated to ethics? A deeper examination of the source of the observed decrease in crime for more educated people reveals an inconvenient truth: No matter what the cause is, it has nothing to do with making the people more ethical per se.

Theories suggest several ways that educational attainment may affect subsequent criminal decisions. First, schooling increases individual wage rates, thereby increasing the opportunity costs of crime. The punishment is likely to be more costly for the more educated, since incarceration implies time out of the labor market and since schooling increases wage rates (Lochner & Moretti, 2004; Moretti, 2005). Grogger estimated a significant negative relationship between wage rates and crime. However, he found no relationship between education and crime after controlling for wages. (Moretti, 2005).

Secondly, schooling may alter individual rates of time preference or risk aversion. That is, schooling may make people more patient and more risk averse, who would place more weight on the possibility of future punishments (Moretti, 2005) (Lochner & Moretti, 2004). Schooling may also affect individual tastes for crime by directly affecting the psychic costs of breaking the law<sup>6</sup>. (Lochner & Moretti, 2004)

Additionally to the above points, there is also the practical aspect. Keeping youth off the street and occupied during the day makes it difficult for them to commit crimes in the first place (Lochner & Moretti, 2004). Youth cannot be in two places at once, and many criminal opportunities are more limited in school than on the streets. (Moretti, 2005).

In summary, there are many theoretical reasons to explain why education reduces crime, reported by various researchers. What is important to note is that none of these reasons has anything to do with ethics per se. We live in a materialistic society and education serves nothing more than to guide humans towards using materialistic criteria in taking decisions. The elephant in the room is too big to ignore. In all the sources referenced in this section, there seems to be a consensus that the cause of the reduction in crime is related to anything except education making someone a 'better person' (i.e. more ethical).

## 6. ARE EVIL PEOPLE LESS EDUCATED?

The era of science and progress has given birth to two world wars and some of the most inhumane acts humankind has seen. When it comes to evil, the thought of modern people easily goes to the example of Hitler, the Nazis and their crimes. The genocide of the Jews and other "inferior races", the infamous death camps, the mass murders of captives are some of the things which make modern humanity still dream of nightmares when the night falls. World War II killed innocence in our mind and what is left – besides a great sense of guilt – are only shattered hopes for a better world. By examining some characteristic cases of this dark era, we will further strengthen the conclusion that being good has nothing to do with education.

### 6.1 German society before WWII and the evil of Nazism

The fourteen years of the Weimar era before the war were marked by explosive intellectual productivity. German artists made multiple cultural contributions in the fields of literature, art, architecture, music, dance, drama, and the new medium of the motion picture. The era of Weimar culture right before the advent of Hitler and the Nazis is often described as a Periclean Age, as a Golden Age for the arts, the culture and sciences in general (Schebera & Schrader, 1990; Panoutsopoulos, 2014). As a continuation of the deeply philosophical history of Germany from the time of Kant, Schiller and Goethe, the era of Wassily Kandinsky, Bertolt Brecht, Hermann Hesse, Arnold Schoenberg, Kurt Weill, Marlene

---

<sup>6</sup> This reason sounds like being related to ethics, yet it does not. One is not ethical because he is afraid of the cost of punishment.

Dietrich, Greta Garbo, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Albert Einstein, Erich Fromm, Sigmund Freud, Max Horkheimer, Carl Jung and Max Weber was a promising one. And yet, after many years, this golden age gave birth to monsters.

Even though the analysis of the causes behind this failure of the German society at that time is usually focused around the political circumstances, which are considered pivotal in the rise of the Nazis (Geiger, 2013; Grego, Lombardi & Mauceri, 2014), it would be absurd to claim that the people who made the 'Golden Age' of Weimar were different than those who made the atrocities of Hitler possible. With a simple search one can find great examples of intellectual men who supported the regime. The Nazis were not a special kind of people, but people who were part of society back then. As Hannah Arendt famously postulated, the Nazis were what we would call 'ordinary people' who just became evil due to circumstances. Circumstances which could reveal the evil into any other person. This banality of evil is the main characteristic of evil which modern man cannot grasp: There is nothing special into being a monster. Even the most cultivated people can be lured into the darkest unethical paths. That is how and why the place which gave birth to Kant and Schiller also gave birth to Mengele.

## **6.2 From Schiller to Joseph Mengele: Prime examples of negative correlation of ethics and education**

The case of Mengele deserves special attention. Not only because of the atrocities he committed, but also because of the extensive scientific coverage of his inhumane 'experiments'.

Mengele (a.k.a. "Angel of Death") was a trained doctor, something which by itself is a good argument against the correlation of science and knowledge with ethics. In 1935, Mengele earned a PhD in anthropology from the University of Munich (Kubica, 1998). In 1937, he joined the Institute for Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene in Frankfurt, where he worked for Dr. Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, a German geneticist with a particular interest in researching twins (Kubica, 1998), focusing on the genetic factors that result in a cleft lip and palate, or a cleft chin (Weindling, 2002). His thesis earned him a cum laude doctorate in medicine (MD) from the University of Frankfurt in 1938 (Allison, 2011). (his degrees were revoked by the issuing universities in the 1960s – see Levy, 2006)

He joined the Nazi Party in 1937 and the SS in 1938. He was assigned as a battalion medical officer at the start of World War II, then transferred to the Nazi concentration camps service in early 1943 and assigned to Auschwitz, where he saw the opportunity to conduct genetic research on human subjects. His subsequent experiments focused on twins, with little regard for the health or safety of the victims (Kubica, 1998; Astor, 1985).

Mengele is generally seen as a "lone lunatic" scientist dissecting prisoners alive for his own entertainment. Nothing could be further from the truth. The American author Robert Jay Lifton notes that Mengele's published works were in keeping with the scientific mainstream of the time and would probably have been viewed as valid scientific efforts even outside Nazi Germany (Lifton, 1986). Records have been unearthed that Mengele's work was supported by elite researchers attached to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics and Eugenics (Diver, 2005). You might know this institute as "Max Planck" institute today ("Max Planck Society", 2019), one of the most prestigious scientific institutes in the world.

In 1997 the Max-Planck Institute decided to fund research into its murky past. As the director of research for the project, Dr Heim, noted "It was formerly believed that scientists in Germany were oppressed by the Nazi regime, that there were only a few guilty people. But in truth, these doctors were in paradise" (Diver, 2005). For scientists who 'just' conduct research, the freedom to do anything can be intoxicating. And the example of Mengele's experiments is a great example of how research for the sake of research is not innocent, but to the contrary, pure evil by definition.

During World War II, Kaiser Wilhelm Institute regularly received human body parts from Josef Mengele to use in studies intended to prove Nazi racial theories ("Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics", 2018). Mengele's research was also used by other scientists and until very recently so (Diver, 2005). "Mengele was sort of set up", said Professor Robert Proctor, an American authority on Nazi science. "There was some very important whitewashing after the war. The leading philosophers and theorists of the Final Solution went free". The working group commissioned by the Max Planck Society reported that it had established direct links between leading

academic centers and Dr Mengele's laboratory (Karacs, 2001). Scientists whose research was somehow connected to the research of the Angel of Death include Verschuer, one of the world's leading human geneticists after the war, Butenandt, a pioneer of the contraceptive pill and Adolf Butenandt, whose work on sexual hormones and protein belonged to the greatest scientific breakthroughs in the 20th century (Diver, 2005; Karacs, 2001). Many of the scientists who collaborated with Mengele in his research made scientific careers in the Federal Republic of Germany after the war (Müller-Hill, 1999).

*Decipimur specie recti*  
~ Horace, *Ars Poetica*

## 7. CONCLUSION

As it is evident from the above, modern culture – expressed mainly via science and education as the main protagonists of enlightenment – has little to offer to ethics. Despite the huge progress in many fields of knowledge, we are still able to conduct the ultimate evil, if the circumstances allow it. The problem lies not with our education, but with our belief in it as source of ethics. Education today simply passes on knowledge based on the current norms, which are purely materialistic, and which change over time. But ethics cannot be built on quicksand. Shifting foundations usually mean that there are no foundations at all.

It is the actions which distinguish ethical men from unethical ones, according to Rousseau. And this is the heart of the problem: science and education are just ways to distract humans from their true ethical callings by placing too much emphasis on the analysis of what is ethical.

We may have not defined what the source of ethics is, but we have definitely defined what it is not. As Horace said, we have been deceived by the appearance of good<sup>7</sup>, and ever since we are driven by this deception into dark places while believing we are following the light. The only way to find our way back to morality is to stop trying to analyze it and start practicing it. The only way towards a moral life, passes first through the notion of living morally, while every attempt to understand ethics ultimately leads to the deconstruction of ethics through the fallacy of knowing. The post-modern era of criticism needs to stop criticizing and go back to a more 'primitive' and more genuine view of the cosmos beyond understanding and knowing. Morality is about living. Remember that the word of Jesus was accepted by simple fishermen. This, as any other point in Scripts, is not a detail to discard as trivial. As Rousseau said, a man cannot be truly ethical unless he lives by ethics. And at the end, this is the main teaching of Jesus: To live by the word of God, instead of just analyzing it and knowing it. Pharisees were too good at that. And yet, they were the first to be denied the entrance to the kingdom of God. As Oscar Wilde said, "Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught"...

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Allison K.C. (2011). Eugenics, race hygiene, and the Holocaust: Antecedents and consolidations. In Friedman, Jonathan C. *Routledge History of the Holocaust* (pp. 45–58). New York: Taylor & Francis.
- [2] Astor G. (1985). *Last Nazi: Life and Times of Dr Joseph Mengele*. New York: Donald I. Fine.
- [3] Currell S. & Cogdell C. (2006). *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s*. Ohio University Press. pp. 2–3.
- [4] Diver K. (2005). Network of top scientists helped 'Angel of Death' Mengele. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/mar/22/research.germany> at 2019-02-02.
- [5] Geiger W. (2013). Doomed to fail? The Weimar Republic in retrospect and from the view of Jewish periodicals. 16th World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/38207450/The\\_Weimar\\_Republic\\_in\\_retrospect\\_.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/38207450/The_Weimar_Republic_in_retrospect_.pdf) on 2019-01-2019.
- [6] Grego M., Lombardi A. & Mauceri S. (2014). *Germany: The Crisis of the Weimar Republic (Bachelor in Politics, Philosophy and Economics)*. Libera Università Internazionale Degli Studi Sociali.
- [7] Hjalmarsson R. & Lochner L. (2012). The impact of education on crime: International evidence. CESifo DICE Report 2/2012.
- [8] Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics. (2018). Wikipedia. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaiser\\_Wilhelm\\_Institute\\_of\\_Anthropology,\\_](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaiser_Wilhelm_Institute_of_Anthropology,_)

<sup>7</sup> “decipimur specie recti”, Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 25.

- [9] Human\_Hereditiy,\_and\_Eugenics on 2019-01-17.
- [10] Karacs I. (2001). Angel of Death Mengele was 'scapegoat' for horrors of Nazi science. The Independent. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/angel-of-death-mengele-was-scapegoat-for-horrors-of-nazi-science-9209390.html> on 2019-02-02.
- [11] Kevles, D. J. (1999). Eugenics and human rights. *BMJ*. 319(7207). pp. 435-8. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1127045/> on 2019-01-04.
- [12] Krueger A.B. & Maleckova J. (2003). Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 17(4). pp 119–144.
- [13] Kubica H. (1998). *The Crimes of Josef Mengele*. Gutman, Yisrael; Berenbaum, Michael. Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp (pp. 317–337). Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- [14] Levy A. (2006). *Nazi Hunter: The Wiesenthal File* (Revised 2002 ed.). London: Constable & Robinson.
- [15] Lifton R.J. (1986). *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. New York: Basic Books.
- [16] Lochner L. (2008). Education and Crime. In *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed.). University of Western Ontario.
- [17] Lochner L. & Moretti E. (2004). The Effect of Education on Crime: Evidence from Prison Inmates, Arrests, and Self-Reports. *American Economic Review* 94. pp. 155-89.
- [18] Ludwig Wittgenstein article. (2018). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/#TracLogiPhil> on 2019-01-07.
- [19] Max Planck Society. (2019). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max\\_Planck\\_Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Planck_Society) on 2019-01-17.
- [20] Moretti E. (2005). Does Education Reduce Participation in Criminal Activities?. Department of Economics of UC Berkeley.
- [21] Müller-Hill B. (1999). The blood from Auschwitz and the silence of the scholars. *Hist Philos Life Sci*. 21(3). pp. 331-65. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11197188> on 2019-02-02.
- [22] Nietzsche and Science. (1945). *Nature*. 156. p. 263. <https://doi.org/10.1038/156263c0>.
- [23] Nietzsche F. (1883). *Also sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* [Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None].
- [24] Panoutsopoulos G. (2014). *Science, technology and neoromanticism in the Weimar Republic* (Thesis). National Technical University of Athens and National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.
- [25] Papanoutsos, E.P. (1978). *Philosophical Problems*. Athens: Ikarus.
- [26] Pascal B. (1670). *Pensees*. Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18269/18269-0.txt> on 2018-12-26.
- [27] Rousseau J.J. (2012). *Ζαν Ζακ Ρουσσώ, Λόγος περί επιστημών και τεχνών* [Discours sur les sciences et les arts] (Tasos Betzelos Trans.). Athens: Nisos.
- [28] Schebera J. & Schrader B. (1990). *The Golden Twenties: Art and Literature in the Weimar Republic*. (Katherine Vanovitch Trans.). Yale University Press.
- [29] U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. (2015). Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm> on 2019-01-11.
- [30] Weindling P. (2002). The Ethical Legacy of Nazi Medical War Crimes: Origins, Human Experiments, and International Justice. In Burley, Justine; Harris, John. *A Companion to Genethics* (pp. 53–69). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756423.ch5>.
- [31] Zabulionite A.-K.I. & Monakhov V.M. (2018). The idea of culture: Kant’s boundary of reason as an imperative in the education of a modern person. *Вестник Томского государственного университета Культурология и искусствоведение*.
- [32] Zamps C. & Gher J.M. (2008). Abortion as a Human Right—International and Regional Standards. *Human Rights Law Review*. 8(2). pp. 249–294, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hrlr/ngn008>.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.42-48>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### ENS, VERUM AND BONUM. AQUINAS ON EPISTEMOLOGY AND ETHICS

**Augusto T. Werner**

\*Corresponding author

(a) University of Malaga, Bulevard Louis Pasteur 13, Malaga, Spain,  
E-mail: [augustotrujillowerner@gmail.com](mailto:augustotrujillowerner@gmail.com)

#### *Abstract*

This scholarship article explains how Thomas Aquinas understood the very beginning of the intellect both practical and theoretical in a person. a) On commencement of the abstraction of the first universal concepts: ens, verum et bonum simpliciter, universal or wisdom seeds. b) On formulating the first practical commandments, and the second ones in the integral person, in quantum talis, compound of real nature or essence, and act of being. c) Therefore, about the use of reason and morality, as general level «do (universal) good and avoid (universal) evil», as particular level «do (human) good and avoid (human) evil». d) The natural law (ethics) is naturally derived or concluded from integral human beings (anthropology).

**Keywords:** Aquinas; epistemology; ethics;

#### **1. 1.INTRODUCTION. THE INTELLECTUAL AND UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS: ENS, VERUM ET BONUM**

In his work it is affirmed, although Aquinas doesn't enter into detail regarding age, that only from a certain period onwards —months of life— it can be talked of intellectual apprehension of the universal ens (being), truth and good. In his philosophy the first concepts -also known as seeds of wisdom (S. Th. I-II, q. 63, a. 1, co)-, are only abstracted and formed after a certain stage of life, given that both a baby of few weeks of age (due to insufficient mental development) and an adult that suffers severe mental damages have their internal sensory powers –common sense, imagination, memory and cogitative-impeded from functioning correctly and producing the species sensibilis.

The use of reason depends in a certain manner on the use of the sensitive powers; wherefore, while the senses are tired and the interior sensitive powers hampered, man has not the perfect use of reason, as we see in those who are asleep or delirious. Now the sensitive powers are situate in corporeal organs (brain, hands, legs, etc); and therefore, so long as the latter are hindered, the action of the former is of necessity hindered also; and likewise, consequently, the use of reason. Now children are hindered in the



use of these powers on account of the lack of development of the brain; wherefore they have perfect use neither of these powers nor of reason (Sum. Theol. I, q. 101, a. 2, co).

Internal sensory powers are organic in the brain. They are necessary for rationality —although intelligence and will are inorganic powers—, given that the active intellect needs the species sensibilis over which it acts, illuminating and producing the species intelligibilis. Finally this species intelligibilis is received by the passive intellect, which produces the universal conceptio or simpliciter notion.

*In (this) state (...) in which the soul is united to a passible body, it is impossible for our intellect to understand anything actually, except by turning to the phantasms (...), because the intellect, being a power that does not make use of a corporeal organ, would in no way be hindered in its act through the lesion of a corporeal organ, if for its act there were not required the act of some power that does make use of a corporeal organ. Now sense, imagination and the other powers belonging to the sensitive part, make use of a corporeal organ (brain). Wherefore it is clear that for the intellect to understand actually, not only when it acquires fresh knowledge, but also when it applies knowledge already acquired, there is need for the act of the imagination and of the other powers. For when the act of the imagination is hindered by a lesion of the corporeal organ, for instance in a case of frenzy; or when the act of the memory is hindered, as in the case of lethargy, we see that a man is hindered from actually understanding things of which he had a previous knowledge (Sum. Theol. I, q. 101, a. 2, co).*

In this sense, he further adds that “human understanding, in the beginning, is [like a tablet, on which nothing is written] (Aristotle, De anima, III 4; 429b, 31), but, later, acquires knowledge through the senses by virtue of the agent intellect” (De Veritate, q. 18, a. 7, co). Lack of cognitive development means that the active intellect in the first weeks of his life, finds himself obnubilated and inoperative in act. Although external senses may be stimulated correctly by external sensations. V.g., baby moves his (or her) head toward a sound that attracts him, or correctly follows with his eyes the golden ball used by the doctor to check his sight. Nevertheless, the internal senses, caused by poor functioning of its organ, are not able to supply the species sensibilis to the active intellect, and as such this one cannot present anything to the passive intellect, which consequently cannot express any universal or simpliciter concept.

Hence, since it is necessary that moistness, especially in the brain, abound in children, and it is the brain in which imagination, natural judgment (cogitative), memory, and common sense have their organs, the acts of these powers must be particularly hindered, and, consequently, understanding, which receives something immediately from these powers, and turns to them whenever it is in act, must be hindered, too.

It is clear, therefore, that for Aquinas, during the first period of his or her life, the brain is still not sufficiently developed to present any species sensibilis to the active intellect. Continuing with the argument, the author clearly distinguishes between intellectual understanding of the first universal concepts: ens, verum, bonum, and the mere feeling of a person that, due to malfunctioning of brain - whether baby or person that entered adulthood with severe mental deficiencies- possess internal senses but is still not able to offer any species sensibilis to the active agent.

*A child is potentially understanding, not as though he has not yet the nature enabling him to understand, but as having an obstacle to understanding, since he is prevented from understanding (...).(Therefore there was some time when he didn't understand actively, but only in potency) he is not said to have the power of understanding because the possible intellect, which is the principle of understanding, can be joined to him, but because it is already in contact with him and is prevented from exercising its proper action; so that, upon the removal of the obstacle, he immediately understands.(Contra Gentiles, lib. 2 cap. 60).*

He does not understand in act because the passive intellect has not yet received any species intelligibilis from the active agent. Such persons are certainly capable of reactions, but it must be noted that they are purely sensory reactions. They are not intellectual apprehension nor are they driven by the will (De Veritate, q. 18, a. 8, ad 2).

It must be pointed out that the object of the intellect or reason is the nature, essence or quidditas of being (ens). The way of people know nature of ens is through senses and accidents as if they were doorways. For this, the reason it is called reason, because it is a discursive knowledge (Super Sent., lib. 3 d. 35 q. 2 a. 2 qc. 1 co). Furthermore, the operation of the intellect or reason is two-fold. One is apprehending nature or essence of beings. Other is producing first principles of intellect or reason practical or theoretical; composing (affirming) or dividing (denying) a sentence or precept, theoretical or practical (Expositio Peryermeneias, pr. 1). In this sense, it shall be argued that practical understanding as

theoretical reason have as object the truth. But theoretical reason involves the truth itself, while practical reason involves the truth ordered to the operation. Therefore, the good and fair truth should rule and govern human action, i.e., rational action.

Aquinas' concept of nature undoubtedly has Aristotelian roots, and he uses the concept of nature in his books on both physics and metaphysics. Since then there has been a legitimate use of the term nature in both empirical and metaphysical senses. As such, it can be affirmed that the concept of nature is analogical, which means that in each case the term nature is applied differently. Man possesses nature, animal possesses nature, plant possesses nature and stone that falls to ground also possesses nature. Therefore, it would be erroneous to categorise each of them in the same way and simply label all of them as possessing nature. Aquinas is always very clear on this point. Moreover, the natural doctrine means that all beings possess in themselves the principle of action, which implies autonomy. I.e. all substances by way of their respective natures possess intrinsic tendencies toward their own ends.

As such, nature adds to essence its aspect of movement and principle of action. In this sense, the concept of appetitus, just as that of nature, is also necessarily an analogical concept. So, the nature of every substance tends to its end and the appetitus will depend on the specific nature of each ens. Therefore, it would similarly be a grave error to gather all rational ens (with intellectual appetite or will) and irrational ens (without intellectual will) and put in all of the them identically the same label, appetitus. (S. Th, I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co).

## 2. THE NATURAL LAW

In light of this doctrine, it can be asserted that natural law presupposes a knowledge of nature in general and of human nature in particular. The enunciation of practical precepts of natural law are derived from the first universal, ontological and simpliciter concepts. Practical reason shall only produce them, naturally, as moral imperatives ordered to real actions -both universal "do good (general) and avoid evil (general)" and particular "do good (human) and avoid evil (human)- when intellect and will (of every person) already know and desire (or do not desire and avoid) in act the universal concepts of ens-no ens, true-false, good-bad and the concrete concepts of human good and evil. Which implies knowing and desiring the human nature and the human inclinations in quantum talis. This is to say, that natural law is also fruit of moral experience, "our understanding of principles, for that is very imperfect, come to us from nature and not because of our search for truth" (Contra Gentiles, lib. 3 cap. 37). Reason uses natural human tendencies -i.e., tendencies governed and a result of intelligence and will- as indicators, signalling to practical reason and will; upon which part of human nature they should focus to produce the precepts of natural law. And "it is as natural as it is befitting to the principles of human nature" (Sum. Theol. I, q. 99, a. 1. Co).

Using the analogy between the order of theoretical and practical truths, Aquinas determines the natural law as rational, as *ordo preceptorum*, because *ordo* necessarily implies rationality. For this, the natural law is the gathering of the first precepts desired by will and understood by practical reasoning of all people (with use of reason). The secondary precepts of the natural law are the precepts, necessarily, immediately and naturally derived from the first precepts, understood and desired by most of people. Hereafter, it will be shown how Aquinas related universal tendencies of each person with the first principles of natural law.

Hence this is the first precept of law, that 1st) "good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided." *All other precepts of the natural law are based upon this. (...) Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is (...) an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of 2nd) preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. (...) there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, [which nature has taught to all animals], such as 3rd)*

*sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth. (...), there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, 4th) to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination (S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co).*

This locus deals exclusively with the human beings in quantum talis, as a rational beings with human inclinations in quantum talis; i.e., ruled and governed by reason. “As, in man, reason rules and commands the other powers, so all the natural inclinations belonging to the other powers must needs be directed according to reason. Wherefore it is universally right for all men, that all their inclinations should be directed according to reason” (S.Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 4, ad 3). This supposes that human inclination refers to man in quantum talis, that which is genuine and specifically human, not the conception and inclination that a serial killer could have toward life of other people. Or sexual inclination that a paedophile, rapist could have with “the reason (...) perverted by passion, or evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature” (Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 94, a. 4, co).

Aquinas claims that a completely free man —given that who desires doing evil actions toward others, killing, raping, committing adultery, etc., is not entirely free, because, in certain sense, he is slave of his passions — is the man in quantum talis. This expression man in quantum talis or simply person makes reference to which is distinct, genuine and exclusive of human species. I.e., act according to intelligence and will, therefore in accordance with human nature; also, to act in accordance with those tendencies that are genuinely human: not to kill, rape, steal, etc.

God acts in everything in accordance to their nature; thus in natural things (animals like dolphins or dogs) he intervene giving them the power of acting determined by their respective natures (...). Nevertheless (in human beings) with free will intervene giving them the power of acting freely (right or wrong) (Super Sent., lib. 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1, ad 3).

In this sense, natural inclinations in quantum talia of a genuine individual in quantum talis are those that arise from his human nature. Inclinations of genuine human beings arise from their rational nature, which is the genuine form specifically human. I.e. the inclinations in quantum talia are naturally in accordance with the human nature and spring from the rational nature. This is the way by which people have their proper place in human species and these genuine tendencies belong to natural law. As is asserted in this text: “natural law belongs to those things to which a man is inclined naturally: and among these it is proper for man to be inclined to act according to reason” (S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 4, co).

It does not mean that: a) People who act voluntarily in an unethical way cease to be free persons or truly human, “the will stands undetermined in regard to many things, it is not under necessity in regard to everything but only in regard to those things to which it is determined by a natural inclination (first precepts of the natural law) (...). (Therefore) it can desire good or evil” (De veritate, q. 22, a.6, co). But it means that this particular person acting badly is not following which is natural and specifically human in quantum talis. In this sense is self-enslaving (John 8:34). “Any created will can degenerate in its act because come from nothing and therefore can deteriorate” (Super Sent., d. 39, q. 1, a.1, co ). b) Any tendency of any person driven or governed by practical reason —as good as it may be, being attracted to cure the wounds of injured people— belongs to natural law. Because there are free, rational and good people that do not feel naturally inclined to engage in these acts. c) A murderer, robber or rapist search their bad. For Aquinas, everybody search some good, but sometimes this good is evil disguised as good (Sum. Theol. I, q. 48, a. 3, co). A murderer seeks his good, on his own terms, to satisfy his anger. A robber seeks his good on his own terms, to satisfy his greed. A rapist seeks his good on his own terms, to satisfy his sexual appetite, etc. In summary, for a tendency to belong to natural law it must fulfil these two requirements: 1) being governed and being the result of practical reason and that 2) every person tends naturally to that good.

In this sense, for our author, the law, in this case natural law, is defined as “an ordinance of reason for the common good” (Sum. Theol. I-II q. 90, a. 4, co). Consequently, the essential part of natural law is that it is the product of practical reason ordered toward good —universal, not selfish and subjective good of any particular person, as we have seen before. This means that there is essentially no law without an order to good simpliciter, ontological or with transcendental property.

An erroneous definition of natural law would be define it simply as a natural instinct of any man. However, the true and fair definition of natural law is only the product of human reasoning as a precept of the intelligence of any person toward his ends. Consequently, it is wrong and unfair for Thomas Aquinas to confuse natural law with the inclination of any person. On the contrary, he maintains that natural law was the product of the practical reason of persons, directing actions and inclinations teleologically toward human end. Even though if natural law must govern human inclinations which are a very contingent matter. This is the ethical essence of people, given that “the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation of the eternal law” (S. Th. I-II, q. 91, a.2, co). Eternal law considers all creation acting and following its own end in order to the universal common good. Some beings rationally and freely, such as man, while other irrationally.

*With respect to the secondary precepts it must be said that the precepts of natural law —v.g., do not steal, do not kill or return which has been lent to you— are specific, and necessary, conclusions of practical reason derived directly from the first precepts. These secondary precepts are fair and good in most of the cases but can fail on occasions ( Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 94, a.4, ad.2).*

*Consequently we must say that the natural law, as to general principles, is the same for all, both as to rectitude (will, wanting) and as to knowledge (intellect). But as to certain matters of detail, which are conclusions, as it were, of those general principles, it is the same for all in the majority of cases, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge; and yet in some few cases it may fail, both as to rectitude(will, wanting), by reason of certain obstacles (...), and as to knowledge (intellect), since in some the reason is perverted by passion, or evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature; thus formerly, theft, although it is expressly contrary to the natural law (i.e., toward a second precept of moral natural law, not toward a first one), was not considered wrong among the Germans (...)* (Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 94, a. 4. Co).

There is a natural moral limit that may not be transgressed. At the most, the errors in of understanding and volition would be related to the second precepts of the natural law, never respect to the first precepts. With respect to these first precepts, not even the intellect could be deceived, nor will desire them, irrespective of how much pressure is placed on them by lower appetites. However, respect to the goods of secondary precepts of natural law, although the will is an immaterial and spiritual power, could be influenced and to accept what lower passions, of the very same person, offer her. Then, the will reaches that the intellect only focus on the positive aspects that the evil action has. The universal inclinations exclusively occur as a consequence of an intellectual process which orders that persons incline towards the universal goods. It can happen that a particular man chooses to act against an universal good, this is because persons are naturally free and responsible for their actions. Even so, human beings always have to seek good under any aspect, sub specie boni; because if not, they would not pursue it neither voluntarily nor guiltily. For example, someone who commits suicide to stop suffering or a particular man who kills his own daughter (filicide) to satisfy his hatred against her mother

*But in our own case that which causes motion as a desirable good differs from that which causes motion as an intelligible good, though each causes motion as an unmoved mover. This is particularly evident in the case of an incontinent person; for according to his reason he is moved by an intelligible good, but according to his concupiscible power he is moved by something pleasant to the senses, which, while it seems to be good, is not good absolutely but only with some qualification.—However, this kind of difference cannot be found in the first intelligible and the first desirable good. But the first intelligible and the first desirable good must be the same. The reason is that a concupiscible good, which is not an intelligible good, is merely an apparent good; but the first good “must be an object of will,” i.e., an object desired by intellectual appetite. For will belongs to the intellectual order and not merely to that of concupiscible appetite. And this is so because what is desired by the concupiscible power seems to be good because it is desired; for concupiscence perverts the judgment of reason (sensitive appetite always follows the judgement of practical reason) insofar as something pleasant to sense seems to be good to reason. But what is desired by intellectual appetite is desired because it seems to be good in itself. For “understanding” as such, i.e., the act of intellection, which is moved in a way by an intelligible object, “is the principle of desire.” Therefore it is evident that the object of concupiscible appetite is good only when it is desired through a dictate of reason. Hence it cannot be the first good, but only that which, because it is good, moves desire and is at once both appetible and intelligible (so the intelligible good) (Sententia Metaphysicae, lib. 12, l. 7).*

With respect to synderesis, it should be indicated that, for Aquinas, it is the natural habit quasi innatus that reminds to reason the precepts of natural law (De veritate, q. 16, a. 2, co), which are the principles of practical reason (De veritate, q. 16, a. 1, co).

a) Conscience is the act of practical reason, b) natural law is more precisely the fructus of practical reason c) and the habit of first principles of natural law is the synderesis. Synderesis asserts universally the precepts of natural law, whilst conscience establishes which must be realised or omitted in each particular case. Therefore, synderesis cannot fail, because, it cannot get confused by any passion (Super sent, lib. 2, d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad 1). But the conscience can fail in applying the general rule to the particular case or conclusion. The synderesis knows the first principles of natural law when practical intellect produces them. So, the potency goes before its habit. Synderesis saves and reminds the first principles to practical intellect when it goes in search of them. "Synderesis is said to be the law of our mind, because it is a habit containing the precepts of the natural law, which are the first principles of human actions" (Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2).

The natural law appears unclear and complicated but at the same time attractive and desirable for the motive that the practical reason more than participating in the divine understanding, participates in the divine will. Because of this, natural law is complex to understand but easy to desire it. If synderesis is the habit of the practical intellect, similarly, intelligence is the habit of the speculative intellect when we understand something. V.g., an arithmetic or moral rule can be conserved despite of thinking only occasionally about it. Although "those in whom the imaginative, cogitative, and memorative powers are of better disposition, are better disposed to understand" (Sum. Theol. I, q. 85. a. 7, co).

### **3. HUMAN NATURAL LAW NATURALLY CONCLUDED OR DERIVED FROM THE INTEGRAL ONTOLOGY**

Bonum coincides with ens, however, the concept of bonum adds to ens a relationship with appetite. Bonum formally refers to good operations according to nature of real ens to which it is always connected. Ens which supposes a bonum (human perfection) is not only human nature, nor is only (act of) being, nor the sole operations, but rather ens that supposes a bonum is, above all, a requirement of practical reason, which knowing itself and knowing other beings naturally produces the natural law, which is a participation of the eternal law in rational creature. Therefore, it is practical human intellect that knowing its own rational human nature, knowing the nature of other creatures, knowing its own tendencies and aptitudes, produces naturally and necessarily a practical judgement or precept of natural law that implies a self-perfection. This occurs because people intrinsically possess an (act of) being, a human nature, and some operations in search of their own good, perfection and end. This operations pursuit to transmit and communicate their own perfection or actuality according to natural law.

It is important to highlight that the only beings that freely demand an end are the rational beings; nevertheless this status implies naturally some freedoms and responsibilities. Sui generis, irrational beings like cats, worms or apple trees as well seek to realise their end, not completely free but determined by their respective natures. Freedom and responsibility in the rational being are substantially joined because man is naturally, by his will, self-determining and arbiter of his own actions and as such not only free, with rights, but also responsible for his own actions.

Moral good is radically initiated in the act of being of person given that, he is an immortal ens, although his essence or nature is composed of form and matter. His form is such that it is not simply substantial form of material body (quod), but also, at the same time, spiritual. It can act separately from matter (quo), and therefore it is universally open to the ontological good. *It must necessarily be allowed that the principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul, is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent. For it is clear that by means of the intellect man can have knowledge of all corporeal things. Now whatever knows certain things cannot have any of them in its own nature; because that which is in it naturally would impede the knowledge of anything else. Thus we observe that a sick man's tongue being vitiated by a feverish and bitter humour, is insensible to anything sweet, and everything seems bitter to it. Therefore, if the intellectual principle contained the nature of a body it would be unable to know all bodies. Now everybody has its own determinate nature. Therefore it is impossible for the intellectual principle to be a body (...). We must conclude, therefore, that the human soul, which is called the intellect or the mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent ( Sum. Theol. I, q. 75, a. 2, co).*

In this sense, moral good formally refers to free and human operations, according to their ultimate end which they must necessarily search, “Good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided” (Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co) . It should be observed that physical good, which is the good that physical agents search (physical or natural agents in the sense of irrational), is much less than that free agents search. Even though bonum is initially in the (act of) being and (essence or) nature of these irrational beings their operations are very limited, given that these beings are not able to apprehend intellectually the concept of ultimate end.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded indicating that Aquinas’ human ethics is a natural consequence of his ontology (anthropology, epistemology), particularly the concepts of being (ens) and good (bonum) in man. The only legitimate sense of the concept human nature —when he writes about natural moral law— is the metaphysical, teleological, and free one. Thus, the natural moral law is essentially metaphysical as the concept of human nature is.

Further, if nature is conceived only in a material sense, as biological or physical nature; it must be affirmed that man does not possess such nature. Given that, man has specific and genuinely a rational nature. He is, above all, a rational and free being, which can be all things (quodammodo omnia) by his intellect (Sum. Theol. I, q. 16, a. 3 co).

Nevertheless, if nature is conceived in a metaphysical sense, as principle of operations, every being possesses a nature or essence, which specifies its genuine way of being and acting. In this sense, man does possess a human nature, that is, a free and rational nature. Furthermore, a person who has never reached the age of reason, not because of it should be considered less man. As, he possesses in this life, naturally, an intelligence and will open to infinite.

Inclinations of human nature are ordered hierarchically where the most important ones are those that distinguish man from other species. He is the most perfect being of earth by his rational nature (Sum. Theol. I, q. 29, a. 1, co). There is in him some inclinations to good (bonum) corresponding to his rational nature. V.g., his natural inclination to seek the truth and to live in society. Therefore, man can move himself to seek his own good, moral perfection and rational end. “Do and pursue good ( intellectum and universal), and avoid the contrary” (Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 94, a.2, co).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Aquinas, T. Summa theologiae. Vol. 4-12 Roma-París: Leonina, 1888-1906
- [2] Aquinas, T. Scriptum super libros sententiarum. Vol. 1-4, 7/2 Parma: Mandonnet, 1858-1956
- [3] Aquinas, T. Summa contra gentiles. Vol. 13-15 Roma-París: Leonina-Vrin, 1918-1930
- [4] Aquinas, T. Questiones disputatae de veritate. Vol. 22 Roma-París: Leonina, 1970-1976
- [5] Aquinas, T. De ente et essentia. Vol. 43 Roma – París: Leonina, 1976
- [6] Aquinas, T. Questiones disputatae de malo. Vol. 23, Roma-París: Leonina, 1982
- [7] Aquinas, T. Questiones disputatae de potentia. Roma: Marietti, 1965
- [8] Aquinas, T. Questiones disputatae de virtutibus in communi. Vol. 2 Roma: Marietti, 1965
- [9] Aquinas, T. De principiis naturae. Roma: Marietti, 1954
- [10] Aquinas, T. Sententia libri Ethicorum. Vol. 47, 1-2 Roma-París: Leonina, 1969
- [11] Aquinas, T. Sententia super libros de sensu et sensato. Vol. 45, 2 Roma: Leonina, 1985
- [12] Aquinas, T. Sententia super metaphysicam. Roma: Marietti, 1971
- [13] Aquinas, T. In Aristotelis Libros Peri Hermeneias et Posterium Analyticorum. Taurini: Marietti, 1964



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### THE IMPLICATIONS OF WITTGENSTEINIAN CRITICISM OF CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS FOR THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Kadir Kılıç

\*Corresponding author

(a) Boğaziçi University, 1653th Street, 27/1, Bağcılar, İstanbul, Turkey,

E-mail: [kadirkilic1045@gmail.com](mailto:kadirkilic1045@gmail.com)

#### *Abstract*

I argue that Wittgenstein's criticism of conceptual analysis sheds light upon methodological issues concerning the ontological argument. Though Sidiropoulou provides a Wittgensteinian analysis of the ontological argument, nobody has yet pointed out how methodological insight from Wittgenstein's rejection of conceptual analysis provides the ground for Wittgensteinian analysis of the ontological argument. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein defends that the idea of language games provides tools for the rejection of a unified conception of meaning in language, and thus of the thesis of conceptual analysis that meaning analysis is formed by necessarily true statements. His arguments for family resemblances attack to the idea of conceptual analysis that meaning analysis is in the logical form of a biconditional which is universally quantified. Wittgensteinian points on first-/third person asymmetry is to reject the idea in conceptual analysis that meaning is analyzed a priori by the apparatuses of logic. All this discussion is applicable to questions concerning the evaluation criteria of the ontological argument. Firstly, when the Christian-Medieval language game is characterized on the basis of its function and grammar, how conceptual analysis of God and analysis of statements like 'God exists' in an ontological argument, in isolation, goes wrong is clarified. Secondly, since this religious language game is dissimilar to descriptive/factual language game in the sense that the function of the former is not to describe any fact, rather it is the avowal of faith; the application criteria for sentences in the form 'x exists' are not the same with that. Thirdly, similar to pain-language game, it requires a community to make sense the meaning of God, thus forms of life are prioritized. The implication is that, in a Wittgensteinian framework, an interdisciplinary methodology should be followed to evaluate the ontological argument that does not make any sense in abstracto.

**Keywords:** Anselm; conceptual analysis; language game, meaning; ontological argument; Wittgenstein;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The relation between Wittgenstein's rejection of conceptual analysis and evaluation of the ontological argument has not yet been figured out in a clear way, even though these issues are separately discussed in the literature. The main argument of this paper will concern this gap: When three theses of conceptual analysis (in the working model of this method that I will briefly present) are rejected in a Wittgensteinian way, analysis of the ontological argument in abstracto, by conceptual analysis of the concept God and statements like 'God exists', is also rejected and an interdisciplinary method is implied. This gives priority to forms of life to grasp function and meaning of such utterances. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein points out problems of conceptual analysis or provides theoretical apparatuses for such criticism. The former is not explicit in general, and thus I will discuss secondary literature on that topic when it is needed. This discussion will be in three points: (1) arguments about language games will reveal that Wittgenstein's direct criticism of a unified picture of language implies a rejection of the first thesis of conceptual analysis that suggests universally quantified biconditional form in meaning analysis; (2) the idea of family resemblances (as briefly discussed) that is against the conception of meaning analysis by necessarily true statements amounts to a rejection of the second thesis of conceptual analysis; (3) first-/third person asymmetry that points out how criteria of evaluation change according to language games even if the logical form of a sentence is fixed implies that analysis is not knowable a priori, and this is contrary to the fourth thesis of conceptual analysis. These are results of Wittgensteinian framework, and concerning the aim and limits of this paper, language games, family resemblances and first-/third person asymmetry could not be exhaustively justified in this paper. However, motivations and some arguments for them are mentioned. This constitutes the first part of the paper. The second part will concern the application of these methodological discussions (the second point is not applicable to the ontological argument, but this is mentioned briefly in the paper to see as far as Wittgensteinian criticism of conceptual analysis can be extended to and clarified) to see how the ontological argument can be evaluated within a certain religious language game, when conceptual analysis is rejected in a Wittgensteinian way. After briefly mentioning different formulations and controversies of the ontological argument, I will attempt to characterize Medieval-Christian discourse as a religious language game. This will be followed by analyzing the sentence 'God exists' as part of this language game by comparing and contrasting it with pain language game and factual language game. The conclusion will be that intelligibility of this statement totally depends on religious language game that is strictly bounded with a certain community of believers and the priority should be given to form of life in any analysis of the ontological argument within Wittgensteinian paradigm. This is against a priori analysis that determines the criteria of applicability of a term by definitions which are not dependent upon any believer- if it depends on believers, it could not be done with forming necessary statements. The conclusions from this case exemplify the main argument of this paper concerning relations between Wittgenstein's rejection of conceptual analysis and evaluation of the ontological argument.

## 2. WITTGENSTEIN'S CRITICISM OF CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Conceptual analysis can be generally characterized as the conjunction of the following four theses: Conceptual analysis is meaning analysis that is (1) in the logical form of a biconditional which is universally quantified, (2) formed by necessarily true statements, (3) informative, and (4) knowable a priori (Daly, 2010). This is roughly stating Moorean analysis, and I will discuss this kind of analysis- though all variations of philosophical analyses do not have to accept these four qualities (Daly, 2010). Concepts' being analyzable by paraphrase within biconditional statements presupposes that meaning occurs in a language as unchangeable formulas of concepts over and above the use of language, and so any word gets its meaning independently of utterance (Hacker, 1996). Wittgenstein argues against this assumption in *Philosophical Investigations* by the idea of language-game.

Wittgenstein (2009) regards language-game as "the whole, consisting of language, and the actions into which it is woven" (Wittgenstein, 2009, 7- page reference is not much preferred for *Philosophical Investigations*, I will follow the numbering of the book in place of page numbers where the abbreviation of this book occurs as PI). Here, an action is directly related to meaning, for example, utterance of a sentence determines its meaning and utterance is always requires an agent who mentions and a context which is mentioned. "The technique of" using a sentence in question form might mean a command rather



than a question, as he exemplifies (PI, 2009, 21). Take, for example, (A): “Are you listening to me?” and the context that a teacher implicitly reminds the student his/her task. Then this sentence has “the function of” command (PI, 2009, 21). This is a case of command-language-game that takes (A) as a cautionary command, whereas another context might make the teacher play question-language-game that takes the function of (A) as a question requiring a Yes/No answer. Examples of many different language games are given by Wittgenstein: giving orders, description of how an object appears, reporting of an event etc. (PI, 2009) This investigation makes clear that a language game is not a fragment of a given language, but a way of using a certain fragment of language (Wolterstorff, 2005) with each having a distinct “grammar” (PI, 2009, 373). The grammar of a language game sets the conceptual structure of a language game (Sidiropoulou, 2009), it “tells what kind of object anything is” (PI, 2009, 373). For example, in a sensation-language game, talking about the duration of sensation is ‘grammatical’, but the taste of sensation is ‘ungrammatical’ - in other words correct/incorrect application of a rule of this language game. Therefore, according to Wittgenstein, a word/sentence gets its sense only by the utterance of a particular language game that has its own internal standards of use (Pears, 1971).

If language is taken as a whole having words as common factors for words/sentences over all language games, any division of meaning that I mentioned can still be taken as variations of common factors according to contexts (i.e. various uses of the word ‘true’) for a particular language. This weakens Wittgenstein’s argument, because it is in favour of the idea that there is meaning as abstracted from its usage despite language games. I will try to formulate a Wittgensteinian argument against this supposition by making use of Saussure (1959)’s analogy of chess (Saussure, 1959). In *Course on General Linguistics*, Saussure makes an analogy between chess and language. Imagine you have a pawn made of wood and you try to get what it means to be a pawn. Outside of playing chess, it is merely a strange thing made of wood that has a certain shape. All the possibility of its moves, the function of it, is defined by its interrelations to other pieces in a game, for example a pawn cannot capture the opponent’s pawn by a forward move. According to Saussure, similarly, any word gets its meaning in language by how it relates to other words (Saussure, 1959). I think Wittgenstein takes Saussure’s picture of language into pieces in a way that language loses its unifying feature for different language games, despite his use of a similar metaphor at three places (PI, 2009; 65, 108, 136) in *Philosophical Investigations* (that I will explain). He says the following:

Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I’m saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, - but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all “language”

(PI, 2009, 65)

Different language games, like games (i.e. soccer, chess etc.), have some similarities to certain ones, for example ball is used in soccer and in basketball, and they also have some differences. Some groups of games having significant similarities create “family resemblances” (PI, 2009, 67) according to Wittgenstein. However, it is wrong to say that all games have one common factor in virtue of which they are called as game for Wittgenstein. Similarly, language games are under the category of language only by some network between those games (PI, 2009). Therefore constructing ‘language’ as determining the sense of words over language games is not a plausible move for Wittgenstein. The usage of a term in contexts of different language games have some differences and similarities to each other, but no unifying meaning for them is in question in this framework. Determination of the meaning of terms like language is via specifying the interrelations between the instances of a general term that do not have certain qualities applicable to instances, contrary to the first thesis of conceptual analysis that suggests necessary qualities on the meaning-side of a biconditional that are applicable to all instances of that term. For instance, the definition of proposition cannot be understood as something above and independent of all language games according to Wittgenstein. An investigation of the role of propositions in language would exemplify this. Firstly, similarly to Saussure’s analogy, Wittgenstein says that: “The question ‘What is a word really?’ is analogous to ‘What is a piece in chess?’” (PI, 2009, 108). This means that a word is a word only according to its role in a particular language game. It gets a sense or it is senseless, only in a particular language game. Take the definition of proposition as a statement that can be either true or false. Is it a general definition that we can use independently of language games and so make use of in conceptual analysis? According to Wittgenstein, the first problem is that, it presupposes that we know

what 'true' and 'false' is to determine whether a statement is a proposition or not (PI, 2009), and thus the criteria of truth in a language game. This definition of proposition is similar to the definition of the king in chess as the piece that one can check (attacking directly to the opponent's king by your piece). The function of king as such is one "constituent part of this game" (PI, 2009, 136). Truth and falsity are also constituent parts of factual language game, apart from this game, the term proposition does not make sense (PI, 2009)- this issue will be elaborated later much more than here. This conception of language games goes against to the second thesis of conceptual analysis because language games have dynamic and rich structures, grammars. Thus the meanings of a word in different language games do not always overlap with each other, and so they cannot be made sense by necessarily true statements.

A sentence gets a different meaning by its place in different language games without changing its form in Wittgensteinian analysis. Hacker (1996) gives examples for this concerning "first-/third-person asymmetry" (Hacker, 1996, p. 26). Consider sentences in the form of 'A has B' and rewrite it as follows (F: x has b):  $P = 'F(AB)'$ . If I take tokens of this sentence as P1: 'I have a pain' and P2: 'He has a pain', these sentences refer to different meanings. P1 is the expression of what is inside me, but P2 is a description (Hacker, 1996, p. 26). Moreover, if I take P3 as 'I have a pin', this also relates to quite a different sense. Indeed, the rules of application of the grammar are different for P1 and P3 (Hacker, 1996). Qualitative identity and numerical identity do not apply to P1, but applies to P3; since P3 is a sentence of thing-language game, whereas P1 occurs in a sensation-language game. This is why whereas the pin is identical over belonging to him or me, this is not the case for pain. Therefore, in a Wittgensteinian analysis, translating from sensation-language game into thing-language game (and vice versa) is not justified, since their grammar are different and a common treatment to all sentences in the form 'F(AB)' is not possible. This means that the fourth thesis of conceptual analysis that meaning is analyzed a priori by the apparatuses of logic is rejected, since the same logical form gets radically different meanings in different language games and more than that those so-called 'tokens' get these meaning only by language games.

### 3. ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT IN RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE GAME

Ontological argument was firstly presented by Anselm in Proslogion. He takes God as the being than which nothing greater can be conceived (take it as a G). His one and many modern or recent defence of the argument focuses on the formal validity of the argument. My rough reformulation of Anselm's ontological argument in Proslogion is the following- for the purpose of illustration, indeed a clear formulation is not needed for this paper:

1. God is the being than which nothing greater can be conceived (G)
2. G exists either in the understanding alone or in reality
3. If God exists in the understanding alone, God is not G.
4. It is greater to exist in reality than to exist in the understanding alone.
5. God exists (St. Anselm, 2000)

Descartes presents the argument within a different methodology and with different terms, but a similar idea is observable in Meditations. Again, my rough reformulation of it is in the following:

1. I find in my thought the idea of God (=a supremely perfect being)
2. I clearly and distinctly perceive that God's nature includes his always existing.
  - 2.1. (the idea of) God is (the idea of) a being who possesses all perfections.
  - 2.2. Existence is a perfection.
  - 2.3. The essence of God necessarily involves existence.
3. God exists (Descartes, 2008)

Kant criticizes these arguments on the basis of his idea that all existential propositions are synthetic (Kant, 1998). Russell points that existence is not a property of proper names (Russell, 2010). Alston discusses it in terms of whether existence is a predicate (Alston, 1960) and Plantinga tries to reformulate it without making use of existence's being a predicate (Plantinga, 1966). Plantinga's attempts are motivated by the methodological basis of conceptual analysis (of the concept God) that would amount to find a definition of God in a biconditional form, as a necessary statement, universally quantified in a way that it is applied to only one being etc. The problem of such attempts is firstly methodological from a Wittgensteinian viewpoint. They accept that there is a definition of God over and above all language

games and the main problem is the formal validity and truth of premises of a certain ontological argument. But, how does the concept God as a G get its sense without any language game it is uttered? An investigation of Christian-Medieval religious language game (call it as religious LG shortly) will provide insights for what the direction of discussion for the ontological argument should be within a Wittgensteinian framework.

Religious LG, like other ones, has its own internal standards and grammar. Its standards regard its use and function in ordinary human life. As Wolterstorff (2005) interprets the Wittgensteinian point that the most remarkable function of religious LG is expressive function. Those expressions become senseless in the mouth of a non-religious person or in a different context that one is uttered. Wolterstorff (2005) points that, in Wittgenstein's understanding, there are two defining features of religious LG: (1) The utterance of words when playing religious LG originates from one's arriving at "valuational interpretation" (Wolterstorff, 2005, p. 258) and (2) This valuational interpretation of one's experiences religiously is by the means of totality of religious practices and also playing this religious LG is one part of those practices. This interpretation and expression in turn is made possible by learning language in a particular religious community (Wolterstorff, 2005). Like all other language games, by this function mentioned above, religious LG has its own grammar for evidence, truth, fact, justification etc. For example, in factual language game, a relevant historical proof gives evidence for or against to certain belief you hold. However, this is not the case for religious LG, because from a Wittgensteinian point of view, the function of religious LG is not to describe the world (Wolterstorff, 2005). As Pears (1971) says that: "Religious propositions do not even purport to express factual possibilities, their meaning . . . is to be gathered from their place in human life" (Pears, 1971, p. 119). Moreover, there is no support from reality for the ground of religious LG like other language games other than human life.

The point that the phrase G is preceded by the form of religious life is argued by Sidiropoulou (2009) on the similarity of religious LG to pain language game, and its dissimilarity to thing language game. I will reformulate her argument to support my claim. She argues that 'God exists' gets its sense through its being "avowal of faith" (Sidiropoulou, 2009, p. 145) within religious LG rather than being a descriptive statement. She compares different language games through these sentences:

- (1) God exists
- (2) A chair exists in my study
- (3) Pain (sensation/inner experience) exists

As I mentioned in the first part of the paper, though the logical form of these sentences is the same, their criteria of evaluation, and indeed, their meaning, changes depending on the language game in which they are uttered. The difference between (1) and (2) is that (i) there is clear criteria to evaluate the truth of (2), but not of (1); (ii) the meaning of (2) does not depend a subject who accepts that it is true, but the sense of (1) cannot be separated from religious practices and attitudes toward the divine within a Wittgensteinian framework (Sidiropoulou, 2009). So, just like saying that 'there is a pain in my arm', saying (1) cannot have any meaning independently of a subject saying this (Sidiropoulou, 2009). Another similarity between (1) and (3) is about how these sentences relate to reality. Chair is understandable in language by the resemblance between the pictorial symbol of chair [Bild] and the object chair. This is not the case for pain, it is signified in our ordinary language not based on any resemblance (not Bild but Vorstellung) (Sidiropoulou, 2009). As Sidiropoulou (2009) says that:

" . . . if it [pain] is Bild, there must be a linear projection between pain as inner experience and a meaningful word in language; it cannot be so, because the meaning of the term 'pain' is given through the logical connections of the inner sensation with the outward expression mediated by the body"

(Sidiropoulou, 2009, p. 142)

This passage means that pain cannot get its sense without our mentally associating other's painful expression with some inner sensation during learning our mother tongue. The similarities between (1) and (3) in this sense is that, (i) they are Vorstellung rather than Bild, because the term God does not get its meaning by a projection of reality on the word before language (Sidiropoulou, 2009) and (ii) just like the requirement of body for our cognitive access to pain, human beings' religious life is necessary for our cognitive access to the existence of God (Sidiropoulou, 2009). Sidiropoulou (2009) further argues that, if I sincerely say that 'There is pain in my arm', I cannot understand this pain as not to exist, in Anselmian terminology. The condition for the possibility of this proposition is common experiences of pain in human life (Sidiropoulou, 2009). Similarly, the condition for the possibility of saying 'God exists' as "an

avowal of faith” (Sidiropoulou, 2009, p. 145) is religious practice. Therefore, the phrase ‘God exists’ and religious LG is more an inner shared experience than a description of a thing. This is against to a priori analysis that determines the criteria of applicability of a term by definitions which are not dependent upon any believer- if it depends on believers, it could not be done with forming necessary statements These suggest a Wittgenstenian point that form of life is prior to the conception of God (in the definition of a being than which no greater can be conceived), rather than the other way around.

Discussing the ontological argument only by conceptual analysis is insufficient, if the sentence ‘God exists’ is grammatical in religious LG, that is more like an expression of faith rather than a descriptive proposition, embedded in religious practice; and it is senseless outside of this language game. Saying that ‘God does not exist’ is not possible, and ungrammatical, within the religious LG (Sidiropoulou, 2009) because of the function of God in this language game as G. Just like taking a piece from chess makes it merely i.e. a piece of wood, talking about God outside of religious LG is analogically senseless. This means that, the sentence ‘God exists’ is not derived by an argument within religious LG, but one constituent of the ground of this language game; and cannot be derived by argumentation outside of this language game, and in turn outside of religious practice. Moreover, this framework implies that investigation of religious epistemology questions requires anthropological and cultural studies, because the priority is not given to abstract concepts, i.e. God, that are analyzable and definable by conceptual analysis, but to utterances within human life that occurs within a cultural context. If presented Wittgensteinian analysis is right, this exemplifies the insufficiency of conceptual analysis and further implies serious defects of widespread methodology and strict specialization in academic philosophy.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Wittgenstein’s full-fledged rejection of the kind of conceptual analysis that I presented is mentioned in three points: language games, family resemblance and first-/third person asymmetry. The two of these points are applied to discussion of the ontological argument by the characterization of religious language game in a way that the statement ‘God exists’ cannot be analyzed similarly to the statement ‘Chair exists’ due to (1) its function is “valuational interpretation” rather than description and (2) its criteria of truth functions diverge from the latter; but analyzed similarly to “Pain exists” due to (1) the necessity of common experiences of a community and (2) its type of representation in language as *Vorstellung*. The conclusion is that Sidiropoulou’s Wittgensteinian analysis for the ontological argument can be based on a certain rejection of conceptual analysis in a way that religious epistemology via definition attempts is devalued. This opens a way for an interdisciplinary methodology for the evaluation of this argument and may be extended to other discussions in this field, if Wittgensteinian framework is assumed.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- [1] Alston, W. P. The ontological argument revisited. *The philosophical review*. 1960; 69(4): 452-474.
- [2] Daly, C. *An introduction to philosophical methods*. Canada: Broadview Press; 2010. pp. 45- 50.
- [3] Descartes, R. *Meditations on first philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2008. pp. 46-48.
- [4] Hacker, P. M. S. *Wittgenstein's place in twentieth-century analytic philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell; 1996. pp. 101-126.
- [5] Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*. UK: Cambridge University Press; 1998. pp. 567- 570.
- [6] Pears, D. *Wittgenstein*. London: Fontana/Collins; 1971. pp. 119-140.
- [7] Plantinga, A. Kant's objection to the ontological argument. *The Journal of Philosophy*. 1966; 63(19): pp. 537-546.
- [8] Russell, B. *The philosophy of logical atomism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London and New York: Routledge Classics; 2010. pp. 67-68.
- [9] Saussure, F. *Course in general linguistics*. New York: Philosophical Library; 1959. pp. 88-110.
- [10] Sidiropoulou, C. St. Anselm's ontological argument: riddle or game?. *Philosophical Inquiry*. 2009; 31 (3-4): 131-152.
- [11] St. Anselm, *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*. Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press; 2000. 92-93.
- [12] Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Oxford: Blackwell; 2009. pp. 5-116.
- [13] Wolterstorff, N. Religious epistemology. In: Wainwright, W. J., editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press; 2005, pp. 245-271m.



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## VISUAL SYMBOLISM IN THE POETIC DOCUMENTARY

Vlad Alexandru (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Theater and Film, Str. Mihail Kogălniceanu, No. 4, Cluj-Napoca,  
Romania, E-mail: vladxela@yahoo.com

### *Abstract*

Even though many of the poetic documentaries do not follow a classical narrative structure, their construction has a natural tendency to form certain patterns in order to convey a message. In the formation of these patterns the use of symbols is an important point because the innovative aspect of the poetic documentaries is to make the connection between the experimental film, the visual essay and the classic documentary. Therefore, the entire poetic documentary uses the symbolism from the visual essay and from the experimental film in order to transmit emotions or information to the public in an innovative way, rarely encountered in the documentary film.

**Keywords:** symbolism; documentary; poetic; religion; innovation;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The poetic mode of documentary film does not refer to the "objective" reality of a given situation or to people, but instead seeks to understand an inner "truth" that can only be achieved by poetic manipulation. It is up to the filmmakers to build their narrative (or non-narrative) structure appropriate to the target audience.

The poetic documentaries first appeared in the 1920s, being a reaction against visual content and grammar, which began to be applied more and more mechanically in the construction of fiction movies. They implement a visual asymmetry (from the point of view of contrasts between successive images), destroying the cluster of image organization by classical models in terms of time and space. The characters, built in an almost heroic form until then, in the fictional movies, become entities similar to ordinary people in the society. The disturbance of the spatial-temporal coherence can be seen as the key element of the modernist era manifested in the texture of these movies.

The first documentary filmmakers, enthusiastic about the theory of Soviet editing and the impressionist cinema, have mastered these techniques in making documentary films in order to create what Nichols later called "the poetic mode". The pioneer of the documentary film, Vertov, made an excellent account of this poetic mode, despite the fact that it was not yet defined as such nor circumscribed theoretically: "Kinochestvo is the art of organizing objects moving in space as rhythmic harmony, in harmony with the properties of the material and the internal rhythm of each object" (Vertov & Michelson,

1984, p. 7). This internal rhythm, spoken of by Vertov, is the main feature of the functional mechanism of the concept. The poetic mode is manifested through a highly subjectivized interpretation of the content chosen to be treated in the documentary film. The traditional narrative subject is left out: characters and individual events remain undeveloped in favour of building free states or forms of subjectivity. This thing is remarkable in the editing of poetical documentary, in which the classical continuity of the narrative thread does not exist. Rather, the poetic editing explores "associations and models involving temporal rhythms and spatial juxtapositions" (Nichols, 2001, p. 44).

The subject is built around the audio-visual poetic associations. The films avoid the pursuit of a specific narrative or conventional narrative logic, use figures similar to poetry such as metaphor, comparison and disjunction, but also a similar structure of the material. This is why the mode gets the name of "poetic".

One of the most popular films, framed in the poetic mode, is the film by Joris Ivens, entitled *Regen* (1929). *Regen* is the paradigmatic example of the poetic mode, consisting of pictures that are not in a clear connection, but which are linked together to illustrate an autumn rain in Amsterdam. Because the poetic mode describes such subjective impressions with little or no narrative content, it is often perceived as avant-garde, and modern documentaries, like *Samsara* by Ron Fricke, have continued the same formal pattern (Nichols, 2001, p. 33).

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (2012) offers a wonderful description of this film, claiming that the film is no longer a representation of the rain, but attempts to give the spectator the feeling or the pure "quality" of the rain, called "skill".

The documentary is, however, very similar to the popular film *Symphony*, which we can not overlook. *Symphony City*, like the one realized by Ruttman, Cavalcanti, or Vertov, obviously varies in the presented cities, but also in dealing with the subject and the prominence of the director's voice in the structure: Ruttman's film transformed the city of Berlin into the main character, while Vertov's film is highly reflexive (Cousins & MacDonald, 2006, p.87). Initially, Joris Ivens's cinematographic activity focused on technique, and his close friends said the director was betting on the relevance of conceptual expressiveness, a remarkable performance in the aforementioned film, offering impressive images and a host of characters, but no precise information about them.

Another poetic film, to be mentioned, is *Sans Soleil* (1982), produced by the French director Chris Marker. *Sans Soleil* is a meditation on the human nature, showing the inability of the organic memory to remember the context and the nuances of events. Thus, the perception of personal and global history is dramatically affected. This experimental essay is a composition of thoughts, images and scenes, especially from Japan and Guinea-Bissau, two extreme poles of survival.

These avant-garde directors, through their cinematic works, show us the way to a different aesthetic: an aesthetics of emotions, of subtle personal experiences that must be experienced while watching the cinematic product. It gives us time to reflect on these emotions through the techniques they use. We are trapped in a space where we experience a fragment of real life or a description of what a living person would experience in real life.

## **2. THE RECURRING SYMBOLIC THEMES IN THE POETIC DOCUMENTARIES**

Exploring space and forms, beyond the barriers imposed by cultural dogmas, generates a new direction of contemplation. The forms become true treasures of the visual culture, in which meanings and non-senses intertwine with the purpose of destroying the stereotypical thinking of filmmakers.

A strong, present and promoted symbol in the modern poetic documentaries is encountered in various forms and sequences throughout them. We refer to spirituality, to religion, or to the way mankind has a philosophical relationship to its own existence. The spectacular example presented in this chapter is the series of sequences in *The Samsara* movie, between the minutes 80 to 90. Here we become acquainted

with the connection with the divinity using the prayer, specific to the four major global religions: Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist.

Although the film begins by presenting this "story" from the perspective of The Buddhist religion (the beginning and ending with the specific rituals), the successive mode in which various modes are described during the prayers of each religion shows us the similarities that can be found between seemingly very different religious systems. Religion being a powerful reservoir of symbols exploited in this type of poetic documentaries, beyond the aesthetic appearances, it has a powerful effect on our subjectivity and the way we decipher the content of the films.

The nature is presented as a support for reality; Practically, here begins "our story". The way in which nature, as a symbol of eternity in the film, is modeled, processed, transformed, destroyed by man is the way in which we relate to this reality. For example, in *Powaqqatsi*, we have a series of sequences (in the opening of the film) with people who carry, load, work on the processing and exploitation of nature. This series is presented in a dynamic rhythm, consistent with the images of an erupting volcano. The destructive force of nature itself is associated with the human nature, equally destructive and unstoppable through its constant actions of transformation of the environment.

In addition to religion and nature, another commonly used symbol is that of uniforms as a way of social organization. From the military uniforms of the militaries from the conflict zones between Israel and Palestine (from *Samsara*, 80<sup>th</sup> minute), the colored uniforms from the military parades (77<sup>th</sup> minute), the uniforms of detainees (64<sup>th</sup> minute), the sports uniforms (*Naqoyqatsi*, 22<sup>nd</sup> minute), the traditional uniforms (*Powaqqatsi*, 99<sup>th</sup> minute), the uniforms of the workers (*Koyaanisqatsi*, 54<sup>th</sup> minute) to the body paintings of the various tribes, the authors of these films succeed not only to show us the diversity of this symbol of social organization, but also the character of the group that these vestments define. The characters often do not interact with each other, being presented in formal situations, whether in factories or in military actions. People move symmetrically, mechanically, in uniforms of the same color and appearance, and perform similar actions. Even the tribes, presented in the traditional garments and body decorations, usually perform symmetrical rituals or identical actions. The affiliation to social groups and the action of modelling, organizing or destroying nature is therefore organized according to certain rules (aesthetic or content).

The consumption, the mechanization and the acceleration of nature's exploitation is another theme explored in these films. The acceleration of images in contrast to the slowing effect shows how, through the process of automation (means of transport, robots, machinery), the inert handmade work, presented in its primary form at the beginning of *Koyaanisqatsi*, remains only a vague memory on which even the now developing countries will soon be over it. Consumption is also described by endless technological processes through which clothing, food or household items are processed (some examples). The multiple repetitive actions do not begin nor end, continuing with small pauses.

The loss of identity is built on these films by the process of film time acceleration, image processing and adding special effects, exemplifying aesthetic operations (58<sup>th</sup> minute, *Samsara*), but also by symbolic sequences like the 38<sup>th</sup> minute (*Samsara*), in which a man masks his face with a layer of clay. Throughout *Samsara*, we find out how man does not just transform himself into a machine, performing mechanical operations after a set schedule, being in fact copied as an aesthetic look in sexual dolls or robots. Even the theme of sexuality and the sex industry exploiting women in a similar way is in *Samsara* (60<sup>th</sup> minute) or *Baraka* (57<sup>th</sup> minute).

In addition to these aspects, we should also remember what does not appear in these documentaries, in order to understand the difference between classical and modern poetic documents regarding symbolic aspects. The classical poetic documentaries deal in particular with the aesthetic valences of the human body, of the surrounding world. The symbols present in Maya Deren's or Stan Brakhage's films are rendered in a subjective manner in terms of editing, framing, or directorial concept. The birth of Brakhage's daughter is not only a new beginning of life (*Window Water Baby Moving*, 1959), but it is also a way through which we can experience this intimate event very intensely.



Exploring the minimalist, intimate space of man or animal through the aesthetic means specific to the poetic way and knowing these characters with their flaws and qualities is a highly invasive artistic approach. These aspects, however, are not found in the modern poetic documentaries, where the directorial concept is constructed by pursuing neutral, unimpressed, the subject presented. Detail shots are rarely used, there are no subjective or "angle shot" footage.

### **3. THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN THE POETIC DOCUMENTARY**

Even though many of the poetic films do not follow a classical narrative structure, they have a natural tendency to form certain patterns in order to convey a message. The narrative structure behind the poetic concept follows a systematization and classification of the dramaturgical elements that define this kind of documentary (Jay, 1977, pg. 3-11).

Moreover, a very important aspect to be mentioned according to the method of research used (structural-semiotic analysis) is the link that the poetic documentary producer builds with his audience. The mirroring of one's own vision of the surrounding universe is the foundation behind the narrative structure. The choice of a certain rhythm of colors, of the night-day alternation, of life-death, the contrast between nature and urbanized society, all these are subjective elements selected by the author and give birth to the entire concept.

As a consequence, in Brachage's documentary, *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959), we see a series of detached details in a quick succession describing not only the relationship between the two protagonists through their intimate gestures and the expressivity of the faces, but the chaotic rhythm itself which life and emotions unfold. This chaotic rhythm is made with the dynamic assemblage like in the *Samsara*, the 56<sup>th</sup> minute, when we see groups of people who consume or buy chaotic. In the same disorganized way at the 49<sup>th</sup> minute in *Koyaanisqatsi*, the streets of the cities are full of people and cars that disappear and appear from all directions. Chaos is a pulse that absorbs people, cars, buildings: everything that has to do with us.

In the modern documentaries, we notice that the authors choose to introduce us gradually into a new world. For example, in *Samsara*, the passage from minute 33 from the exotic, tribal world to the man-made universe is done through a series of frames with suspended motorways on which many cars move. This "hive" of human civilization then becomes more and more visible as the rhythm begins to accelerate.

*March of the Penguins* (2005) is a French documentary depicting the habits of penguins during a whole year: their mating rituals, their migration, the laying of eggs, the search for food, etc. The film is accompanied by an external voice in the form of dialogue between two characters (in the original version). Made in French, the dialogues and poetical images create a moderate, relatively constant pace throughout the film. Although it is a documentary about nature, we see that the authors are starting a different approach to content. This concept, the dialogue, gradually introduces us into the world of penguins that we discover with great curiosity.

The first pictures show us a group of penguins that go along the horizon line. A little under the fire disc, they resemble humans - they are described as nomads who commit an ancient ritual. In these images in the film's exhibition, a link is created between the public and the penguins. Shortly after this humanized opening, the film sets (through pictures, not by scientific explanation) that these impressive nomads are emotional beings who, as individuals, form a society. The individual penguins present separate personalities and desires, but subordinate to those in the group as a whole. The whole action of the film, focusing on the phenomenon of reproduction of these creatures, is the tone of all the "actions" that the spectators witness. The motives of the penguins are to survive as a group, to reproduce; to love and to survive as individuals.

If at Stan Brakhage his wife's birth was filmed from his hand, in a crazy, chaotic cut, we see that in this situation, the subject's approach was made by long frames on the tripod, using ambient sounds and fictitious dialogue. Thus, it is increasingly evident that the method of conceptualizing a subject of poetic documentary can be very different, compared to other documentary modes.

The visual simplicity of black and white objects moving against the infinite expansion of ice, sky, and then water matches the simplicity of the story. These simplicities allow the visual landscape and the main narrative thread to be outlined. There are many obstacles for the penguins: the pain, the conflict, the sacrifice and the loss are juxtaposed with moments inspired by humour, redemption, love, beauty and accomplishment. The universality of the story allows the spectator to lose himself inside the frames to enjoy the beauty of the film and the landscapes and the amazing astonishment that this is happening on the same Earth as the cinema that gives it life and also, takes care of the way an individual feels this unbelievable adventure of life. The scientific explanation is not the central point of the narrative (nor does it propose to do so); is the backdrop for the amazing form that brings a deep and rewarding story to the audience. Nature or natural elements are often presented in static or very light panoramic ways. A directorial choice that makes us stop, let us "relax" our eyes on these imperishable buildings. Their appearance has a circular role in the narrative construction. They appear most often after the climax of a certain sequence, reminding us of where we started and where we are returning.

Also in a circular role is built the subject of the film *Samsara*. The film begins with some Buddhist temples in Myanmar ending up with the call of the monks and the destruction of the newly built "mandala", the construction of which was presented in the film's exhibition.

*Baraka* begins with several pictures of nature that continue with other images in a Buddhist temple, the end of the film being built in at first from frames describing the interior of a church in Jerusalem, and then the film ends with pictures of nature in a timelapse. *Koyaanisqatsi* ends with a frame similar to the one it starts with, namely a picture of cave paintings. The list can continue.

The narrative structure of the poetic documentary does not follow a cognitive-logical line. It is built around the emotions that swing from the highest peaks to the deepest precipices, so the spectator is always on a continuous emotional journey, in a continuous search. This emotional connection is formed on the basis of the relationship established by the humanized symbols and elements as we have seen above. In order for the entire narrative construction process to function, it is always calibrated so that the spectators do not only remain in a certain palette of emotions until the end of the film.

#### **4. THE IMAGE AND THE SIMBOLISM**

By looking more closely into the intrinsic universe of the works we refer to, we see the visual similarity between the movies of the great film revolution, such as *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), *Regen*, and Ron Fricke's films.

Separated for almost a century of existence, the recent films seem to use exhaustively many of the techniques discovered and used by the parents of cinema in their films that treated various subjects from a poetic perspective. This demonstrates the universality of aesthetics in relation to the subject, but also a particular rhythm that only a non-verbal film could manage with such mastery. Special attention to the aesthetics reveals the author's preference for the subliminal message behind the mounting mechanism.

The aesthetic is also exploited through the naturalness of costumes or bodily paintings practiced in different cultures. Thus, in the film *Baraka* we discover the beauty of indescribable aborigines, their bodies being decorated with necklaces, bracelets and various small accessories, their faces being painted in countless models, built from points. This phenomenon is also observed during the film, and in the *Amazonians* where the scarlet paint shines on the forehead of a young woman looking through the green leaves of a tree. Approaching the theme of body painting is a direct way of communicating our return to the primordial aesthetics of man and his primary sense of aesthetics.

The color plays an essential role in the semiotics of the audiovisual language. In addition to its technical role, the color brings to the spectator certain states depending on the code of the cultural paradigm in which it becomes exploited. For ordinary viewers, lacking cinematic culture, the story is the most important element of any film. In turn, the color of an icon can have a major impact in keeping the viewer's attention and storytelling. For example, when a frame changes, from a warm yellow feeling to a cold-blue feeling in successive images, it can be quite difficult to keep the viewer's attention on the film. In this case, the color correction really helps the quality of the final version. The color correction helps to

smooth the recorded color at the production stage and to give a more pertinent image, allowing the viewer to focus on the story.

The most common colors have a standard social sense, while the specific colors may contextualize a particular spirit or personal idea. These meanings often do not exceed the limit of society that gave the colors a certain meaning. An example is black (non-color) black, which often represents death in Western society, while white is used to symbolize death in eastern cultures (Faur, 2019).

We notice a particular attention that the documentary filmmakers attribute to the colors in the construction of the poetic documentaries. The predominant colors are green and blue, which are basic colors in nature (life is built around them). A concrete example of heavily conceived semantic use of colors can be seen throughout the documentary *Naqoyqatsi*, where the color becomes the main pawn in the narrative construction. In an experimental manner, the documentary makers have chosen a specific color to represent the states and the actions described by the images. The poverty of the working class and those in developing countries is carefully portrayed by gray colors, colorful grays and desaturate tones. This way of presenting reality has the effect of generalizing the present situation in the areas covered by the documentaries.

The meanings created by the set of lines, dots and spots are defined in relation to the applied aesthetics. Each society and culture is modeled by a specific paradigm of general aesthetics. The lines, in their own right, do not exist in nature, just like no dots or spots. They occur in the form of optical phenomena when the group of objects deviates from the viewer.

Another semiotic lineage, this time, inside the *Naqoyqatsi* documentary, can be seen at the 8th minute when the image of people is overexposed with the image of barcode-like lines, suggesting the concept of transforming people into products that can be sold in supermarkets.

A great emphasis is placed on contour light, with accentuations of shapes and movements in the decor. Besides the role of the ambience, the light gains a dramatic function supported by the assembly of lines and rising rhythm.

The author then introduces us into the metropolitan area of an unspecified city, respecting the same rhythm, the same chromatic and dynamic. Another important aspect is the excessive use of primary geometric shapes, straight lines and trajectory movements, thus structuring a very secure and rhythmic mechanism of the audiovisual message. In addition to this geometric consistency, this whole set of primary compositional elements takes us to the art of Antiquity, but also to the construction of archetypal shapes that carry a universal message in relation to the whole documentary.

Regardless of the media format we refer to, it will include text as a support for the transmission of information. Thus, we observe how this important visual symbol in our culture is carefully selected in various contexts throughout poetic documentaries in order to support the image.

One of the concrete examples appears in the 68th minute of the *Powaqqatsi* film when a red guerrilla paints on a wall and a little girl with a red box in hand stops at the wall looking at the camera. The author shows in this way the struggle that is going on between the future of the next and present generations, by using a sign of meaningful signal and premonition.

Another conclusive example can be seen in *Samsara* in the 80th minute, where we are presented a picture of the wall between Palestine and Israel where it says suggestively: "I want my ball back!" And afterwards added "thanks!", thus suggesting us the gap between normality and reality.

As mentioned above, the movement as an aesthetic element in all visual arts is one of the most important general features, whether we refer to the movement of an audiovisual camera or the motion suggested by the lines of perspective and form. The shapes in motion are often visually coordinated to describe relationships between different elements and to form coherent assemblies. The relationship between nature and man is often depicted by forms in motion. One of the most representative examples appears in the *Powaqqatsi* documentary, in the 17th minute, where we see a natural waterfall that then, by enlarging the frame with the zoom-out effect, turns into an artificially formed waterfall by manipulating the water course by man.

The slowing effect is heavily used in all modern poetic documents. Using this effect, the documentaries manage to show us another facet of the surrounding world that we usually miss because of

the amalgam of visual aesthetics that surround us. But in *Ashes and Snow*, the slow motion effect is applied to sequences that transcend space and cinematic time. From the very first minute of the movie, an external voice superimposed on slow-motion pictures tells us, "If you come to me at this moment, your minutes will become hours, your hours will become days and your days will become a lifetime." Thus, the expansion of time is not only achieved through this technological process, but also through the narrative argument that leads us, as an illusionist, in atemporal and aspatial.

It might be confusing and it could be considered that *Ashes and Snow* would strictly respect the characteristics of the visual essay due to the text, which is largely a philosophical, poetic, abstract, but also because of the theme approached, namely the link spiritual nature of man and nature. But the film, as , uses real images to represent a reality (for the most part), whether we are talking about the meditation of the monks or the animal world. In addition to this, the subject matter is as tangible as possible. At any moment, an exhibition, observer or performative documentary can be done on the same theme (the connection of man with nature).

In another eloquent example, in *March of the Penguins*, right at the end of the movie (78<sup>th</sup> minute), there is a slow-motion sequence which shows the moment when the penguin chicks enter the water for the first time. Although the film does not include any other sequence shot through this technical process, the author chooses to slow down the image in order to generate a feeling of joy generated from the pleasure of the small swimmers. The joy of the penguins in water is not only prolonged by the slowing effect, but it also has a different meaning: from a simple ephemeral jovial, it turns into a major moment in the life of those animals. This moment becomes practically a ritual, a transition to maturity.

The camera movements are used to describe spaces, actions, to track characters, and generate emotions. These are classified according to the directions of the dynamics involved in several categories. Throughout the poetic documentaries, we observe the whole range of camera movements. From descriptive or tracking panoramas to helicopter or underwater cameras (as in *Ashes and Snow*, 2005), the poetic documentary filmmakers are trying to use all possible means of shooting - with a visual impact more powerful on viewers - the situations presented in the film. The visual counts and speaks its word by itself, through its own irradiation force. Even "from hand" filming is not avoided, the aesthetics of this style being intensely exploited, especially in the urban scenes or in the poetic documentaries of the early authors.

The rhythm is used in audiovisual products to build drama or to emphasize certain states or ideas. It is usually built on music, the images being cut exactly when the sound resumes a passage or it changes. Perhaps the most spectacular way the rime is used in the film is in this documentary mode. We can see the rhythm of the military choreographies, of the religious encounters, of the traditional customs (as in *Powaqqatsi*, in the 44<sup>th</sup> minute), the rhythm of natural elements, buildings, cities, lights, but the rhythm of digital elements remains the most prominent. If the other forms of rhythm in the picture are integrated into the universal ensemble, more or less, these rhythms consisting of digital codes or digital visual experiments, through various overlaps or digital processing, have a separate aesthetics.

As for the aesthetics of the human face, the authors of all the modern poetical documents use as a leitmotive the faces belonging to different cultures. People's figures remain fixed, staring at the room, or staying locked in a slow-motion, lost in a vast metropolitan area. We often see faces of robots doing the same thing, or silicone doll faces. Through this strategy, the authors not only make us pay attention, observe certain resemblances and differences between cultures or between humans and artificial forms but have as a fundamental purpose to present man's adaptation to modern social life and the way in which it relates to this adaptation, in contrast to the expressiveness that the world manifests.

The contrast is no less used than other expressive features of plastic language elements. For example, during the *March of the Penguins* movie (Morgan Freeman's narrative), exactly at the 18<sup>th</sup> minute, there is a sequence in which the sky, surprised at sunset, gets reddish tones in contrast to the underwater horizon is presented in shades of blue-gray. We have in this sequence not only a contrast of primary or hot-cold colors, but also a contrast used for semiotic purposes: the sunset of the quiet, abundant period, and the brutal arrival of winter.

The visual world of poetic documentaries is the central point around which the entire narrative structure collapses. Its importance is given by the image's ability to generate powerful emotions that the public readily accepts. The image of frozen penguins in Antarctica or the image of a religious ritual has the ability to sensitize the public in the direction desired by the director, and this phenomenon is largely due to the use of a universal visual language and aesthetics that tends also - powers - to some degree of universality.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

It is important to note that although poetical documentary films appear in a wide range of representations, they often have aesthetic, compositional, rhythmic similarities. Just like in fiction films we find a whole arsenal of genres in which they are divided, the contrast between them is essentially reflected in the directorial vision of the filmmaker who is involved in the film. As long as it strives to make a narrative, non-narrative, or original stylistic structure, some basic features can not work without being part of an existing pattern. Therefore, a parallel study between aesthetics and recurrence of the symbols present in the poetic documentary shows the process by which the aesthetics of the poetic documentary evolved, namely what it "borrowed" and what it gave up during its evolution.

It is also important to note how the global interconnection, anthropic fingerprint left on a planetary scale, is designed as a theme during modern poetic documentaries and how they achieve, through music, rhythm, image and atypical visual compositions, to surprise life in its raw form.

Beyond these aspects, decorating the aesthetics of poetic documentaries and analyzing it by the case study or film analysis method, I noticed how these documentaries respect a specific structure and how the elements of this structure have a universal applicability in the case of the poetic documentaries, demonstrated by the comparative study.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Cousins, M. & Macdonald, K. (2006) *Imagining Reality*. London, UK: Faber and Faber Limited.
- [2] Faur, C. (2019, April 15). *The Semiotics of Color*. Retrieved from [christianfaur.com/color/Site/Color%20Semiotics.html](http://christianfaur.com/color/Site/Color%20Semiotics.html).
- [3] Deleuze, G. (2012). *Cinema 1. imaginea-mișcare [Cinema 1: The Movement Image]*. Cluj-Napoca: Tact.
- [4] Jay, R. (1977). *The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film*. *Journal of the University Film Association*, 29(4), 3-11. Retrieved May 05, 2019, from [jstor.org/stable/20687384](http://jstor.org/stable/20687384).
- [5] Nichols, B. (2001). *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- [6] Vertov, D., & Michelson, A. (1984). *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

## FILMOGRAPHY

- [7] Brakhage, S. (Director). (1959). *Window Water Baby Moving*. USA: Independent movie.
- [8] Fricke, R. (Director). (2011). *Samsara*. USA: Bullet Productions.
- [9] Fricke, R. (Director). (1992). *Baraka*. USA: Magidson Films.
- [10] Ivens, J. (Director). (1929) *Regen [Rain]*. Netherlands: Independent movie.
- [11] Ivens, J. (Director). (1988). *Une histoire de vent [A Tale of the Wind]*. France: Air France.
- [12] Jacquet, L. (Director). (2005). *March of the Penguins*. France: Bonne Pioche.
- [13] Marker, C. (Director). (1983). *Sans Soleil*. France: Argos Film.
- [14] Reggio, G. (Director). (1983). *Koyaanisqatsi*. USA: New Cinema și Island Alive.
- [15] Reggio, G. (Director). (2002). *Naqoyqatsi*. USA: Miramax Films.
- [16] Reggio, G. (Director). (1988). *Powaqqatsi*. USA: Golan-Globus.
- [17] Ruttmann, W. (Director). (1927). *Berlin, Symphony Of A Great City*. Germany: Deutsche Vereins-Film.
- [18] Vertov, D. (Director). (1929). *Man With A Movie Camera*. URSS: Independent movie.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.64-68>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## FAMOUS CRIMINAL PHRASES: LIMPIEZA DE SANGRE

Ivan Ivlampie(a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: ivanivlampie@yahoo.com,

### *Abstract*

History of mankind has recorded numerous proverbial phrases of great cultural significance. There are, however, such phrases that have a different, social-political meaning. In previous studies, we have highlighted the expressions égalité, fraternité and что делать? This study presents and analyzes the phrase limpieza de sangre. Present on the territory of the Iberian Peninsula starting with the 15th century, the purity of blood formula remains in force until 1870. In this case, we consider a form of racial discrimination, with systematic victims and persecutions, involving several actors: the State, the Church - through the Inquisition, the civilian population. Targeted are the ethnic groups and minorities brought to the European peninsula by the hazard of history. Limpieza de sangre is the evil that, when projected onto the Other, justifies crimes, banishment, forced conversions, social and professional discrimination.

**Keywords:** limpieza de sangre; Inquisition; racial discrimination; intolerance;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Although it is a product of the 15th century in the Spanish society, the phrase limpieza de sangre should be considered an effect of the experiences of the historical past, which, when combined with the visions and intentions of the Spanish present, with the European ideology of those times, will give birth to a formula on which a nation has been founded.

Geographically speaking, Spain is said to be the head of Africa and the tail of Europe, a metaphor that can also be accounted for culturally. The Muslim invasion of 711 and the seven-year conquest of the peninsula allowed for the coming into Europe of both the Eastern civilization and the lost or forgotten culture of Greek and Roman Antiquity. The domination of three up to eight centuries created in Iberia a melting pot mixing the influences of various cultures. It is not, however, just the ideas that clash and interfere, but, equally important, people. In this Hispanic-Moorish melting pot, war would alternate with peaceful exchanges, ethnic and religious differences, with mixed marriages and conversions. A relative tolerance has imposed among the two societies, each with their own hierarchy, described as follows by historian Pierre Vilar: "For Muslims, it consisted of Arab rulers, Berber soldiers, then renegade Christians and then Christian autochthonous population, named Mozarab, while for

Christians, of the Spanish clergy and nobility, old Christian commoners, reconverted Mozarabs, newly converted Christians and, lastly, Mudejares [Muslims who lived on Christian soil] who had kept their faith, customs and judges. Let's also add the Jews, respected for a long period of time." (Vilar, pp. 17-18).

Reconquista (722-1492) was the reaction of the Christian kingdoms in the north of the peninsula to the Islamic conquest. A Christian crusade different from the rest of the European crusades, an intermittent and long lasting war, the Reconquista created kingdoms and allowed for the discrepant ascension of some and rare moments of unity, as was the one of 1212, which resulted in the extraordinary victory from Las Navas de Tolosa. The centuries-long holy war produced a state of mind of expansion and independence, stimulated honor and pride and gave birth to the knightly ideals. Enthusiasm would come over all social categories, from grand and small nobility to commoners, who would ensure the repopulation of the reconquered areas. Even the clergy, understanding the importance of the armed fight for faith, would militate within the paradigm of expansionist reasoning, which would favor, among old Christians, the maintaining of social balance. The independence spirit and the local vanity of the victories achieved determined the political disintegration of Spain during the Reconquista rather than its unity. The effects would be visible in the long-lasting process of centralization and unification of the state, in which the purification of blood would play an important part.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Limpieza de sangre is a formula in a political ideology that would dominate Spain in the 15th-19th centuries. It is based on the distinction between the so-called pure blood and the impure blood. The pure-blooded are Spanish, original dwellers of the Iberian Peninsula, genuine believers and Christians, while the other dwellers of different faith or race, are considered impure. The premise is thus a simple but primitive prejudice. The phrase originated from the habit of the Spanish noblemen who, in the battles with the Moors, would tuck up their sleeves to display their blue veins, visible owing to the white color of their skin. This way, they would emphasize their superiority to the Moors, whose dark skin made impossible the visibility of the blue color. By birth, the blue-blooded warriors are pure, as they are not contaminated with the ones with darker skin. The idea of racial superiority is thus asserted.

"The choice for blue for blood is explained, for the most part, by the fact that the costumes, coats of arms and especially cordons and ribbons of decorations were azure-colored back then, blue also being the preferred, representative color of high aristocracy. This way, they wanted to single themselves out from the order of clergy, who had adopted red-colored clothing (hence the name Cardinal Red) and especially from "the green coats" of the folk (green being the color of the commoners and, accordingly, considered vulgar)" (Berg, pp. 321-322)

It is interesting that this Spanish idea seduced the entire European aristocracy, segregating the population on the two levels, according to the color of their blood. However, unlike the rest of Europe, as we will try to prove, in Spain, this discrimination would not operate only at the caste level, would not be socially limited, but would become a tool of eugenics through terror.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the Spanish specificity of blood-based discrimination? From the above, it would be reduced to that it becomes a weapon of a new crusade. One may also add that this crusade is fought on the Christian continent, on a territory that reentered the possession of Christianity without the allogeneic factors to represent any imminent danger.

Spain was geared towards blood-based discrimination when it could come down just to the color of the skin, as the Europeans would do in their colonial empires, even with genocides involved, in some cases. What was the reason for this much more radical solution here, in 'Europe's tail'?

Can we identify and qualify among the actions of consolidating the Spanish nation some acts as going under the category of genocide? And if that is the case, whose responsibility are they?

## 4. RESEARCH METHODS

The end of Reconquista coincides with the competition of the Spanish kingdoms in the unification of the peninsula. Portugal leaves this competition with its strong separatism and with its acquiring the independence that would further mark its status as a self-contained nation. With the marriage of

Ferdinand of Aragon to Isabella of Castile, the rule of the Catholic kings began, thus laying the foundations of the modern Spanish nation. This process will be long lasting, in the context of the centrifugal political movements of claiming regionalist privileges.

The first Catholic kings understood that the tool of political unification of the kingdom could only be the Catholic religion. It had to be imposed on Jews and Muslims, by conversion. In the case of a refusal, the method applied should be expulsion. In this context, in 1478 is founded the institution that would supervise the process of religious unification: the Spanish Inquisition. Subject to Rome, in fact, it carried out its activity independently from the papacy, up to its dissolution in 1820. The general Inquisitor is appointed by the king and there is a complete overlapping of the state apparatus and the inquisitorial power. This cooperation of the two powers is satisfactorily argued by Bartolomé Bennassar in his article, "The Inquisitorial Power" (chap. III).

Until the imposition of the religious unification policy, there had been mutual tolerance in the Christian, Mosaic and Muslim communities. This fact was the result of the military balance between the Moors and the Christians, a balance upset after the victory of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). Gradually, the spirit of the Reconquista would act against the other communities in the peninsula. In the 14th century, things become even more serious because of various calamitous events, such as the plague, economic depressions or military conflicts. These events arouse in the public consciousness the need of finding a scapegoat. The chosen one was the Jew. As in other places in Europe, in Spain too, pogroms were targeted against the ones considered guilty for the black plague. In 1391, Jewish neighborhoods were under attack in many cities: for example, in Seville, more than 4,000 people died. The result of these anti-Semitic actions was their massive conversion to Christianity, accepting baptism being the only means of saving one's life. Conversions would continue after these pogroms, but public opinion was that the new Christians were false Christians, that they were secretly practicing their old rituals and religion. The violence against the newly converted burst out in 1449 in Toledo, during a popular riot led by Pero Sarmiento. The rioters were opposing a tax whose collector was a converted Jew, Alonso de Cota. The crowd entered his house, ransacking and setting it on fire. Many of the Jews converted to Christianity who fought back were hung in the public square. Sarmiento decided that Christian converts would no longer have the right to testify in trials or hold public office in the city administration, under the penalty of death and seizure of assets. This event is the debut of the process of racial discrimination and the starting point of the practice of *limpieza de sangre*, which gradually becomes general, at both territorial and professional levels.

The first Catholic kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, turn racial and religious discrimination into state policy. From 1481 to 1492, measures were taken to enclose the Jews in ghettos and to banish the non-converts. The banishment order of March 31st, 1492, applying to the entire Spanish territory, resulted in the conversion of more than 200,000 people. The ones who did not accept baptism, around 150,000 people, were exiled. The new converts increased the number of those suspected of heresy. The Inquisition was fully legitimized to define and exercise its reason of being. In 1481, in Seville, takes place the first *auto-da-fé*, six people being burnt at the stake. After this moment, the number of those sentenced to burning at the stake is unprecedented. The exile, death penalty, imprisonment and the seizure of assets were the first forms of manifestation of ethnic purging.

The wave of cruelty of the Inquisition from its foundation until the former half of the 16th century will diminish as a result of Jews' extermination and self-exile. This allowed the institutionalization of the *limpieza de sangre* principle. The old Christians prevented the half-blood's access to universities, to military and religious orders, and forbade their holding public office or inquisitorial positions. (Ironically, Torquemada, the first Inquisitor and Isabella's advisor in the matters of religious unification, was one of those conversos later on persecuted because of *limpieza de sangre*.) Mixed marriages were also forbidden.

Purity of blood brought fear related to ascendancy to Spain. Gradually, the test of blood purity would degenerate by falsifying documents and genealogies and by bribing witnesses. Such practices could not be avoided since half-bloodedness was a reality throughout the centuries and since it had been noted, in full 15th century, that the noblest families had Jewish blood.

The procedure of trying the purity of blood was carried out with the candidate's testimony that he did not have Moor or Jewish origins. On his knees, with the right hand on the Bible, the questioned would indicate the names of his parents and grandparents and his place of birth. The Church and Council delegates would then organize an inquiry to assert the truthfulness of the declaration. Then, there was an



interrogation pursued by an inquiry commission which would travel in the field to question witnesses. Following the report of this commission, the candidate was admitted or rejected. Just as the direct descendants of Moors or Jews, the rejects were sentenced to inaptitude. They were banished from all public offices and, had they infringed these interdictions, they were subject to substantial fines.

A new wave of repression of the Inquisition spread after the annexation of Portugal by the Spanish crown (1580-1640). After the banishment edict of March 31st, 1492, a great number of Jews had found refuge in Portugal, which had a tolerant policy. This policy came to an end in 1547, when Rome instituted an Inquisition court, similar to the Spanish pattern. The auto-da-fes affected a small number of people, but in 1580, with the burning at the stake of 222 Marranos (Christianized Jews who were still faithful to Judaism), the warning signal was clearly received. A massive exodus to Spain and the American colonies began, although the legislation forbade the Jews' access to the Indies.

In Spain, the new exiled lived peacefully until 1624, thanks to the large sums of money delivered to the royal treasury, which was in great impasse at the time. But, in 1625 and 1626 a new wave of arrests bursts out, mostly targeting the Portuguese Marranos. The Crown's financial quandary makes it address the wealthy banking oligarchy of the converted Jews instead of resorting to the bankrupt Genovese bankers. Four years before losing Portugal, the Spanish Inquisition is unleashed on their new bankers, seizing large amounts of their money and arresting and banishing people. After 1640, owing to their Portuguese origin, the Marranos became even more suspected. More than 12,000 wealthy families chose the exile, which the commoners could not afford. Until the end of the 17th century, the Inquisition did their job: arrests, seizures of assets, and burnings at the stake.

The last wave of repressions took place during the reign of Philip V (1700-1746), with similar consequences. Catherine Brault-Noble and Marie-José Marc, in their article 'Religious and social unification. Minority suppression' (Bennassar, chap. V) describe the final forms of persecutions against the Jewish communities in the following terms: "Towards the middle of the 18th century, the conversos community was no longer a serious religious problem. The last wave of repressions triggered the decline and annihilation of the Judaic practices in Spain. At the end of the 18th century, the trials against conversos were scarce. (...) This fast diminishing was the consequence of the lack of 'raw material' and of the evolution of thought." (Bennassar, pp. 137-138).

The purity of blood also targeted the descendants of the Moors. Unlike the conversos, elements of incipient bourgeoisie with a high cultural level, the Moors preponderantly belonged to the rural proletariat. After the conquest of Granada (1492), this minority was forced to choose either baptism or banishment. By 1526, it was said that there were no longer Muslims in the country. These forced converts (Moriscos) were also suspected of not having chosen Christianity in earnest, of secretly practicing Islam and of being still faithful to their old food and hygiene habits, as well as to their customs related to birth, marriage, funerals, celebrating and fasting. In addition, the Moriscos would stand out with their clothing and their language, algaravia.

After each forced baptism, there followed the armed riot of the converts, which was usually ended with official reactions that ratified the complete assimilation. The children's Catholic education policies, the seizing of Islamic literature and the encouragement of mixed marriages faced the resistance of this social category. Diligent, austere, enterprising and content with small earnings, the Moriscos enjoyed the protection of the seniors who would exploit this workforce, but were despised by the majority of Christians, who hated and feared them.

In what concerns their heretic practices, the Inquisition acted abusively especially at the level of seizing their assets. The burning at the stake, targeting the religious leaders and abjurers, occurred much more rarely than in the Jews' case. And if the latter managed to mingle with the Christian society, the Moriscos could not be assimilated. This determined Philip V to order general banishment. From 1609 to 1614, around 300,000 Moriscos left Spain.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The politics of the Inquisition had, in its beginnings, a religious motivation. The Catholic kings supported it as they were interested in religious unification. The religious exclusivism in its initial stage, as a spiritual follow-up to the Reconquista, corresponds to a real necessity. Becoming a day-by-day bureaucratic issue, the activity of the Inquisition ends up being pursuing other criteria: people's hatred,

the Crown's financial problems, the economic rapacity of the institution itself. *Limpieza de sangre* is the formula that matches these new criteria, adding to the obsession of religious unity. "The status of *limpieza de sangre*, created exclusively by the old Christian, marked by his own military prestige as victor against the Moorish heresy, inoculated the Castile mentality with the concept of racial and social discrimination." (Bennassar, p. 139). Although baptism saved many of persecutions, *limpieza de sangre* remained a barrier to their social affirmation. It would strike at the most dynamic economic sectors, and thus, the Spanish society failed to enter the capitalist world. The victory of Catholic unity is also the disdain for making profit and for the idea of labor. The spiritual hegemony that the Catholic kings tried to impose on Europe, as an expression of the obsession of internal religious unity, would eventually lead to the ruining of the State finances. In this respect, the persecution of the Inquisition has proven useless. The spiritual masters of the people, the monks and the clergy tried, as a follow-up to the Reconquista, to carry on fighting and win the final victory based on a biological principle: the blood. As in any battle, blood spill was present, but, on a civilian front, spilling blood is genocidal. The two ethnic groups were almost erased from the society. The ones who remained in Spain were pursued, caught and sentenced. Their number is still hypothetical." (Bennassar, p. 139).

*Limpieza de sangre*, as the Inquisition's tool and mass psychosis, was the greatest restraint of the development of Spain, which failed a great destiny, considering its colonial conquests. Religious psychology deeply permeated the national psychology, and it is probably not hazardous that Spain's favorite show is *Corrida*.

In her book, *L'Occident et les Autres: histoire d'une suprématie*, Sophie Bessis inquires: "In the history of the West, does Nazism leave the impression of an inventor or an heir? Must we regard it as an accident or as a result inscribed in the possibilities of a history that started centuries ago, in the Spanish age of that *limpieza de sangre*, as the latter's monstrous but logical apostasy?" (Bessis, p. 69) The question is challenging and represents a path to the research of a new form of genocide, in another space and in another time.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Bessis, Sophie, *Occidentul și ceilalți. Istoria unei supremații*. București: Editura Runa; 2004. p. 220.
- [2] Bennassar, Bartolomé „Puterea inchizitorială” în Bartolomé Bennassar, editor. *Inchiziția spaniolă. Secolele XV-XIX*. București: Editura politică; 1983. pp. 63-86.
- [3] Berg, I. *Dicționar de cuvinte, expresii, citate celebre*, București: Editura SECULUM I. O. Și Editura VESTALA; 1996. p. 384.
- [4] Brault-Noble, Catherine, Marc, Marie-José, „Unificarea religioasă și socială. Înăbușirea minorităților” în Bartolomé Bennassar, editor. *Inchiziția spaniolă. Secolele XV-XIX*. București: Editura politică; 1983. pp. 119-162.
- [5] Vilar, Pierre, *Istoria Spaniei*, București: Editura Corint; 2000. p. 156.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.69-74>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## HEALING MIRACLES PERFORMED BY CHRIST – A SYMBOL OF MAN’S REDEMPTION

Leontin Popescu (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Ph.D. Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [prleonpopescu@yahoo.it](mailto:prleonpopescu@yahoo.it)

### *Abstract*

Each time, we find it very difficult to understand the real cause of suffering and this happens because illness and suffering hurt the individual in his most intimate experience. The suffering man must experience inner conflict: how he must understand himself. We are aware that God is not the cause of our evil and suffering, but they must be allowed by Providence. The persistent question lingers: why does God allow man, the most beautiful of all creatures, to wallow in misfortune, suffering, pain and death? Throughout all the New Testament, the experience of healing and recovering from various illnesses, as well as forgiving sins, certify Christ’s salvation work, eventually accomplished by death and resurrection. All instances of healing physical illnesses that the Saviour performs are a forerunner of His salvation work achieved by His sacrifice on the Cross. Therein lies the great sacrament: Christ, crucified on the Cross, overcomes suffering and pain by His own suffering and pain. If until the Resurrection suffering and illnesses were only cured by the manifestation of divine power, Resurrection bestows a new dimension upon suffering, which is transfigured, in that it becomes triumph.

**Keywords:** healing, miracle, sacrament, salvation, illness, suffering;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Holy Scripture shares with us, in an impressive icon, God’s love to man, even if man does not always understand the way this love manifests itself. The Old Testament, deeply indebted to the retributive mentality, any deed has its reward, gradually leads us to discovering the Messiah by its remarkable personalities: Abraham, Joseph, Moses and particularly Job, an icon of the suffering of the innocent one, prefiguration of Christ who, by assuming human form [S. Ioannes Damascenus, 1864, 1071], comes to vanquish suffering by eradicating its cause: sin.

### 2. THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE ISSUE OF SUFFERING

One of the most powerful key concepts in the Teachings of Christ the Saviour is precisely overcoming the Old Testament mentality: there is no punishment without sin, where there is suffering, sin came first [Grelot, 1986, 27]. Friends of Job, embracing this very traditional way of thinking, share the

Benthamite belief according to which virtue breeds happiness, and sin causes suffering [Spinsanti, 1990, 185; Popescu, 1935, 14]. The Old Testament does not lack in texts preaching this connection between sin and suffering, which must be interpreted in their Biblical context. Thus, the illness of Saul, king of the Jews (1 Samuel 16, 14); the illness of Gehazi, Elisha's servant (2 Kings 5, 27); the illness and healing of king Ezechiel (2 Kings 20, 1-11); the illness and death of Alchimos during the Makabim time (1 Makabim 9, 54-56); the illness and death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (2 Makabim 9, 11-12); the illness and death of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4, 28-30), etc. All these Biblical places speak of the same mentality, present in the Book of Job and during the entire Old Testament period: the greater the sin, the greater the punishment, so that suffering turns into acknowledgement of sin [Spinsanti, 1990, 185].

### 3. THE HEALING PERFORMED BY CHRIST – SYMBOL OF THE NEW VOW

The Jews during the Saviour's time were also indebted to this mentality. We find this very concept with the healing of the blind since birth (John 9): "*And His followers asked Him, saying: Teacher, who sinned, this one or his parents, since he was born blind?*" The same as with the Galileans who were slaughtered by Pilate when they were presenting their offering, or in the case of other 18 Jews that were crushed to death by the falling tower of Siloam, the Saviour refuses to accept death as punishment for their sins. *And there were people present who told Him of the Galileans whose blood Pilat had mixed with that of their offering. And answering, He said: Do you somehow believe that these Galileans were more sinful than all Galileans, because they underwent this? No! I tell you; but if you do not repent, you shall all die the same. Or those 18 people, crushed to death by the Siloam tower, do you believe them to have been more sinful than all people living in Jerusalem? No! I tell you; but if you do not repent, you shall all die the same*" (Lc. 13, 1-5). In reversed logics, we can talk about the fact that gaining eternal life does not depend on bearing suffering and illness, but on kindness and virtue, as we can see in the Story of the poor Lazarus and the merciless rich man (Lc. 16, 19-31). S. John Chrysostom says in this respect: "*Lazarus underwent nine types of suffering on earth not to be punished, but to become better. Which is exactly what happened.*" [S. John Chrysostom, 2005, 42]. The Saviour's Gospel is just as firm in this regard of the connection between suffering and sin: to the extent to which the illness and suffering of the righteous is a sacrament, we cannot conclude that it was brought about by sin. *Jesus answered: Neither did he, nor did his parents sin, so that God's work might become manifest in him.*" (John 9, 2-3). However, if we think about the Healing of the paralytic in Capernaum (Marcus 2, 1-12), as well as of the Healing of the invalid at the bath in Bethesda (John 5, 1-15), where we might make a cause and effect connection between sin and suffering and where we might find it is a contradiction, well, according to S. John Chrysostom, all healing miracles performed by Christ must also be read from the perspective of man's redemption, of mankind's redemption for God's Kingdom. "*He showed each and everybody - S. John Chrysostom says - that sins had been the cause of their illnesses. And in the very beginning, in the beginning of the world, sin had been the cause of illness...*" [S. John Chrysostom, 2005, 287]. Theology tried to clarify this contradiction, explaining it by means of consequences of the ancestral sin in the nature of man. and, from this point of view, the therapeutical work of Christ is an integral part of the salvation work of mankind. S. Matthew the Evangelist is the one to thus sum up the Saviour's mission: "*And Jesus walked throughout the Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing all the illness and the weakness in the people. And word of Him spread throughout Syria, and they would bring before Him all who were suffering, afflicted by many types of illnesses and torments, the possessed, the lunatic, the invalid, and He would cure them all*" (Matthew 4, 23-24). S. Luca the Ev. Supports the same idea when he creates the solemn context in which Jesus Christ the Saviour begins His activity announcing in the synagogue in Nazareth the sabbatical anniversary which foretold the eschatological redemption foreseen by prophets: "*And He came to Nazareth, where He had been raised, and, according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on Saturday and He rose to read. He was given the book of prophet Isaiah. And, opening the book, He found the part where it was written: «God's Holy Spirit is upon Me, for which He anointed Me to tell the poor the good news; He sent Me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach freedom to the enslaved and sight to the blind; to relieve the burdened. And to talk about the year that God is pleased with». And, closing the book and giving it to the servant, He sat down, and everyone's eyes were upon Him. And He started telling them: Today this Scripture is fulfilled before you.*" The healing performed by Christ on a Sabbatical day causing scandal among the legalist

Pharisee necessarily align along announcing this great sabbatical Jubilee, at the same time becoming a symbol of the New Vow inaugurated my Messianic times. The illnesses and suffering of the various people Christ heals usually display this function of a sign, a symbol of God's work manifesting itself: "*Neither did he, nor did his parents sin, so that God's work might become manifest in him*" (John 9, 3). The blind man in Jerusalem getting blind is here presented as an opportunity for God to bestow His grace on man. Yet, what is characteristic to these miraculous healing instances performed by Christ the Saviour, and which are not meant to be a simple re-balancing of bodily health and equilibrium, is precisely the fact that they represent the arrival of a new moral order as a manifestation of faith in Jesus Christ. That is why healing is often connected to forgiving sins as a consequence of faith. S. Cyril of Jerusalem, commenting on the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum, says that "*such is the power of the virtue of faith that the faithful is not the only one to experience redemption, but some experience it by means of other people's faith*" [S. Cyril of Jerusalem, 1885, 515]. Faith in Christ is not just some random trust in His power to perform a miracle, but it is foremost that faith that entails salvation, discovery and experience of knowing God. That is why the Saviour cannot be assimilated to any curer or healer because He heals the entire man, body and soul, as S. Cyril of Jerusalem says again: "*Jesus, as the Jews call the Saviour, means doctor in Greek. For He is the doctor of our souls and bodies*" [S. Cyril of Jerusalem, 1886, 678]. By Embodiment, the Son of God assumes His whole humanity with its corresponding suffering and shortcomings, except for sin as a means to relieve suffering, to heal and entirely deliver man from evil, illness and suffering. On the one hand, miraculous healing is a sign of divine power becoming manifest, and, on the other, the Calvary, the Cross and Death suffered are signs of voidance, of real descent to the human condition, and both the sigh of obedience to the Father. The meaning of Christ's Calvary and suffering do not represent the Father's punishment, but obedience and love for the Father. Christ Himself suffers abandonment, pain leading to death on the Cross, having complete, resolute faith in the Father's will. From this perspective, the Cross is not a symbol of pain, but of communication within obeying the Father. The suffering of the Son of God should thus be understood as originating in love and not the other way around [Chiodi, 2006, 357].

During His life on earth, Christ never tried to explain suffering, but, on the contrary, He had a compassionate attitude towards man experiencing suffering. And this compassion for the suffering man is not random compassion, but God's mercy in His role as a doctor capable of healing, or rather saving, both body and soul [Cascone, 2008, 259]. We can say that Christ's whole salvation work is a work of healing the entire individual who, through faith, receives a new life. Faith in Christ is the compulsory condition to achieve the healing miracle, as the Evangelist saints say in their accounts of healing the blind, the paralytic, the possessed, the leprous, etc. performed by Christ, but above them all, faith is the prerequisite that entails redemption [Chiodi, 2006, 354].

#### **4. CHRIST'S PERSONA – THE PROTOTYPE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN**

Throughout all the New Testament, the experience of healing and becoming healthier after various illnesses, as well as forgiving sins, are a proof of Christ's salvation work, eventually achieved by dying and resurrecting [Chiodi, 2006, 355]. All the physical healing performed by the Saviour foretells His redemption work achieved by His sacrifice on the Cross. And herein lies the great Sacrament: Christ crucified on the Cross defeats suffering and pain through His own suffering and pain. If until the Resurrection suffering and illnesses were only relieved by the manifestation of the divine power, through Resurrection suffering is granted a new dimension, being transfigured, in that it becomes triumph [Moldovan, 2008, 86].

Christ's persona is the prototype of every Christian faced with illness, suffering and pain. Christ embodied, suffered, was crucified and died not to eradicate suffering, but to transfigure it as obedience. As He was obedient towards the Father until the Calvary, Cross and Death, so must every Christian, by means of virtue and the Holy Sacraments, mortify any tendency to sin. S. Maximus the Confessor says that the Saviour "*celebrates obedience by His nature and experiences it by suffering, not only to save all through His own, cleansing it of all evil, but also to taste our obedience, learning our own, He who encompasses all knowledge, discovering what is asked of us and what we are forgiven for in connection with complete obedience, which brings the saved to the Father. How great and how filled with awe truly is the sacrament of our redemption*" [S. Maximus the Confessor, 1865, 1046BC]. For the Holy Fathers,

the persona of Christ the Saviour is a living reality in the life of the believer, manifested in the continuous and complete action of the Holy Spirit within the Holy Sacraments. Only to the extent to which this reality is lived as such by the believer during his life here, only to this extent can he gain access to God's Kingdom in heaven and achieve union to God [S. Simon the New Theologist, 1999, 338].

Christ reveals God by His humanity and being He Himself God, He shows us the way to salvation by inserting obedience to Him into our suffering, as a way of meeting God [Staniloae, 1983, 54]. Jesus Christ, by Embodiment, assumed human form, but in this form we are all embodied spiritually, and, by the sacrifice and the divine rendering of the human nature in Christ, we were all sacrificed and virtually rendered divine. Thus, our personal or subjective redemption means each of us should assume what we already have within in Christ. The way we grasp ourselves within Christ surpasses any reasonable understanding, remaining a great mystery.

Redemption is thus possible due to the fact that, in His human form, Christ revises the entire creation: heaven and the inhabited world, the skies and the earth, the sensitive and the intelligible, all outside of rot and sin. The same way in which through the old Adam all nature becomes sinful and suffering, through the new Adam, Christ, all nature is restored and acquires its entire Paradise glow. If, within Adam, all nature suffers from illness and rot, because of disobedience, the same way, within Christ, it regains health due to its obedience [S. Cyril of Alexandria, 1863, 790B].

We are encompassed within Christ because He embraced the human nature and revised in Himself the entire humanity, becoming the new Adam. The fall of mankind through Adam and Eve's fall had to be resolved by raising all mankind. Christ, in His salvation action, grants redemption to all people of all times forever.

Man's personal redemption is a continuation of what Christ virtually started. In this respect, Christ suffered with His face both towards God and towards mankind. By means of His suffering, He freed us from the curse and rendered us divine: "*as all die within Adam, so will they all resurrect within Christ*" (I Corinthians 15, 22). If through Adam we inherit the consequences of the ancestral sin, which are passed down to us as being prone to sin, the same way, virtually, by secret union to Christ, we achieve redemption. By virtue of our communion with Christ, we all find ourselves within Him.

## **5. THE HOLY SACRAMENTS – MEANS OF HEALING AND ACHIEVING REDEMPTION**

Through the Holy Sacraments, we keep alive the path the Saviour accomplished to ensure our salvation. All Sacraments more or less display the aspects of sacrifice and Sacrament. Because, with each Sacrament, Christ sacrifices Himself for us, and He offers Himself, along with us, to the Father as sacrifice, so that our sins might be forgiven and we might gain eternal life. All Sacraments are connected to Christ's sacrifice and, within all, we receive the power to sacrifice ourselves out of Christ's sacrifice [Staniloae, 1997, 72].

The sacrifice state can be accessed by Baptism. The Neophyte is enlightened by Christ, he is a new creature endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, received during Unction, and this new life develops and grows through the Eucharistic. Within this "initiation," the Holy Sacraments are not mere signs, but the "origins of rebirth" - ἀναγενεσις [Evdokimov, 1996, 140]. Within salvation, Christ's humanity creates a new humanity where He also includes us.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Christ's work as a human being started at His birth by Virgin Mary and continued up to the accomplishment of His human self by Resurrection and Ascension. There are different stages in this progressive state of His redeeming life: the baptism, the temptation, the Gethsemane garden, and particularly the cross. Each part of Christ's life means assuming fallen humanity with a view to healing it from within. Yet, Christ accomplishes all these within His own divine-human self for any man as potential fulfillment. Just as Adam had immortality as opportunity in Paradise, the Christian on "via Crucis" is granted potential access to the eternal kingdom. S. Gregory of Nazianzus expresses this truth saying that the Calvary, the Death and the resurrection of Christ have become healing medicine for all the illnesses of the human nature, "bringing the old Adam out of his fallen state, back next to the tree of life" [S. Gregorius Theologus, 1857, 435]. The Holy Fathers' oriental Theology [S. Ioannes Damascenus,

1864, 790-1226; S. Maximus the Confessor, 1864, 632BC] says that, in His human form, through all His divine-human actions, Christ not only restored the old Adam's nature, but He also continued God the Father's eternal plan for the first man, plan which was interrupted by Adam's fall, namely that He managed to render the human nature divine as potential achievement for each Christian.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Cascone M., *Diakonia della vita. Manuale di Bioetica [Life Deaconry. Textbook in Bioethics]*, Rome: Edizioni Santa Croce, 2008, 428 p.
- [2] Chioldi M., *Etica de la Vita [Life Ethics]*. Milan: Edizioni Glossa, 2006, 429 p.
- [3] Grelot P., *Nelle angosce la speranza. Ricerca biblica [In the Anguish of Hope. Biblical Research]*. Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1986, 355 p.
- [4] Evdokimov P., *Ortodoxia [Orthodoxy]*, Bucharest: Biblical Institute, 1996, 382 p.
- [5] Moldovan I., *Viața, suferința și moartea în condiția spirituală a existenței creștine [Life, Suffering and Death in the Spiritual State of Christian Existence]*, in "Sensul vieții, al suferinței și al morții" ["The Sense of Life, of Suffering, and of Death,"] International Symposium, Alba-Iulia, February 29 – March 2, 2008, Alba-Iulia: Reîntregirea [Reversion], 2008, p. 69-87.
- [6] Popescu- Mălăiești I., *Cartea lui Iov. Studiu introductiv [The Book of Job. Introductory Study]*, Bucharest, 1935, 68 p.
- [7] San Gregorius Theologus, *Oratio II*, 25, in JP. Migne, PG., vol. 35, 1857, col. 407 -514, here col. 435: "Haec omnia divinae cuiusdam erga nos disciplinae loco erant, infirmitatisque nostrae velut medicina quaedam, veterum Adamum eo, unde exciderant, reducens, et ad illud vitae lignum adducens."
- [8] S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis V. De fide et Symbolo*, 8, in JP. Migne, PG., vol. 33, 1885, col. 505-525, here col. 515 "Tantum porro virum habet fides, ut non solum ille qui credit salvus efficiatur, verum etiam per aliorum fidem alii salventur"
- [9] S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis X. De Uno Domino Jesu Christo*, 13, in JP. Migne, PG., vol. 33, 1886, col. 659-689, here col. 678: "Jesu itaque juxta Hebraeos Salvatorem sonat, in lingua vero Graeca eum qui sanat. Quandoquidem animarum est et corporum medicus, et spirituum curator".
- [10] S. Cyril of Alexandria, *Explanatio in Epistolam ad Romanos*, V, 18-19, in JP. Migne, PG., vol. 74, 1863, col. 774-854, here col. 790B: "Sicut igitur humana in Adamo natura, ob inobedientiam, corruptionis infirmitatem nacta est, et passiones eam invaserunt, sic eadem postea Christum liberata est, qui obediens Deo Patri fuit et peccatum non commisit".
- [11] S. Ioannes Damascenus *Expositio Fidei Orthodoxae*, in J.P.Migne, PG., vol. 94, 1864, col. 790-1226, here col. 1071: "numai ceea ce este asumat poate fi vindecat / only that which is assumed can be healed: Nam curatum non fuit, quod assumptum non est".
- [12] S. John Chrysostom, *Omilii la săracul Lazăr [Homilies to Poor Lazarus]*, Bucharest: Biblical Institute, 2005, 378p.
- [13] S. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum Liber*, 4, in JP. Migne, PG., vol. 91, 1865, col.1031-1417, here col 1046BC: "Hoc modo obedientiam in honore afficit Dominus, et eius experientiam perpetiendis malis capit, non tantum ut salvet nos, totam a vitio purgando naturam, verum etiam ut expoloret nostram obedientiam, et nostra omnia intelligat experiendo, qui alias omnem cognitionem sua natura complectitur; ita nimirum dispiceret quantum et a nobis exigi aequum foret, et quantum condonari, ad perfectam obedientiam; per hac enim eos suo Patri adducere solet qui salute digni videbantur. Quam magnum, quam vere tremendum est nostrae salutis mysterium!"
- [14] S. Maximus the Confessor, *Răspunsuri către Talasie [Answers to Tallassee]*, Questiones [Questions], 61, PG., vol. 90, 1864, col. 626D-646C, here col. 632BC: "Deus igitur vere homo factus est, alianque naturae secundi ortus dedit originem, laborum compedio in futurae vitae desinentem voluptatem. Quemadmodum enim primus parens Adamus, qua divinum transgressus mandatum est, aliam ortus originem ex voluptate ac libidine consistentem, atque in mortem intermedio labore aerumanque desinentem, contra ac se prima habebat, consilio sequiore induxerat, ac serpentis suasu, voluptatem anteriori labori non succedentem, sed quae ipsa potius,

in laborem aerumnamque cederet, adinvenerat; [...] sic et Dominus factus homo, atque aliam secundi ortus originem ex Spiritu Sancto naturae fabricatus, justissimamque Adami, quae labore aerumnaque consciscitur, suscipiens mortem, quae in eo utique iniquissima fuerit, ea scilicet ratione, quod ortus sui originem, iniquissimam ex primi parentis transgressione voluptatem atque libidem, minime nacta sit.” [God truly became man and He established another origin for the world for its second birth, an origin that He leads work and pain to future joy. As our first father, Adam, disobeying the divine commandment, gave the world a foreign origin when compared with the original one, which consisted in the pleasure of the voluptuous and which lead to death by pain; and he lent his ear to the whispered advice of the snake, pleasure that was not caused by prior pain, but which led to pain. [...] Yet, the same way, by embodiment, God established a different origin for a second birth within the Holy Spirit and He did away with both extremes. With the origin and the end of the human nature after Adam, as some that had not been given in the beginning.]

- [15] S. Simon the New Theologist, *Cateheze. Scrieri II [Catecheses. Writings II]*, Sibiu: Deisis, 1999, 382 p.
- [16] Spinsanti S., *Vita Fizica [Physical Life]*. In Goffi T, Piana G. *Corso di Morale [Course in Morale]*, Brescia: Queriniana, 1990, p. 127 – 281.
- [17] Staniloae D., *Nota 10 [Grade 10]*, to S. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, 4, Bucharest: Biblical Institute, 1983.
- [18] Staniloae D., *Teologie Dogmatică și Simbolică [Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology.]* vol. III, Bucharest: Biblical Institute, 1997, 312 p.





<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.75-79>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## THE ECLESIOLOGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL DIMENSION OF SPIRITUAL EXELLENCY

**Constantin -Valentin Bugiulescu (a)\***

\*Corresponding author

(a) Ph.D. Student, Doctoral School Faculty of Orthodox Theology „Justinian Patriarch”, University of Bucharest, ROMANIA, E-mail: bugiulescu\_constantin@yahoo.com

### *Abstract*

The Church is a sure reality through which mankind can rise from the burden of sin. The Church expresses through the Holy Spirit all those who have been redeemed and harmonized in the love of Christ. That is why the Church contains millions and millions of hypostases, just as the Hypostasis of the Son of God comprised in Him, without absorbing it, the whole human nature assumed by Him as a connection to all mankind. In this sense, perfection is accomplished in Christ as a sacramental church, because He encompasses all in Himself as a center of straight lines that start from Him. The indispensable participation in the life of the Church, through a life after Christ, according to the attributes of the Church, highlights in us the grace of adoption, given to us through the Holy Baptism in the Holy Spirit in a life after the will of Christ. In the Church, we clothe the new man who renews himself in knowledge in the image of Him who made him (Colossians 3: 9-10).

**Keywords:** The church; perfection; Christianity; saving;

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

True moral perfection of man is accomplished only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God Incarnate. In their desire to achieve perfection all the way to the likeness of God, humans are modeled on the Savior, for He is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14: 6) through which the Father can be reached. Exellency is continuous progress, it is constant growing, it is unceasing ascension on the golden staircase that leads to the light palace of happy life, illuminated by truth, holiness, joyless joy.

Perfection is never over, it does not have a climax, from which it will not continue.

Perfection is flight from the top to the top, namely from a high peak, to a higher peak, the peaks becoming higher and higher "that fade in the sky's blue, through which it will continue to climb"(Ioan G. Coman 1995, 217). To this perfection, the Savior calls us when he says, "Be ye, but ye are perfect, as your perfect Heavenly Father is" (Matthew 5:48).

## **2. THE UNION WITH CHRIST BY PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

God's perfect knowledge is conditioned in the case of the created natures by His Incarnation, this being the perfect expression of God's manifestation in the way that He Himself becomes visible, but "not as He is, but as He who sees Him is capable, through a proportional division of the vision with the poverty of those who see" (Vladimir Lossky, 1995, 79).

An unseen and unknown God in His being is made known and revealed by coming out of His own self, descending to the created beings. It is His descent from Heavens as a work of His will through which the Word, as the unseen face of God, is seen by angels and men. The kenosis is the outpouring of God from His being through His works or energies. God's contemplation thus has a sacramental aspect, and the Church becomes the space of holiness where union with God is accomplished by the Holy Mysteries.

God has allowed salvation to be available only through His Son. Only those who believe and work in Jesus, who receive Him as Lord and Savior, and continue in a vital and intimate relationship with Him, will receive the benefits of His death on the cross. Salvation hangs on the status of being in Christ. Being in Christ means being in the Church. To be outside of Christ means to have sunk into the world's sin without hope or safety. Thus, salvation depends on remaining in the relationship with Jesus Christ, being faithful to His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit in us (E. H. Schillebeeckx 1966,123). Christians, through the church, are sons of God (I John 5:13).

Christ saves people as it expands in them through the Holy Spirit, because it incorporates them into Himself and gradually assimilates them with His resurrected humanity. The Church is this extension of Christ by the Holy Spirit into humans, this laboratory in which the assimilation of humans with the risen Christ is gradually realized. Each of us receives salvation through the grace and divine gift of the Spirit, but it can come to the perfect measure of virtue through faith, love and the struggle of his free will, as he or she can inherit eternal life through the grace but also through justice (D. Belu, 1956, 552).

## **3. THE CHURCH AND THE WORK OF CHRIST IN PEOPLE THROUGH THE HOLY MYSTERIES**

Salvation can only be achieved in the Church; it is the field of action of the energy of grace, that springs from Christ, that is, of the Holy Spirit, who dwells fully in the humanity of the risen Christ, and from it, it is also communicated to us. Believers make up the mystical Body of the Lord, that is, the Church. The notion of Mystical Body expresses a more intimate and mystical part of the church, while the notion of seen Church as an exteriorized one, embodied in three exponents: the place, the institution, and the hierarchy.

Through the Church, the kingdom of God is expressed in the world, which has united the whole world from the Pentecost when the first Christian community was formed until the end of the world when we will have a new heaven and a new earth. The word "Mystical Body of Christ" always calls into mind the mystery of the frightening divine economy of the Incarnation, whose extension is "His Body" (N. Chițescu, 1942, 298).

It thus bounds itself to infinity, not only as a perceived earthly organization, as a present intersection of the two eternities: the past and the future, but also as an extension of the endless past to the eternal God, when it will be in a state of paradigm, and of the future that will not end, beyond the visible edges of this ephemeral world.

The Church, the mysterious body extended to humanity is the sure reality through which mankind can rise from the burden of sin. In the Body of Christ, the whole of the redeemed humanity is expressed in the Body of Christ, harmonized in the love of Christ, comprising millions and millions of hypostases, each complementing the building of the body to the praise and magnificence of the Creator. So, the notion of a mystical body has a sense of supernatural, wonderful. Seeking to deepen it further, we find that it also has that "mystical" and that of "hidden, secret", it has Christ the image of the unseen God revealed in the sacred holiness.

In the Church, each believer is part of the Church, and each receives the grace of the Holy Spirit through the Holy Mysteries, and through their communion acquires salvation. From that "he who believes

and will be baptized will be saved ... (Mark XVI, 16); grace is transmitted in the communion of believers, sharing with the Spirit of Christ, uniting with Christ not only as human, but also as God, and through Him and the Father. As a consequence of the presence and work of the Spirit, there is the impetus towards the brotherhood with all humans, "for the Holy Spirit is the divine energy that tends to bring forth the adoption of all, in relation to the Father, and thereby the universal brotherhood. The believer, who feels the Son of the heavenly Father, sees all humans as such, even if they do not have this understanding, so he or she sees them all as his or her brothers and sisters. The Spirit, filling it with the enthusiasm of the paternal fellowship with the Father, fills him or her implicitly with the brotherhood's impulse for all humans. The Spirit, through the very fact that it is the Spirit of the Son, is the spirit of a son, wants to fill all with this spirit, towards unity, it being the spirit of communion.

The sharing of Holy Spirit is only through the Mysteries of the Church. That is why life in the Church manifests itself as an endless communion with the Spirit of Christ, with the spiritual powers that our flesh carries in the person of the Savior. We receive these new powers from Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Mysteries. By fulfilling the commandments of Christ, these spiritual powers bear us through the same labors and states through which Christ Himself endured in His life.

To be able to bear the image of the heavenly One, *σώμα πνευματικόν*, to reach "the state of the perfect man" (Ephesians 4:14), the human must unite with Christ. This union with Christ is accomplished first through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and continues throughout his life through the other Holy Mysteries. The Savior sees the Sacrament of the Baptism as indispensable for the attainment of perfection: "If someone is not born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3, 5) and" He who believes and will be baptized, will save himself; and he that believeth not shall condemn himself "(Mark 16, 16).

So the mystical experience in Orthodox theology is permeated by the liturgical life. Only through the Holy Mysteries man enters into intimate communion with God. The importance of the Holy Spirit's grace for spiritual life is capital, without him the knowledge of God would not be possible. God becomes known to the human through faith, because of the uncreated energies by which God is made known to the human.

#### **4. THE DESTINATION, UNIQUE AND SACRAMENTAL MISTIC TRUTH**

The moral perfection of believers, as we have seen, becomes the only condition of the mystical experience, because those who have reached moral perfection have come to the full mystical knowledge of the truths of faith and to the full gracious union with Christ. The objective-mystical union with Christ, which is accomplished and perfected in the Church through the Holy Mysteries, must and can be externalized in the life of every Christian. Every Christian feels this union due to the presence of divine grace in him, and giving himself or herself intimately to God, he or she succeeds in perfecting this union.

Metropolitan Nicolae Mladin says that the mystical human is the Christian "for whom the objective-mystical union with Christ becomes conscious, is updated, becomes a fact of spiritual experience" (Nicolae Mladin, 2012, 257). Thus, the mystic is the human who has reached spiritual maturity, through a continuous and steady ascetic-mystical process, is the spiritual human, the spiritualized human. It is true that the mystical experience is a divine gift, realized in grace through the free and conscious participation of the human will and reason, but the closeness of the soul to God cannot be accomplished without the involvement of reason. The mystical experience is rational, and the one who wants to unite with the Supreme Reason will have to purify and restore his faculties first, including reason.

The existence of the world is seen as exerting also, besides other joints, all the powers of the soul in the ascension towards God. If God wanted to make Himself known at once, the world of things would be deprived of one of its meanings. The existence of the world itself as a way to God is proof that the supreme knowledge of God is not an irrational act, but an over-rational act, that is, it is not accomplished by premature renunciation of reason, by a direct leap out of reason, but by exceeding reason, a level that does not disintegrate it, but involves it, after the activation and use of all its resources, after the fullest exercise of its powers (Dumitru Stăniloae, 2002, 230-231).

The mystical experience, understood as a life in connection with God, the life that has God in itself, has the ultimate goal of deification and union of the human with God. "Mystic," says Koepgen, "always has one goal: the deification and union of the human with God, without the confusion with Him. In Christianity, everything is necessarily oriented towards future perfection. Christian mysticism is not based on a predisposition of the humans that manages to confound themselves with the deity in a pantheistic experience of union with it, but it is the actualization of the incarnation of God in the believer" (Koepgen George, 1939).

In the vision of St. Maximus, mysticism is not unreasonable, but it implies reason in the process of "assimilating man in Christ", it is not an unreal product of the phantasmagoric side of the human, it is connected to the very human being, to its person, it being accessible to all who follow Christ. Through this position Saint Maxim the Confessor "has succeeded in uniting philosophy with mystical theology, the beginning of creation with its end," the straight line ", but not in an abstract and speculative way, but only in the Person of the Son as the creating and redeeming Logos, by virtue of the universal and harmonious rational order of all creation that has its center of gravity in Himself" ( Dumitru Popescu, 2005, 434).

In this respect Ioannis Zizioulas says: "It is perhaps for the first time in the history of philosophy as a whole when such a thing could have been expressed, because there is no other case, as far as I know, in which philosophical language has succeeded in uniting the beginning and the end of the being without closing in in a vicious circle. What Saint Maxim has accomplished is nothing but the miracle of making the circle compatible with the straight line.

The manner in which he succeeded, namely the happy relationship between ontology and love, and the development of an ontology of love in the notion of "ecstasis", can have tremendous value both in theology and contemporary philosophy" (Ioannis Zizioulas, 1996, 68).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Perfection, as the supreme mission of the human, involves an ecclesiological and sacramental work made gradually by the progressive breaking from the material to receive the spiritual, in which the limits and boundaries of human nature are established in the divine intimacy, having God as boundary, whose brightness is reflected in the beings who approach Him, like the mirror that approaches the light of the sun, but in order for the light to shine, the mirror of our soul must be pure and without sin.

The greatest good given to the human, is the soul that cannot be defined by a material representation, but by report and analogy to its Creator, he must wisely select the negative influences from the body to appear pure, full of glory, and light before God. The whole world, through the human "is an iconic world", being potentially portrayed in the divine paradigm. Through the human, the world and creation presents itself as a liturgy and cosmic service, which makes the heavenly world serve and sing with the earthly one, all being a "play" of love, communion, and perfection, from which the mesmerizing smell grows and blossoms, which sanctifies and fully realizes the image of the human, making it like God's through the consumption of the Holy Eucharist, as the eternal praise of God the Creator.

In other words, man was created as priest of the cosmos. He brings the entire created world as sacrificial offering to the praise of God, calling His love over the world through this eternal cosmic liturgy. The human subject is called to a conscious spiritual-material life in communion with God. He is called to sanctify all creation through asceticism and spiritual life, lifting it gradually through its endless wealth, to the fullness of a transfigured nature.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] COMAN IOAN, *Importanta si sensul desavarsirii în monahism*, in Studii Teologice, an VII , nr. 3-4 /1995
- [2] LOSSKY VLADIMIR, *Vederea lui Dumnezeu*, traducere de Remus Rus, Ed. IBM al BOR, București 1995,
- [3] SCHILLEBEECK E. H., *Hristos – Taina întâlnirii noastre cu Dumnezeu*, în „Ortodoxia”, XVIII (1966), nr. ,1
- [4] BELU DUMITRU, *Împărăția lui Dumnezeu și Biserica*, în Rev. „Studii Teologice”, an VIII (1956), nr. 9-10,
- [5] CHIȚESCU NICOLAE, „*Biserica, Trupul tainic al Domnului*”, în Rev. „Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, an LX (1942), nr. 7-8,
- [6] MLADIN NICOLAE MITROPOLITUL, *Hristos-viața noastră. Asceza și mistica paulină*, Ediția a II-a, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu 2012
- [7] STĂNILOAE DUMITRU, *Ascetica și mistica Bisericii Ortodoxe*, Ed. IBM al BOR, București, 2002,
- [8] KOEPGEN GEORGE, *Die Gnosis des Christentums*, Salzburg, 1939
- [9] POPESCU DUMITRU, *Iisus Hristos Pantocrator*, Ed. IBM al BOR, București 2005,
- [10] ZIZIOULAS IOANNIS, *Ființa Ecclesială*, Ed. Bizantină, București, 1996,
- [11] BULGAKOV SERGHEI, *Icoana, cinstirea sfintelor icoane*, trad. Ierom. Paulin Lecca, Ed. Anastasia, București 2000



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcfsare.2019.3.80-85>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS – A HUGE CHALLENGE

Adrian Ignat

\*Corresponding author

(a) ) Associate Prof. PhD., Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Sciences of Education, “Valahia”  
University of Târgoviște, Romania, Email: [adrianignat1974@yahoo.com](mailto:adrianignat1974@yahoo.com)

### *Abstract*

The survival of the planet Earth in its entire reality is the major problem we face today. Both scientists and all Christians are concerned about the evolution of the ecological crisis. That is why, both at the level of the whole of human society and at the level of the Church, the evolution of life, the slippage of the present ecosystem has become a main point on the agenda. The joint efforts of the competent institutions of the world's states, Christian Churches, environmental organizations have succeeded, at some points, in the adjustment of pollution and the implementation of policies to protect the environment. In this context, we can say that in some points the human desire and the survival of the earth are similar. In any case, no human desires or desires can be realized as long as the earth no longer exists. On this paper I will try to emphasis some aspects of ecological crisis and how they affect us. Also, I will try to underline the Christian points of view, as the solutions proposed for that.

**Keywords:** ecology; crisis; anthropocentrism; biodiversity; environment; ecosystem;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Our world is connected with us, and we are living on it. For that, we can make the difference. This world is today how it is, because of our involvement or our indifference. The ecological crisis, well connected with the economic crisis, represents a challenge and a dilemma for the entire world, which determines not only reflection, but also action. Everyone is called to contribute for the sake of our world.

If we want to live in a normal and wonderful world, we must preserve it. Ignoring all environmental changes from nature, we became indifferent to our lives, to the future of entire world. The preservation of our planet became important not only for the secular society and organizations, but also to “the world religions”, which “*have been instrumental in formulating views of nature and in creating perspectives on the role of the human in nature*” (Mary Evelyn Tucker, John A. Grim, 1999, 11).

The solutions for better world depends by the perspective of every society, of every human understanding. Despite of differences, everyone has agreed to the fact that: we must be preoccupied by our world; without our involvement our world will not be the same tomorrow as it is today. Unfortunately, today “*no one religious tradition or philosophical perspective has the ideal solution to the environmental crisis*” (Mary Evelyn Tucker, John A. Grim, 1999, 11).

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Industrial civilization has polluted the environment with toxic chemicals and radioactive elements. This fact has led to a degradation of our global ecosystem. “*The secularism, humanism, and materialism of industrial culture demystified and undetermined earlier environmental ethics, aggravating the destructive impact of industrial technology*” (J. Baird Callicott, 1999, 33).

Orthodox theology has been concerned with the human-nature dialogue, understanding that only through a partnership man and nature can reach the perfect edge in the kingdom of God. Not the exhaustion of natural resources, not the use of unnatural means to solve it, are the goals to which man is directed, but the collaboration and harmony. Among the most remarkable theologians of today who have dealt with the ecology relationship with the Church, about Eco-theology, we mention: PF. Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch, Ioannis Zizioulas, Dumitru Stăniloae, Dumitru Popescu, Gheorghe Petraru, etc.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Dealing with the warming of atmosphere, thinning of the ozone layer, the rapid disappearance of some plant and animal species, the destruction of the tropical rainforest that surrounds the earth, and many other events, and using the biblical teachings, the Cristian Church taught that the human being is only a steward, not an owner of this world. We received this world, and we have the duty to protect, and gave to the next generations as we received. The destruction of it means a destruction of our way of living. For that, what we can do? Which is the contribution to preservation of our planet? What says the Christian Church about that?

## 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will try to identify the ecological crisis as a huge challenge of our world. The aim of our approach is to understand the role and contribution of Christians on this world. Christians, as every inhabitant of this world, must make difference, learning from biblical and patristic teachings and applying nowadays. Until our society and our life will not change, we cannot keep this world the same. For that, the Orthodox Church have taught and practice a responsible life in the world, called Eco-theology.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODS

On this paper I will use the theoretical methods of research, trying to identify the some practical solutions. The Christian Church must have an important role on the world, preserving it for the future generations. Awareness of decline of our world is the first step. After that, everyone is called to act for the preservation of the environment. Believing that is our duty, as Christians and inhabitants, to be involved on the protection of our world, as creation of God.

## 6. FINDINGS

### 6.1. Domination or Stewardship. A Christian point of view

Despite the human perception that all goods acquired or inherited in this world are ours or are our property, man is only a controller of the goods received from the Creator. Often the gains in technique, the welfare, the worries, the tribulations, or even the joys of this life make us believe that we are eternal, that here is Heaven and Hell<sup>1</sup>, that the rich and well-ranked social will also be in the afterlife. Nothing more untrue! Very often, right here on earth, these myths have been broken, they have been turned into shadows and dreams. People holding key positions, fortunes, were honoured by the whole society. It has been proved, however, that this is but a shadow and a dream; the expectations of others and theirs have been mistaken. There was, however, a category of rich people who enjoyed themselves, like the rich man who gave birth to the land, all right here on earth. But at the terrible judgment, how will he respond to the righteous and immortal Judge?

The Orthodox Church has always maintained that man is not the owner of the world, but only an administrator of material goods, which he has received and ought to be aware of. The world is just a sensitive scale, which is meant to climb man to greater and more comprehensive meanings. The

---

<sup>1</sup> There are some who believe that those who are wealthy and have a high social standing are right in Heaven, and the others are in Hell, in the hell of poverty, of indigence, etc. For “*the satisfied never believes in the hungered*”, as one of our Romanian proverbs says.

contemporary man, stolen by the mirage of this world, believes that the world is the ultimate destination, it is the target to which it is heading. He does not see the world as the space of his encounter with God, his dialogue with the Creator (Rom. 1: 19-20).

Because of the scientific conquests of our time, the contemporary man is tempted by all the professional goals, by the horizon of major events, by his own space of life. Thus, the civilized world becomes a wall in the way of others' suffering and solidarity with them. Without mercy, no matter how bright, the world remains captive and disfigured. A world in which the human subject has not gone beyond the material things for its fellow men, but has remained with them.

Wealth, if not wisely used, is nothing but shade and dream. The one who finds its support in material goods forgets their role in human life, the fact that God is the one who measures with the same measure as we measure, that we have all received it as a blessing, not as a curse, for the benefit of one another in God. Even nature has an important role to play in the mission entrusted to man on this earth. It is not a means for man to alienate himself from God and to escape his selfishness, but a useful partner on the path to God.

The possession of property and fortune is often accompanied by a severe spiritual poverty<sup>2</sup>. The rich man only thinks of his wealth, becoming his slave<sup>3</sup>. Instead of enjoying these goods, not squandering them with pleasure and fun, enriching them with a lot of wisdom to acquire a more precious good - the Kingdom of God, the rich see things selfishly, like the rich man from the parable of the Saviour Christ who gave birth to the land. The transcendent material wealth, earthly, that is, wealth and money, "*must not be an end in itself, but a means of seeking and cultivating the inalienable, heavenly spiritual wealth that is gained by love for God and for people through charity and other good deeds*" (Daniel, 2009).

The man is only the administrator of the goods entrusted to him. The world is just a sensitive scale, which is meant to climb man to greater and more comprehensive meanings. The contemporary man, stolen by the mirage of this world, believes that the world is the ultimate destination, it is the target to which it is heading. He does not see the world as the space of his encounter with God, his dialogue with the Creator (Rom. 1: 19-20). Referring to the fact that we are only administrators here on earth, St. John

---

<sup>2</sup> The researches that have as objects of study wealth and happiness are full of contradictions. For decades, studies showed that more money did not bring a greater degree of spiritual fulfilment. A study conducted in 2010 claims that super-rich people are still pleased with their lives, but they also struggle with daily frustrations. A new study co-funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation shows that ultra-wealthy people are not really happy, but are worried about worries and fears caused by too much money. According to an article published in *The Atlantic*, survey respondents were generally unsatisfied with how money has led to greater anxiety both on a professional, sentimental or family level. <http://www.ziare.com/life-style/fericire/banii-aduc-fericirea-super-bogatii-nu-prea-cred-asta-1081925>

<sup>3</sup> Eloquent in this regard is *The 8-minute Legend and the wealth of the soul*.

The legend says that a poor woman with a baby in her arms, passing by a cave, heard a mysterious voice that told her:

- "Enter and take everything you want, but do not forget what is more important. Remember that when you exit the gate it will be closed forever. So take advantage of this opportunity, but do not forget what is more important!"

The woman entered the cave and found many riches. Fascinated by gold and jewels, he placed his baby on a rock and began to gather everything he could. The mysterious voice spoke again: "You only have 8 minutes!"

When the eight minutes passed, the woman, loaded with gold and precious stones, ran out of the cave and the gate closed. Then he remembered having forgotten the child inside, and the gate had closed forever. Wealth has lasted a little, and despair forever.



Chrysostom says: “So, because they are not ours, but the Master, we had to spend with our brethren, because for this reason the rich in the Gospel was blamed, as well as those who do not feed the Lord, as some who did not” (St. John Chrysostom, 2005, 102).

The Christian Church has emphasized the responsibility of the man for all creation. The man, along with creation, should move towards perfection, not destruction. *“The word “ecology” contains the prefix “eco,” which derives from the Greek word oikos, signifying “home” or “dwelling.” How unfortunate, then, and indeed how selfish it is that we have reduced its meaning and restricted its application. This world is indeed our home. Yet it is also the home of everyone, just as it is the home of every animal creature and of every form of life created by God. It is a sign of arrogance to presume that we human beings alone inhabit this world. Moreover, it is a sign of arrogance to imagine that only the present generation enjoys its resources”* (<https://www.patriarchate.org/bartholomew-quotes>).

## **6.2. The ecological crisis on the XX century**

It is incomprehensible why only starting with the XX century ecological crisis and care for the survival of the earth have become a landmark on the work agenda of society. In 1968, American historian Lynn White, writing about the historical roots of the ecological problem, categorically attributes it to the Western intellectual tradition and her predominantly rational views of man, and imputes theology and the Church with great responsibility for this evolution (Ioannis Zizioulas, 1999, 34).

Pollution, exhaustive consumption, globalization, permanent desire for welfare regardless of costs, man’s lack of connection with God and the world, focusing on egocentrism, and focusing only upon our own human creation have made this world not a true God’s garden, in which man would have enjoyed the fruits he received, but an instrument to achieve his own goals. *“The experience of the two world wars and their catastrophic consequences came to appease the optimism of the 18th and 19th century Enlightenment prophets who believed that by cultivating reason and spreading knowledge the twentieth century would become a paradise for the human nation”* (Ioannis Zizioulas, 1999, 31).

Global warming, thinning of the ozone layer, the rapid disappearance of some plant and animal species, the destruction of the tropical rainforest that surrounds the earth, and many other events have caused a growing concern among society. Different views have emerged about the reaction that people should have to these challenges: the first method, also called *“anthropocentrism”* - utilitarianism, for example - is applied in the Western society and did not yield the expected results. The second method is called *“biocentrism”* (centred on life). It is built on animal welfare ethics and attempts to extend the relationship of human ethics beyond sentient animals to all living things. The third method, also called *“ecocentrism”*, is done on the lines of Aldo Leopold’s ethics (J. Baird Callicott, 1999, 31). Following Darwin, Leopold believed that ethics had its origins, as understood, in social organization, and that we humans have the duty and obligation to keep it in the community we belong to as self-standing members. Thus, he argues that *“the ethical realm changes the role of homo sapiens from a conqueror of society to a simple member or citizen”* (Aldo Leopold, 1949).

In a pertinent theological analysis of human-world relations, the presence of God must also be indispensable. The man, the image of God, cannot forever ignore his vocation and his eternal purpose - the reformation to God. *“In the context of the current technical and informational society, man preserving and giving life to his religious beliefs inherited in the living, confessional, ecclesial tradition is and remains the same spiritual, rational and free being that is defined and understood in a logical and ontological relationship with God”* (Gheorghe Petraru, 2002, 11).

In this spiritual journey, as in the Old Testament “the stairway of Jacob”, man is connected with the world. Christianity has always had a positive attitude towards the ecological issue. The whole Christian doctrine speaks about sustaining and promoting our values. Place, space, culture, spirituality, our national being are landmarks that link us to this world, our living on this earth.

In order to preserve this world from destruction, observes a Western author, “*there is a need for a renewal of the whole Western religious-spiritual tradition in relation to the full functioning of the Earth’s bio-systems. We must move from the spirituality of the alienation of the natural world to the spirituality of the connection with the natural world, from the spirituality of the simple justice for men to the spirituality of justice for all the other components of the great earthly community*” (Thomas Berry, 2000, 128).

In one of his articles, Thomas Berry presents the three phases of the loss of man’s connection with the natural world (Thomas Berry, 2000, 128-131). The first phase begins with the encounter of primary Christian spirituality with Greek humanism in the basic form of anthropocentrism that the world has promoted so long through the centuries that it has lost human sense as an integral component of the great community of existence.

The second phase of the removal of humanity from the natural world came when the plague (the Black Death) broke over Europe between 1347-1349. This period was devastating for western civilization. One third of Europe’s population died during these years. It seems that the survivors have not cried their dead; they themselves felt they would soon die. The plague was widespread in Florence where, in the summer of 1348, less than 45,000 people survived out of the 90,000 who lived there in the beginning of the year. In Sienna, at the same time, out of 40,000 people only 15,000 survived.

The problem was that people did not know how to explain what had happened to them. They had no knowledge of germs. They could only conclude that the world had become weaker. God has punished the world. There was a great need for repentance, for withdrawing from the world, and for a quest for redemption.

The greatest consequences of plague can be seen in the spirituality of the detachment of the world as it was predicted by Thomas de Kempis in the mid-fifteenth century. The Book *The Imitation of Christ* became classical for Western Christian spirituality during the five centuries from that time to the mid-twentieth century (Thomas Kempis, 2001).

The third moment in the loss of connection with the natural world happened at the end of the nineteenth century, when man abandoned his role in renewing the organic farming economy in favour of the extractive industrial economy. This was the decisive event that moved the entire scientific and technological power of the modern world into a program of merciless destruction of the planet’s organic functioning. At this point, the planet has lost its wonder and majesty, grace and beauty, its life-giving qualities. The planet has become an object of use. “*Modernism has started from the premise that nature is dependent on man, and that man can do all he can with nature, but has forgotten that man is also dependent on nature and if he does not take measures to limit the ever more worrying proportions of pollution will undermine his own life and existence*” (Dumitru Popescu, 2001, 13).

Through these three phases of the planet’s ablation, the profoundly spiritual aspect of the earth was almost completely denied. The expression of Toma d’Aquino that “*the order of the universe is the last and the noblest perfection in things*” has lost its meaning. Any awareness of the spiritual communication made by the natural world with man has become extremely weak. From a Christian perspective, the value of creatures ultimately derives not from utility, market price, beauty or charm. Indeed, their value derives from their Creator (Calvin B. Dewitt, 2000, 300). To recognize in the world the creation of God is a gift of the Holy Spirit, just as the text of creation and subsequent scriptural confirmations are the fruit of divine inspiration that gives the sacred author the vision of all existence as a dependence on God and in the light of God (Gheorghe Petraru, 2002, 109).

The social and environmental problems that we face at the beginning of the 21st century call on us to identify some causes that often go beyond our temporal and spatial boundaries. Only through “*Christian spirituality*”, through a desired and sustained commitment to the whole world, we can make our approach viable in our own lives (Stephen R. L. Clark, 1998, 123).

## 7. CONCLUSION

Along with industrial development, human society has been increasingly struggling with an ecological crisis. The rapid consumption of natural resources, the exhaustion of resources due to the waste of contemporary society: water, food, warmth, convenience and lack of interest for the good of the planet that shelters us have created the premises of a departure from everything that surrounds us. The basis of this attitude was the desire of man to have welfare, regardless of the price to be paid. This aspect is also linked to man's complete perception of nature, transforming it from a partner into a tool that can be exploited at its discretion.

Today's ecological crisis is deeply rooted in excessive economic development, unprejudiced exploitation of nature, even in sacrificing it for good and for human well-being. It had planetary dimensions, its consequences being noticeable from now on. On this point, the Ecumenical Council of Churches at the General Assembly of Canberra (1991) stated that "*the human species, which entered the stage of history and creation only eighty thousand years ago, was able to destroy only two centuries since the beginning of the industrial age, which nature has built over four and a half years. This crisis, it says, has its roots deep in the unshakable man's lusts of exploiting natural resources for power and enrichment. The economy and the industrial era was irresponsible to treat nature from the desire for profit. Everything is the result of an autonomous concept of the world that has eliminated any presence of God in the cosmos seen*" (C.O.E., 1991, 2).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Bartholomew His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch, *Environmental Justice and Peace*, <https://www.patriarchate.org/bartholomew-quotes>.
- [2] Berry Thomas, *Christianity's Role in the Earth Project*, in „Christianity and Ecology”, edited by Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether, Harvard University Press, 2000
- [3] C.O.E., *Septième Assemblée de Canberra*, Section I, *Esprit de vie, garde ta création!*, Australia, 1991
- [4] Callicott J. Baird, *Toward a global environmental ethic*, in „Worldviews and Ecology. Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment”, edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A. Grim, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1999
- [5] Clark Stephen R. L., *Is nature God's will?*, in „Animals on the Agenda”, edited by Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1998
- [6] Daniel Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *The Risen Christ, the richness of our life*, Pastoral of the Holy Easter 2009.
- [7] Dewitt Calvin B., *Behemoth and Batrachians in the Eye of God: Responsibility to Other Kinds in Biblical Perspective*, in vol. „Christianity and Ecology”, edited by Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether, Harvard University Press, 2000
- [8] Kempis Thomas, *Urmarea lui Hristos (The Imitation of Christ)*, Lumină din lumină, Bucharest, 2001.
- [9] Leopold, Aldo, *A sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1949.
- [10] Petraru Rev. Gheorghe, *Lumea, creația lui Dumnezeu. Perspective biblice, teologice-patristice și științifice (The world, creation of God. Biblical, theological-patristic and scientific perspectives)*, Trinitas, Iași, 2002
- [11] Popescu Rev. Prof. PhD. Dumitru, *Omul fără rădăcini (Man without roots)*, Nemira Publishing Press, Bucharest, 2001
- [12] St. John Chrysostom, *Tâlcuri la Epistola întâi către Corintheni (Interpretations to the First Epistle to Corinthians)*, X, Sophia Publishing, Bucharest, 2005
- [13] Zizioulas Mitrop. Ioannis, *Creația ca Euharistie (Creation as Eucharist)*, translated by Caliope Papacioc, Bizantină, Bucharest, 1999
- [14] [www.ziare.com/life-style/fericire/banii-aduc-fericirea-super-bogatii-nu-prea-cred-asta-1081925](http://www.ziare.com/life-style/fericire/banii-aduc-fericirea-super-bogatii-nu-prea-cred-asta-1081925)



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### MANAGEMENT OF 1977 SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS EVENTS IN ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Ovidiu-Danut Soare (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [ovidiu.soare@yahoo.com](mailto:ovidiu.soare@yahoo.com),

#### *Abstract*

The study analyses the social and religious events in the Romanian society of 1977, and the way in which the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR) succeeded in managing them. The 70s in the Romanian society were characterised by authoritarianism, which was felt in all social spheres. And the Romanian Orthodox Church was not exempted from this. In 1977 there were several events that marked the Romanian society and the Romanian Orthodox Church. After the death of Patriarch Justinian Marina, the new Patriarch was enthroned - Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church Iustin Moisescu. Alongside these two important events for the Romanian Orthodox Church, another event in 1977 was the celebration of a century of Romania's independence, since 1877. In addition to all of these events, we should also recall the earthquake of the evening of 4 March 1977, which left deep traces in the souls of the Romanians, event in which the BOR was also involved.

**Keywords:** church; patriarch; Justinian Marina; Iustin Moisescu; social crisis;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the social and religious events of 1977 in the Romanian society, as well as the way in which the Romanian Orthodox Church succeeded in dealing with them.

The 1970s in the Romanian society were characterized by an authoritarian state policy that was felt at all societal levels, and the Romanian Orthodox Church was not exempted from this either. It was a sensitive period of time, and the social analyses are usually biased, subjective and sliding into two directions. The former is the denial of that society, the institutions of the time being accused of having submitted to the communist political regime, while the latter is eulogistic, emphasising the positive actions taken by the political system for building a better society.

Several events that marked both the Romanian society in its entirety and the Romanian Orthodox Church took place in 1977. Patriarch Justinian Marina died, and a new Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church was appointed – Iustin Moisescu. Another important event of 1977 was the celebration of 100 years of Romania's independence. Also worth mentioning is the earthquake on the evening of

March 4, 1977, which left deep scars in the souls of the Romanians, an event in whose aftermath the Romanian Orthodox Church was also involved.

These events are presented and analysed with a view to highlighting the ability of the Romanian Orthodox Church in dealing with them with responsibility, balance and faith, in a society that was hardly free and democratic. This topic has been chosen because 2019 is the Year of Celebrating the Romanian Village, as well as the anniversary of the Patriarchs Nicodim Munteanu and Iustin Moisesescu and that of the translators of ecclesiastic books at the Romanian Patriarchy.

## 2. THE PASSING OF PATRIARCH JUSTINIAN MARINA

The first article of the Official Bulletin of the Romanian Patriarchy, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, in April 1977, breaks the news of Patriarch Justinian Marina's death. The article is entitled 'Justinian, părintele nostru' [Justinian, our father] and was signed by Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania, at that time, archimandrite and Director of the Biblical Institute and Orthodox Mission Press of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The opening lines are:

"Great grief is made of stone. It petrifies us for a moment, then simmers in silence for a long time. And its tears are made of stone too, as those of the large caves. We cry in the dark throughout a lifetime and we suddenly find ourselves between columns, in the temple of our own grief, face to face with the ones we have mourned and alongside them, unto the same walling, knowing that we haven't wasted ourselves in vain. A candlelight gathered from the dew, as from the tombstone of the Holy Sepulchre, is our only miracle: a light that unveils from within, in the absence of the coloured stained glass" (Anania, 1977).

In the same article, Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania outlines several aspects that marked this event: "A handful of older and closer collaborators had gathered at the Patriarchal Palace on that evening of March 26 to greet the homecoming of His Beatitude after almost two months of hospitalisation... A phone call from the hospital fell like a heavy bell from a spire broken by the wind: the Patriarch had passed away. He had passed away 45 minutes earlier, in the car heading home, with his head on the shoulder of the doctor that was accompanying him. His heart, large as a heavy bell, had fallen from a spire broken by the wind" (Anania, 1977).

It is then presented the carefulness of the Patriarchal Father in choosing his place of eternal rest: "Extremely thoughtful, the Patriarch Father built his resting place of stone in Radu Vodă Church, on the Bucharest banks of Dâmbovița River, which he had re-established with passion and ardour.

-Why not in the Cathedral, next to the other two? Someone had asked him about three years before.

-The Cathedral is so small now, he had replied, stroking his beard. Put one more tomb or two in there and all church-goers will be sent out. Where would they fit into that space?" (Anania, 1977).

It ends with this farewell of forgiveness and prayer: "We have accompanied him to the place of eternal rest, we bade him farewell, we prayed for him and did not pray for us, we all forgave him and no one asked for his forgiveness. We are praying and asking for forgiveness now, when the white flame of death consumes impurities and leaves room for transparencies only" (Anania, 1977).

The ceremony and burial service of Patriarch Justinian highlight the thoughtfulness and wisdom of the Orthodox Church's mediation of this event of religious and social significance at the international level. Thus, on March 27, 1977, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church announced the sad event with a note in the Register of the Patriarchal Palace, also notifying, on the same day, the other Orthodox Churches, the Romanian Orthodox communities abroad, and Christian organisations worldwide.

The burial ceremony started with a solemn assembly in the Synod Hall of the Romanian Patriarchal Palace, on Thursday, March 31, 1977. The following took part in this ceremony:

- Members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church;
- Representatives of the Department of Cults;
- Delegates of other Orthodox Churches;
- Heads and representatives of non-Orthodox Churches and other ecumenical bodies;
- Heads of other cults in the country (David, 1977).

After the conclusion of this commemoration service, the burial rites were performed in the Metropolitan Church by a synod of high hierarchs. In the Metropolitan Church, there were present delegates of the State authority, delegates of the Church and of non-Christian cults, as well as representatives of international Christian organisations. More ambassadors, consuls, cultural attachés and other political and diplomatic figures also attended.

On Sunday, April 4, 1977, in the Romanian Orthodox churches in the country and abroad, as well as in other Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches and in temples and headquarters of other Christian or non-Christian cults and denominations, memorial services were held (dirges, requiems, Trisagion, memorials) (David, 1977).

In addition, condolence telegrams and letters were received by His Eminence, Iustin, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava, acting Patriarch after the death of Patriarch Justinian, from:

- Heads of Orthodox Churches (His All Holiness Dimitrios I, Patriarch of Constantinople);
- High hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church (His Holiness Pope Paul VI);
- Telegrams from the Old Catholic Church (Archbishop Marinus Kok, President of the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht);
- Telegrams from the Eastern Churches (His Holiness Vasken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; His Holiness Shenouda III, Pope and Patriarch of the Coptic Church of Egypt);
- Church of England and the Anglican community (Donald Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury – Primate of All England);
- Telegram from the United Bible Societies;
- The Evangelical Church (Olof Sundby, Archbishop and Primate of Sweden);
- Telegram from the Lutheran World Federation;
- Telegram from the Management of the Conference of European Churches;
- Telegrams from various political and diplomatic personalities who could not attend the funeral – the telegram from His Excellency Haim Zadok, Ministry of Religious Affairs of Israel (David, 1977).

All these underline the European and international opening of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The following are mentioned in the condolence telegram sent by the Management of the Conference of European Churches: “We remember that His Beatitude was one of the greatest religious leaders of Europe after World War II, and we praise God for his sincerity and honesty (André Appel-President)” (David, 1977).

### **3. THE ELECTION, INVESTITURE AND ENTHRONEMENT OF HIS BEATITUDE IUSTIN MOISESCU, PATRIARCH OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

According to the Status for the Organisation and Functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church, after the death of Patriarch Justinian, His Eminence Iustin Moiescu, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava, became the acting Patriarch.

On June 12, 1977, the Church Electoral College was summoned, electing His Eminence Iustin Moiescu, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava as Archbishop of Bucharest, Metropolitan of Ungro-Vlachia and Patriarch of All Romania, in accordance with the canonical and statutory provisions (Gagiu, David, 1977).

The Church Electoral College consisted of members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, rightful delegates of the national authorities, clergy and lay members of the National Church Assembly and the Eparchial Assembly of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, the Rectors of the two Theological Institutes, and the headmasters of the seven Theological Seminaries of the Romanian Patriarchate. 94 out of the 105 members of the Church Electoral College were present, thus the requirement of the legal quorum being met.

In his opening address of the assembly of the Church Electoral College, Metropolitan Iustin Moiescu requested and obtained a half-an-hour delay for the members of the College to confer with

regard to the person that they consider worthy of the dignity and responsibility of the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church (Gagiu, David, 1977).

The 94 ballot papers were given to the members of the College. After the counting, it was established that His Eminence Iustin Moisescu, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava, had obtained 92 votes, and His Eminence Nicolae, Metropolitan of Banat, 2 votes (Gagiu, David, 1977).

In his address, the elected Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church emphasised the unity of the Romanian people: "As peoples are different from one another in various ways, it goes without saying that the national or local Churches also acquire specific traits. In this context, one can speak of Romanian Orthodoxy, built according to the origins, life and aspirations of our people. Thus, the unity of the Romanian people, so dear to our nation, has manifested in the religious sphere as church unity. On the one hand, the Church has taken advantage of this national aspiration to guard its unity. On the other hand, the unity of the Church has fed our people's sense of community. Similar considerations can also be given in regard to the autocephaly and autonomy of the Church, and to the great historical event of national independence" (Gagiu, David, 1977).

Aside from national unity and Romanian Orthodoxy, Patriarch Iustin also mentioned the care for the Romanian Orthodox communities abroad and the connections to be strengthened with other Churches and religious cults: "Our thoughts will not stop at the borders. We have Romanian Orthodox communities abroad that we are going to support as per their needs.

Similarly, we will help and support the strengthening of the links and the cooperation of our Church with other Churches or religious cults, both bilaterally and generally, within the framework of the Conference of European Churches, the Christian Conference for Peace, and the Ecumenical Council of Churches, having the belief that the work of strengthening and defending peace among peoples is one of the most beautiful sides of the Church's activity in the world of our times.

Not only does it explain the emergence and persistence of the positive connection between the State and the Church in our country, but also emphasises the necessity of their strengthening" (Gagiu, David, 1977).

On June 13, 1977, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church assembled for an ordinary session for the canonical examination of the election.

The report of the Canonical, Juridical and Disciplinary Commission appointed by the Holy Synod stated that the election of Metropolitan Iustin as Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church had been pursued with consideration for the canonical and stator provisions. The Holy Synod made the following decisions:

- It was recorded that the election of Metropolitan Iustin as Patriarch had been pursued in accordance with the canonical and statutory provisions;

- It decided that the Department of Cults would be notified to issue the Presidential Ordinance of Acknowledgement of His Eminence Metropolitan Iustin Moisescu as Archbishop of Bucharest, Metropolitan of Ungro-Vlachia and Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church (Gagiu, David, 1977).

On Saturday, June 18, 1977, the Presidential Ordinance was issued and handed at the Palace of the Great National Assembly, in the presence of representatives of the State, the Vice-President of the State Council, the Mayor of Bucharest, the President of the Council for Culture and Education and the President of the Department of Cults. Patriarch Iustin was accompanied by the members of the Holy Synod.

From the address uttered by Patriarch Iustin upon receiving the Presidential Ordinance, it is worth mentioning the advice on the steadiness, history and Christian faith of our people, which can be construed today as a catechization of the representatives of the State authority present at the event: "As it is well-known, since the age when our Romanian being was coming into existence in the land of our Dacian-Roman ancestors, the thread of the Church history has interwoven with that of the country's history. Identifying its mission with serving the people, the Church has ceaselessly pursued to keep the righteous faith and serve the aspirations and hopes of the entire Romanian nation, and to improve man's day-by-day life... The Church has carried out charitable activities of illumination of the people, of creating an artistic oeuvre that is nowadays a national treasure, part and parcel of the Romanian heritage, that is reconditioned, preserved and maintained by the provisions of the Law of the National Cultural Heritage" (Gagiu, David, 1977).

On Sunday, June 19, 1977, the ceremony of enthronement of His Beatitude Iustin as Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The festivities were attended by an international audience, among whom one could mention:

- the members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church;
- representatives of the State authority;
- high clerks of the Department of Cults;
- heads and representatives of other Orthodox Churches;
- representatives of the Old Eastern Church;
- representatives of inter-Christian organisations (the Conference of European Churches, the Ecumenical Council of Churches, the Ecumenical Council of Sweden, the Christian Conference for Peace);
- heads of the religious cults in the country;
- radio and television reporters, etc. (Gagiu, David, 1977).

The festivities started on June 17, when the foreign delegations arrived, and ended on June 21, when they left the country. These festivities had been carefully prepared and scheduled. The delegations were welcomed at the Patriarchal Palace by Patriarch Iustin on June 17 and 18.

The Patriarch thanked the delegates for the expression of their feelings and gave them assurance that the Romanian Orthodox Church would pursue the collaboration between all Churches and Christian organisations, both for the reunification of the Christian Church and for the peaceful understanding among peoples. He also informed the foreign delegates that they were welcome to visit the religious settlements and monasteries near Bucharest or from the Romanian Patriarchate.

All guests enjoyed a warm welcome both at the airport or train station and at the hotels they were lodged in. A protocol service provided the best conditions for them, and they were at all times accompanied by hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church and, whenever needed, by interpreters of the Foreign Relations Service of the Church.

The festivities set out on June 19, 1977, with the Holy Liturgy held in the Metropolitan Church, followed by the service of the Doxology of seating on the Patriarchal Throne and canonical investiture. Then, the Synod statement signed by all members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church was read, followed by the enthronement service and speeches.

The first of the foreign delegates to take the stage was Maxim, Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, who said: "I would like to express my joy, as our Churches and peoples have always had positive mutual feelings. Our Churches are connected by the same fate, by mutuality and collaboration. We are on the eve of the one-hundred-year anniversary of the 1877-1878 war for Bulgaria's liberation. In brotherly Romania, many sons of the Bulgarian people have found hospitality during the Ottoman oppression. This is why these lands are precious for the Bulgarian people that harbour feelings of sincere gratitude for the Romanian brothers" (Gagiu, David, 1977).

Then, His Eminence Meliton of Chalcedon, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, said: "... I have the privilege of representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which, as an older sister, is proud of the presence – an essential, edifying, universally acknowledged presence – of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian world, and also, generally speaking, in the European cultural world and, moreover, in the world of mankind. This mankind has, from this moment on, to take upon themselves the mission of reconciliation of the people of all races, religions and ideologies. ... The above stated is in close connection with Your Beatitude... you have been, since 1961, when I had the privilege of making your acquaintance and of collaborating with Your Beatitude, and until today, a great mentor of the principles and ideals expressed in my address. You have been the faithful apprentice of Saint Justin, the philosopher, martyr and apologist" (Gagiu, David, 1977)

Concluding the service, the Patriarch thanked everyone for their good thoughts: "through my voice, the Romanian Orthodox Church gives assurance of the appreciation for all your Churches and of the close cooperation in all fields comprised by our shared duty."

On the same day, at 2:00 PM, a brotherly feast took place. We present, in the following lines, the significant address of Dr G.G. Williams, on behalf of the Conference of European Churches: "A few months ago, I was here to join you in the great grief of the Romanian people for the great loss suffered by the Romanian Orthodox Church at the passing of Patriarch Justinian.



It is known that, for 13 years, you have been our distinguished collaborator and founder of our organisation, the Conference of European Churches. You have been a teacher and, at the same time, a reconciler, inspiring us and bringing peace among us. We will always remember that Your Beatitude have constantly interpreted Orthodoxy for those who are not Orthodox. You are also an example for interpreting the Church in a socialist society, showing the role of the Church in this society.

You have brought peace and resolution in all tensions and misapprehensions. ... This day is an event and a great joy for all members and believers of the Conference of European Churches” (Gagiu, David, 1977).

On the evening of June 19, 1977, a festive concert in honour of Patriarch Iustin took place at the Romanian Athenaeum, with the participation of the foreign guests and the representatives of the Department of Cults. The first part was a religious concert, while the latter featured folk music and patriotic songs. After his investiture, Patriarch Iustin sent the Heads of Churches an irenic letter, underlining the following aspects: “We would like to assure you that the Romanian Orthodox Church is determined to actively and vividly participate in all intra-Orthodox counsels – especially for the preparation of the Holy Grand Synod, in the assemblies of the Conference of European Churches, as well as in dialogues with various Churches” (Gagiu, David, 1977).

#### **4. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS EVENTS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF PATRIARCH IUSTIN’S ARCHPASTORATE**

In 1977, after his being appointed Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Iustin sent congratulatory telegrams for various life events of the Heads of the other Orthodox Churches – Dimitrios I, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Maxim, Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and also to the Head of the Catholic Church, Pope Paul VI (Editorial team, 1977b). All these telegrams were replied to, which is indicative of the fact that the Romanian Orthodox Church managed to maintain the spiritual-religious international relations at a significant level at that time.

In the address delivered at the closing festivity of the training courses for teachers specializing in theological education, held in the summer of 1977 at the Theological Seminary from Neamț Monastery, Patriarch Iustin said the following: “Our presence here shows the special importance that the Church grants to theological education. Efforts are being made for the priests to rise to the age. We need priests of today for our today society, with their eyes fixed upon the life of believers” (Editorial team, 1977c). This speech emphasises the care of the Church for church-goers. Even though the political regime of that time was hostile to the Church, attempts were being made at nearing the people to God and to the ways of the Church by all means available. The priests were prompted to maintain their relationships to the believers and to “keep their eyes on the life of the church-goers”, as it was known that Romania had just experienced, in the spring of that year, a devastating earthquake.

The same positive and thoughtful attitude is encountered in the Pastoral to the Birth of Our Lord of 1977: “Dearly beloved, the Godly feast of today, the Birth of Our Lord, prompts me to stop amidst you to share words of righteous learning, fatherly advice and hierarchal blessing with you. Although “my body may be far”, as Saint Apostle Peter once said, “I am by your side in spirit” (Moisescu, 1977b).

#### **5. THE CENTENNIAL OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF ROMANIA, 1877-1977**

In his address delivered at the Metropolitan Church on May 8, 1977, Patriarch Iustin said: “Our people has never coveted to conquer foreign lands and has never thought of invading other peoples... Independence is the proper, free and dignified state of a people... Throughout our history, the Romanian Orthodox Church has always been present in the life of our people, not only making its presence obvious in the day-by-day life of the Christians, but also in times of great predicament... Today, at the anniversary of the centennial of the independence, looking back to our worthy forerunners, let us pay homage to them, promising to follow their example and to keep the heritage they left us” (Moisescu, 1977a).

There is a great number of articles that deal with this topic: the Romanian Orthodox Church’s support and contribution to the national independence (Octavian, 1977), the attainment of the independence, as a contribution of the past and present generations (Constantinescu, 1977), the representation of the conquering of the independence in Romanian literature (Plătică, 1977) or the Romanian visual arts and the national event of the Independence (Calciu-Dumitreasa, 1977).

## 6. THE EARTHQUAKE OF MARCH 4, 1977

In the morning after the earthquake, on March 5, 1977, a session was held in the chancellery of the Holy Synod, followed by a telegram sent to all eparchial centres of the Romanian Patriarchy, requesting the church staff to support the local commandments in the state of necessity decreed after the earthquake of March 4, 1977.

In the report of the Official Bulletin of the Romanian Patriarchy, one reads the following news on the earthquake of March 4:

- Thursday, March 10, 1977, from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM - session of the permanent synod on the issue of the damage produced by the catastrophic earthquake of March 4, 1977;

- Friday, March 11, 1977, 10:00-02:30 – Follow-up to the same assembly of the Synod. Architect Cristian Moisescu, Director of the Directorate of the National Cultural Heritage, was also invited. The information on the torn down and damaged churches was examined, roughly assessing the damage.

- Sunday, March 13, 1977 – The Pastoral of the Holy Synod was read in all churches in the country. It contained advice and urge that the affected population receive support, asking for charitable contributions to the Fund for helping and reconstruction after the earthquake, known as the 1977 Humanity Fund (Editorial team, 1977a).

Although the earthquake had heavily hit the Romanian Orthodox Church's places of worship and edifices, the hierarchs, the clergy and the church-goers participated in the general mobilization for removing the immediate damaging effects by saving lives, material goods and art masterpieces, providing their entire support.

Aside from the donations made out of charity and civic spirit in the 1977 Humanity Fund, the Romanian Orthodox Church also committed to donate 21 million lei from voluntary donations. It is worth mentioning that the wage of a caretaker hired in a parish was of 1,000 lei at that time, which means that the respective amount is equivalent to approx. 4.5 million euro of today (Hurez, 1977).

In the Pastoral sent to church-goers on the occasion of the Lord's Resurrection, Patriarch Iustin prompted them to honour the victims and keep their memory alive in their hearts, while focusing on the country's reconstruction and development, helping the ones in need with financial contributions to the 1977 Humanity Fund, as a sacrifice pleasing for God (Moisescu, 1977c).

An article from May 1977, published by the journal *Glasul Bisericii*, emphasises the people's struggle for rescuing the victims of the March 4 earthquake. Soldiers, doctors, drivers, stuntmen, welders, builders had suddenly become valuable assets, turning into life-savers! Mankind struggled for their wretched peers, tearing away from the claws of death people that had been waiting under the ruins. Love triumphed once again over the blind forces that opposed man, in the name of God, who made man in His image and likeness (Rădulescu, 1977).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The management of the two events of 1977, Patriarch Justinian Marina's passing and the Enthronement of Patriarch Iustin Moisescu, highlights the European and ecumenical vocation of the Romanian Orthodox Church, through the participation of the foreign delegations and the messages received from the representatives of the Christian and non-Christian Churches and cults.

Secondly, the events of the anniversary of the centennial of the Romanian Independence of 1877 underline the affection of the Romanian Orthodox Church for the ancestral faith, national identity and for the Romanian people.

Last but not least, by mobilizing in support of the victims of the March 4 earthquake, the Church proved attachment to the people and church-goers, worthily fulfilling their mission as the Samaritan from the Scriptures.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Anania B. V., (1977). Justinian, Părintele nostru [Justinian, Our Father], In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, nr. 4, year XCV, (pp. 233-235). Bucharest.
- [2] David P., (1977). Încetarea din viață a Prea Fericitului Părinte Justinian, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Ceremonia și slujba înmormântării [The Passing of His Beatitude Father Justinian, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church]. In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, nr. 4, year XCV, (pp. 236-288). Bucharest.
- [3] Gagiu I, David P., (1977). Alegerea, înmânarea Decretului Prezidențial de recunoaștere și întronizarea Prea Fericitului Dr. Iustin Moiescu ca Patriarh al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române [The Election, Handing in of the Presidential Order of Acknowledgement and Enthronement of His Beatitude, Dr Iustin Moiescu as Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church]. In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year XCV, nr. 7-8, (pp.590-668). Bucharest.
- [4] Moiescu I., (1977a). Centenarul Independenței [The Centennial of the Independence]. In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year XCV, nr. 5-6, (pp. 333-337). Bucharest.
- [5] Redacția [Editorial team], (1977a). Cronică [Report]. In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year XCV, nr. 4, (p. 304). Bucharest.
- [6] Redacția [Editorial team], (1977b). Schimb de telegrame și scrisori de felicitare [Exchange of Congratulatory Telegrams and Letters]. In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year XCV, nr. 9-12, (pp. 837-339). Bucharest.
- [7] Redacția [Editorial team], (1977c). Deschiderea noului an școlar 1977-1978 la Seminariile teologice eparhiale [Inauguration of School Year 1977-1978 at the Eparchial Theological Seminaries], In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year XCV, nr. 9-12, (pp. 875-884). Bucharest.
- [8] Moiescu I., (1977b). Pastorală trimisă clerului și credincioșilor de Prea Fericitul Patriarh Iustin cu prilejul sfintelor sărbători ale Nașterii Domnului, din anul 1977 [Pastoral Issued by His Beatitude Patriarch Iustin on the Occasion of the Holy Feast of Our Lord's Birth, 1977], In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year XCV, nr. 9-12, (pp. 925-930). Bucharest.
- [9] Moiescu I., (1977c). Pastorală la Învierea Domnului – 1977 [Pastoral on Our Lord's Resurrection - 1977], In Glasul Bisericii, year XXXVI, nr. 5, (pp. 294-298). Bucharest.
- [10] Hurez P., (1977). Contribuția Bisericii Ortodoxe Române [The Contribution of the Romanian Orthodox Church]. In Biserica Ortodoxă Română, year XCV, nr. 4, (p. 328). Bucharest.
- [11] Rădulescu M., (1977). Patru martie [The 4th of March]. In Glasul Bisericii, year XXXVI, nr. 5, (pp. 307-307). Bucharest.
- [12] Octavian N., (1977). Adezina și aportul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române la lupta poporului român pentru Independența Națională [The Romanian Orthodox Church's Support for and Contribution to the Fight of the Romanian People for National Independence]. In Glasul Bisericii year XXXVI, nr. 5, (pp. 308-325). Bucharest.
- [13] Constantinescu I., (1977). Independența – contribuție a generațiilor trecute și prezente a întregului popor [The Independence – Contribution of the Past and Present Generations of the Entire People]. In Glasul Bisericii year XXXVI, nr. 5, (pp. 326-330). Bucharest.
- [14] Plătică M., (1977). Evocarea cuceririi Independenței de stat a României din 1877 în literatura română [Representations of the Attainment of the Independence in Romanian Literature]. In Glasul Bisericii year XXXVI, nr. 5, (pp. 362-376). Bucharest.
- [15] Calciu-Dumitreasa Gh., (1977). Arta plastică românească și evenimentul național al Independenței [Romanian Visual Arts and the National Event of the Independence]. In Glasul Bisericii year XXXVI, nr. 5, (pp. 377-384). Bucharest.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.94-100>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### CREATION, BETWEEN POTENCY AND ACTIVATION, VERSUS EVIDENCE AND EVOLUTION AT RICHARD DAWKINS

Ionel Ene (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: igmoride@yahoo.com,

#### *Abstract*

The problem of life and the existence of the universe has always been of concern to mankind. There have been no historical periods in our becoming, in which man was not fascinated by the miracle of life and did not ask questions about the beginnings. Of course, every historical age has expressed its beliefs according to the power of understanding and the ability to express reality. Antiquity was convinced that the world was the work of the gods, to whom they paid special attention, through liturgical acts. It was not a unitary expression of mankind in this regard.

**Keywords:** Creation; evolution, Richard Dawkins;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of life and the existence of the universe has always been of concern to mankind. There have been no historical periods in our becoming, in which man was not fascinated by the miracle of life and did not ask questions about the beginnings. Of course, every historical age has expressed its beliefs according to the power of understanding and the ability to express reality. Antiquity was convinced that the world was the work of the gods, to whom they paid special attention, through liturgical acts. It was not a unitary expression of mankind in this regard. The only exception was made by a minority in Asia Minor, who was convinced that life and the universe had their origin in God-Yahweh, a Person God, who had uncovered himself to man and talked to him. But everything was passed on from generation to generation, verbally. About two thousand years before Christ, Yahweh called upon a man - Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldees, to come to Canaan and with him conclude a Covenant, verbally, without writing anything of it. Only in 1500 BC, Yahweh commanded a descendant of the one with whom he had the Covenant to document in writing about the beginnings of the universe and of life.

This was Moses. God-Yahweh revealed to him the truth, that He created the world, and Moses had to pass the knowledge received from God through the filter of his human reason and to express it in intelligible terms, so that by reading, the man, can understand its origins and purpose on earth. This truth was embraced only by the descendants of Abraham, although all humanity was invited to know it. Theologically speaking, the world, as God's work and expression or materialization of Divine Love, was

invited, through the creation of mankind, to a partnership of eternal love with its Creator. Having been invested with absolute freedom, mankind could always refuse this invitation. Through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and His coming into the world, God renewed the invitation made to the mankind - the partnership of eternal love. Christ has revealed a way of life, which, if we assume it, if we follow him, we become the sons of God. This is Christianity, which does not exclude anyone and does not force itself, on the contrary! This explains why, until the dawn of modernity, mankind continued to be divided, in terms of the response to the Universe and the beginning of life on Earth. But regardless of whether the answer to this invitation was, Christian or not, the world was eminently religious.

## **2. CHANGING THE RELIGIOUS PARADIGM**

The French Revolution marked the turning point in history, when God was driven out of the world and mankind returned to the values of antiquity. The phenomenon is far from being fully explored and understood, because the secularist and materialist ideological assault on French society had eastern roots in the Russia's illuminated tsars behavior. What is noteworthy is that, although striving towards irreligious, the communards have proven that man can not live without a divinity. This is how we explain the gesture of the statue of the goddess of Reason on the altar of the Notre-Dame cathedral, as well as the various liturgical processions and acts brought to it as an expression of a return to the practice of a natural religion.

Between the French Revolution (1789) and the mid-nineteenth century the issue of life and the universe seemed to reside inside a shadowy cone. But with the publication of the *Origin of Species* (1859), the spirits became inflamed. It was believed that religion in general and Christianity would falter because of Darwin's theory. Because "the triumph of Darwinism involves the death of God, which prepared the replacement of biblical religion with a new faith based on evolutionist naturalism. The new faith would become the foundation not only of science, but also of governance, laws and morals" (Ieromonah Serafim Rose, 2001, p. 6).

. But not all scientists of the time embraced, or agreed on, the ideas of evolution, "some of the most brilliant scientists in the world - from Richard Owen and Louis Agassiz in 1860 to Richard Goldschmidt and Otto Schindewolf in 1940 - (which) showed the scientific community the embarrassing difficulties of the Darwinian theory ..." (Ieromonah Serafim Rose, 2001, p. 7). Still the theological academic community was caught off guard and for a century it did not taken its stand. The birth of quantum mechanics and physics, in 1920, changed the parameters of the problem and the academic community was invited to reassess its view of the universe in general and of human existence in particular! In this regard, Stephen Hawking referred to the principles of quantum physics that "were developed in the first decades of the twentieth century, after Newtonian theory proved inappropriate for describing nature at an atomic or subatomic level" (Stephen HAWKING, 2012, p. 54). Also the American neurosurgeon Dr. Eben Alexander, remembering Werner Heisenberg (and other founders of quantum mechanics), was convinced that "he made such a strange discovery that it would take a long time for the world to assimilate" (Dr. Alexander EBEN, 2013, pp. 147-148.), because in the case of quantum physics, "In the case of quantum physics, physicists are still working to figure out the details of how Newton's laws emerge from the quantum domain" (Stephen HAWKING, 2012, p. 55).

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This giant leap made in the scientific research community, allowed theologians and others who did not share the evolutionist vision of the world, to differentiate themselves from the materialists and evolutionists. This happened at the great event which marked 100 years from the publishing of the *Origin of species*, also known as the Darwin Centenary. Only then there have been contradictory voices which upheld that the universe and life are the product of divine creation. In the meantime, there have been a plethora of works which look at both the material evolution of the world and also at the existence of a Creator, the author of existence.

**Research Proposal – Creation, between potency and activation versus evidence and evolution at Richard Dawkins**

Evolutionism and the materialism had and still have numerous supporters, even in academic environments. But the most active ones of the 20th century have been Anthony Flew and Richard Dawkins. The former, after advocating his whole life the supremacy of materialism and evolutionism, at the age of 80, had the courage to confess that God Exists! Although being labeled as a philosopher of the night, which presented darkness as light and made the source of general existence and world order from complete chaos (Ioan Gh. SAVIN, 2002, p. 127.), still had the power to overcome himself! He was so touched when he discovered the intelligence behind the innerworkings of DNA, that he proclaimed God exists! Once again, it has been proven that the chaos which was believed to sit at the foundations of existence, is nothing but what Boutroux said, „the word with which we cover our own ignorance and which before explaining anything, it demands renouncing any attempt to explain, even the abdication from thinking itself”( Ioan Gh. SAVIN, 2002, p. 132). He was postulating the existence of a Supreme Intelligence. We can only imagine how evolutionists have reacted, when one of their own has deserted! The most acid reaction was the one of Richard Dawkins, which accused his friend of being senile. But Flew's reply was full of nothing but dignity: „I have to underline that my discovery of the Divine has been concerned purely with the natural, without any reference to any supernatural phenomena. It was an exercise in, what we traditionally call natural theology. This had nothing to do with any of the existing religions. I did not imply I had any personal experiences of God or any other experience of the supernatural or miraculous kind. In short, my Divine discovery was a pilgrimage of reason and not of faith”( Antony FLEW, Roy VARGHESE, 2007, p. 93).

In this context, Richard Dawkins published *The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution*(Richard DAWKINS, 2006. He had tried, since 1976 , to revolutionize Darwin's evolutionary theory by introducing into the scientific research a new term, namely the meme, a term that has generated a new field of research: the domain of memetics . He argues, with this new hypothesis, that there is not only an evolution at the biological level, the species, or a natural selection, but also a cultural one. If within natural evolution we speak of genes, as replication units, in the case of cultural evolution we are talking about memes. Dawkins argues that as genes propagate into the genetic background, moving from one body to another, the memes propagate into the memetic background, moving from one brain to another through a process that can be called imitation or meme. Dawkins' hypothesis completely changed the essence of Darwinian theory, because it postulated evolution at the genetic level and not at the species level. On the other hand, he introduced a new component in discussion - the cultural evolution, by which he expanded the scope of the notion of evolution, but, implicitly, emphasized his fragility. Unfortunately, Professor Dawkins' attitude proved to be a fundamentalist one, perhaps fueled by the religious fundamentalism that marked the beginning of the third millennium. It is painful to overshadow your liberty and to label those who have other beliefs than your own, but it is more painful to use the umbrella of science and to offend those who do not share your ideas. Thus he speaks of "the pride of being an atheist ... because ... it is a matter of praise, because atheism almost always proves a positive mental independence and a healthy intellect" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 14.). He allows himself to preach insults to religion, which is the root of all evil (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 11), be convinced that his work will have miraculous effects on faithful readers ( believing readers who will open it will be atheists when they finish it - Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 16), although he acknowledges that there are also "square-headed believers ... who will remain immune to any argument, proving resistance after so many years of indoctrination in childhood, through methods that have matured over the centuries" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 16). It would be enough to stop at these considerations, because we realize that R. Dawkins, first of all, did not understand what Christianity is: an invitation to a partnership of love with God, or a way of life to which man is invited to adhere. In whose name science allows to label , those who respond to this invitation, square heads? By denying the existence of God, he is considered a god, having the freedom to judge those who do not share his views! Not to mention freedom. If he has the freedom not to believe, why don't Christians have the freedom to believe what they want? The slogan faithful in faith or believe in faith(Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 18) is also an offense to those who, unable to explain their feelings, conclude that they have a faith. In Dawkins' mind, the existence of religion has brought all evils to humanity, that is why it postulates and fights for a world without religion, in which atheism is the only religion.

If Darwin, when he outlined his vision of over evolution, in his work *The Origin of Species*, he made it clear that the innumerable links he proposed without evidence would be complemented with the

development of scientific research, we must say that the phenomenon it was the other way round; as scientific research advances, evolution is invalidated! Actually, Anthony Flew is the most terrible argument in this respect! The simple fossil research which - although they are invoked by evolutionists in support of their theory - confirms not evolution, but creation. If the fossils confirm evolution then we should "find in the oldest layers of rock the most primitive forms of life, and then gradually, as we climb through different beginnings, more and more complex forms of life." (Dr. Farid ABOU-RAHME, 1998, p . 70.). In reality things are totally different, because - in the same layer - sudden complexions of billions of animals appear, thus contradicting evolution. On the other hand, if evolution were true, new forms of life should emerge gradually and not suddenly, preserving some of the characteristics of their ancestral groups. Thus, if "fish gave rise to amphibians more than 50 million years ago - as evolution claims - there should be millions of fossils presenting transient forms, that is to say, fossils with partial fins and partly legs; or be half the fish and half of the amphibians.

"Also, if the reptiles gave birth to the birds several million years ago, then we should find the fossils that have some of the previous members and some of the wings, or half reptiles and half birds." (Dr. Farid ABOU-RAHME, 1998, p .70). It is noteworthy that there is not even one transient form in the entire fossil inventory known today. Moreover, once "with increasing collection of fossils, many discontinuities tend to become increasingly more pronounced and regular absence of transitional forms is not confined to mammals, but is an almost universal phenomenon. It can be argued that such transient forms do not meet because they did not exist." (GG SIMPSON, 1944, p. 107.)

But returning to the claim of Mr. Dawkins to present evidence of evolution, we should note that he operates very much with probability and chance. To build axiomatic theses, leaning only on hazard, but in the name of science, it is a greater boldness than that imputed by him to religion. Moreover, since the beginning of his book, he acknowledges that "uninformed opposition is ... stronger than I remember ever being", but he claims he will make "a review ... of the evidence that the theory of evolution is a reality as hard to challenge as any other scientific reality" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 5).

From the theological perspective, and especially Christian-Orthodox, things are extremely clear. We explained above that we all know what we know about the beginning of the universe and the emergence of life on earth we owe to Moses. A simple analysis of the text of the Revelation, written by him, uncovers the mystery of existence. Although the Hebrew language has a low volume of words, it is extremely precise in expression. As in Russian, we find the perfect and imperfect aspect of the verbs, through which we know whether the action is finished or is in progress, or how in Greek we have more verbs to love, leaving no room for confusion, so do the things in Hebrew . It is enough to point out that Moses, in the description of the act of divine creation, used different words, but they are translated, at least in Romanian, by one and the same verb or noun. Let us consider only the verb to make and the words heaven and earth. Thus, we read : " In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ... And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. " (Genesis 1: 1-3 ; 7-8). The first time Moses uses the verb bar - the Elohim bar - In the beginning God created, which he does not repeat again and which means doing from nothing; then he uses the verb asah, which means doing of something. In this first day, we read: The And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters., that is to say , the infusion of heaven and earth, the laws of existence, or the laws of life.

We can not accept that the universe and everything that exists has extremely clear laws, and they are the expression of the hazard! From the beginning God has given these laws so that the whole creation fulfills its meaning, its purpose. The man discovers the unpredictable laws in every eve of history, he marvels, but he has the feeling that he is the work of the hazard! How many other laws will not be discovered until the end of the ages?! In this way we understand the word " The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. " ( Psalm 19, 1), or " For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:... " (Romans I, 20). We must also point out that that in the translation of the Creation Reference the word heaven is met on the first and second day, and the word earth in the first and third day. The reader might think it's a mistake, or a repetition. In reality, things are totally different. On the first day, God created the heaven and the earth, that is, the

spiritual world and material world. The heavens of the second day refer to the physical sky, the heavenly vault, and the earth on the third day refers to the Earth and has its origin in the land of the first day. We understand, then, that God created, in the beginning, the spiritual world of angels and matter, to whom he gave the laws of existence, and in which he was biting life in all its aspects. Potentially, the entire creation, presented on other days by Moses, was virtually encompassed in the earth or matter of the first day. God has activated, day by day, some of the power smoldering in the earth of the first day! We do not analyze the logic and chronology of the emergence or activation of the kingdoms, but we make it clear that if the whole creation is the work of the commandment, the word of God, man is the fruit of the work of His hands. Here's how Moses plays this moment : " And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis II, 7). What does that mean? That man is made of matter that obeys the laws of life and can therefore live without Receiving God's call, though His call is to become like God. Then that man is made of matter, earth, contains in his body all the minerals that exist naturally in the universe, but in a proportionality so well adjusted that the slightest imbalance would result in the loss of life - the bios; this is also proof of this truth! We have in common with all living creatures – the bios, which makes us meet the same elements, from the smallest life form to the human being. DNA is what fascinates and proves that life does not have its own source but postulates a previous, all-knowing and omnipotent existence, a Creator! Antony Flew, discovering the intelligence that operates in DNA exclaimed God Exists!, quite late, for pr. Stăniloae had noted since 1978 that "The Logos or Word of God has been in the world from the beginning on the one hand by the rationale of things, which are faces created and sustained by His eternal reasonings, on the other, by human persons, who in their living rationality are the faces of His hypostasis, created with the purpose of thinking the rationale of things together with Divine personal Reason in a dialogue with Him "( Prof. Dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, 1978, p. 7).

In the face of this truth, proven by science today, how could I, with the greatest confidence , endorse Hazard, as the author of the universe and life? If we read carefully the book *The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution*, presented as the "clearest, more comprehensive and more exciting review of Evidence of Evolution in Biology"( Cover IV, of the book *The Greatest Show on Earth*), we find that axiomatic statements are deduced from suppositions, assumptions, imaginations, hypotheses and theorems . Extremely generous is with the formulas such as: suppose if we find it, it can not be demonstrated ... but good sense treats it as a reality, it seems very likely, if we leave the premise... it necessarily results... as it will have been, we must admit, without taking into account the phrases that contradict! We sum up to three examples (although there is an abundance of them in the book) : theoretically, You can daisychain your way back, theoretically for millions of years using petrified forests, although in practice dendrochronology is only used on archaeological timescales over some thousands of years. And the amazing thing about dendrochronology is that, theoretically at least, you can be accurate to the nearest year, even in a petrified forest 100 million years old. You could literally say that this ring in a Jurassic fossil tree was laid down exactly 257 years later than this other ring in another Jurassic tree! If only there were enough petrified forests to daisychain your way back continuously from the present, you could say that this tree is not just of late Jurassic age: it was alive in exactly 151,432,657 BC! Unfortunately, we don't have an unbroken chain, and dendrochronology in practice takes us back only about 11,500 years. It is nevertheless a tantalizing thought that, if only we could find enough petrified forests, we could date to the nearest year over a timespan of hundreds of millions of years.( Richard DAWKINS, 2016, pp. 104-105) ; So if you want to date a rock which is billions of years old, you must be satisfied with an error of plus or minus tens of millions of years (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p.105); we don't need fossils in order to demonstrate that evolution is a fact. The evidence for evolution would be entirely secure, even if not a single corpse had ever fossilized..( Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 159 ); We don't know how our ancestors rose on to their hind legs. We need more fossils.( Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 221); But, we think nothing can do better for the irony of science, and what this can mean for Mr. Dawkins, than the passage in which he strives to convince us how and when life began on earth! Here is what he says: " We know a great deal about how evolution has worked ever since it got started, much more than Darwin knew. But we know little more than Darwin did about how it got started in the first place. This is a book about evidence, and we have no evidence bearing upon the momentous event that was the start of evolution on this planet. It could have been an event of supreme rarity. It only had to happen once, and as far as we know it did happen only once. It is even possible that it happened



only once in the entire universe, although I doubt that. One thing we can say, on a basis of pure logic rather than evidence, is that Darwin was sensible to say 'from so simple a beginning'. The opposite of simple is statistically improbable. Statistically improbable things don't spontaneously spring into existence: that is what statistically improbable means. The beginning had to be simple, and evolution by natural selection is still the only process we know whereby simple beginnings can give rise to complex results" (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, pp. 438-439). Where the author of the book strives to convince us of the soundness of the evidence of evolution, he is powerless to say a word about the beginnings of life. He even recognizes that " We have no evidence about what the first step in making life was, but we do know the kind of step it must have been. It must have been whatever it took to get natural selection started. Before that first step, the sorts of improvement that only natural selection can achieve were impossible" (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 441). It is obvious that although he declares his ignorance, he still knows, putting the probability into play. He does not know, but says that "Before that first step, the sorts of improvement that only natural selection can achieve were impossible. And that means the key step was the arising, by some process as yet unknown, of a self-replicating entity." (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 441). Oscillating between accepting the doctrine of spontaneous generation, dismantled by Louis Pasteur's experiment and the operation of natural selection, before the appearance of life, Mr. Dawkins proves to be a good source of scientific information, a good journalist, but obviously deficient in the logical chapter. The primordial atmosphere, different from the current one, the absence of free oxygen at first and then its necessity (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 440), importance and molecules of DNA or RNA to which it does not stop, there are other proposals that would be the emergence of life. It really enriches our inventory of scientific evidence, stating: " It is now possible to estimate that there are upwards of a billion planets in our galaxy, and about a billion galaxies. This means that, although it is possible that ours is the only planet in the galaxy that has life, in order for that to be true, the probability of life arising on a planet would have to be not much greater than one in a billion." (Richard DAWKINS, 2016, p. 444). How many unknowns are introduced in this equation!

#### **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In 1977, after his being appointed Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Justin I have only surprised a few aspects of Mr Dawkins' book, which, although he wants to present as scientific evidence, is likely to be very embarrassing. The study of his work would bring more testimonies in support of what we said. Conferences, television shows, newspaper articles can be supported on such scenarios, but a book that is claimed to be scientific can not appeal to statistics to demonstrate the emergence of life! That is why, between the godifying Hazard and accepting an Almighty Creator, All Wise, a Parent who wishes to make his work eternal, the preferable choice is the pilgrimage to godification!

Christianity remains the most wonderful way of life in which man is invited to become like God, if he does not succeed, God is not guilty! But Mr. Dawkins, referring to the authentic religion, revealed, and formalizing himself for the mistakes of some religious people, was able to insinuate the following: " When one person suffers from a delusion, it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion it is called Religion" (Richard DAWKINS, 2018, p. 16.).

#### **5. RESEARCH METHODS**

In the rendering of this material we have used the simple method text analysis and explanation, exegesis or ermination. But I also have recourse to identifying the terms that reduce the allegedly scientific value of the work, Mr. Dawkins, who is a well-known scholar of scientific knowledge, a diligent colporteur of this information, but also an exceptional writer. It is obvious that it gives more weight to a probability of one to one billion than a historical event - the existence of Jesus Christ!

#### **6. FINDINGS**

The ultimate goal of our approach is to convince ourselves that there is a big difference between the scientist and the scientific data newsmonger. If the scientist is humble, respectful, willing, aware that there is no limit to knowledge, especially after the early 20th century findings, that of quantum physics, the scientific data newsmonger is arrogant, triumphant, contemptuous and even dictator like; who does

not share his point of view is retrograde, square head, etc. Either Mr. Richard Dawkins, though poses as a scientist proves a scientific data news monger, but still on pilgrimage towards truth. We are confident that his former friend, Anthony Flew will inspire him to anchor in the Truth, also proven by the outcome of scientific research.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we must proclaim the truth confessed by Eastern Christianity, at least as follows: We are the work of a Creator, called to become like Him, meaning gods. Although we have been created from earth (adamah, clay), and through this we have common parts with the whole Universe, our call is to live according to the model of Christ and be again the sons of the Creator. Christianity is an invitation to deification, or a pilgrimage from earth to heaven, the essence of life being the partnership of love with God, expressed through a partnership of love with all creation or existence! In this sense we can speak and accept evolution, but within the strict framework of one and the same species, and not transition from one species to another. We have a common Creator, but no common ancestors. Everything we know about the transition from the Lucy monkey to humans, to the humans of Java, to Nebraska, to Neanderthal, etc., although they have been proved impostures, somehow are still kept as axiomatic. Moreover, why should this surprise us, since Ernest Haeckel's drawings, as a result of proven talent and not evidence of evolution, condemned by some Universities of the time, are still used in biology books, dictionaries or encyclopedias! We live in the era of sensationalism and man is hungry for it.. When we read the book of Mr. Dawkins, *The Greatest Show on Earth* we are impressed by the abundance of information and masterful weaving of words, but if we look at what percentage is supported on the probability, then we realize that science to him is more religious than our faith! But we have to admit: we have no right to condemn, it is the right of every man to choose what he thinks and how he lives. What we know and proclaim is: Christianity as a way of life is the Creator's invitation to become His fellows!

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] ABOU-RAHME, Farid dr, *And God said ... The Bible Science Authority*, ed. Logos, Cluj-Napoca, 1998
- [2] ALEXANDER, Eben dr, *The proof of the beyond world brought by a neurosurgeon, a traitor*. Constantin Dumitru - Palcus, Ed. Lifestyle, Bucharest, 2013
- [3] FLEW, Anthony, Roy VARGHESE, *There is a God - how the word ~ with the most notorious atheist changed his mind*, ed. Haper -Collins, New York, 2007
- [4] DAWKINS, Richard, *God, A Delusion*, 3rd Edition, English translation by Victor Godeanu, ed. Old Court, Bucharest, 2018
- [5] DAWKINS, Richard, *The World as a Great Performance - Proofs of Evolution*, English translation by Mihnea Gafița, ed. Humanitas, Bucharest 2016.
- [6] HAWKING, Stephen, MLODINOW, Leonard, *The Great Plan*, ed. Humanitas, Bucharest, 2012, English translation by Anca Vișinescu and Mihai Vișinescu.
- [7] ROSE, Seraphim, Ieromonah, *Book of Faith, Creation of the world and man of beginnings - Christian - Orthodox Perspective*, Trad. by Constantin Făgețean, ed. Sofia, Bucharest, 2001
- [8] SAVIN, Ioan Gh, *Apologetica*, vol. II, Ed. Anastasia, Bucharest, 2002, with a *Word before* Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu, edited by Radu Diac.
- [9] STANILOAE, Dumitru, pr. prof. dr., *Orthodox dogmatic theology for theological institutes*, ed. The Biblical and Mission Institute of BOR, Bucharest, 1978



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.101-114>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## THE LIMES THEORY. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATIONS

Mihaela Denisia Liuşnea(a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Associate professor Phd, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galati, Romania,

E-mail: denisialiusnea@yahoo.it

### *Abstract*

In the present paper, we set out to determine the historiographical landmarks of the approaches to understanding the concept of limes, in order to understand its great semantic complexity, which is the basis for the construction of limes theory. The theory of limes emerged in the nineteenth century, and the meaning of the term was a fortified defensive barrier surrounding the Empire's territory, defending it from the external danger that the Romans identified with the barbarian world. Moreover, Theodore Mommsen defined limes as the space between the wall and the line of defense in the field on the other. The research spaces for which these meanings were then established were the ancient territories of Germany and Raetia. Overall, the theory emerged amid the analysis of the boundaries of the vast Roman Empire, in the context of attempts to redefine the relations between the center (Rome and the Italian Peninsula) and the periphery (the provincial territories and the barbarians at the edge). One can speak of a cosmology in which the territory is not limited, but the power of Rome establishes the reporting space. Paul Chaval, speaking of space and power, notes that the Empire is stopping its expansion on the edge of the civilized / cultivated universe. Charles R. Whittaker notes that the Roman attitude towards the border combines the practice of divination with the delimitation of the enclosure. It is Rome that creates order in chaos, and the sacred space, organized is delimited by profane, unorganized space.

**Keywords:** frontier strategy; Limesforschung; Pax Romana; invisible border;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

At the moment, Romania is facing a number of problems that have an impact upon the society and the 1892 the "Reichs Limeskomision" was founded, by the head of it, Theodor Mommsen, who worked in an Institute, which aimed to research the limes in Upper Germany and the one in Raetia. By 1937, 14 volumes about limes appeared. (Fabricius, Hettner, Von Sarvey 1894-1937 *passim*). In this context, the theory of limes appeared, and the meaning of the term is today a fortified defensive barrier that surrounds the territory of the Empire (Le Bohec, 1989), protecting it from the external danger that the Romans identified with the barbarian world (Cadiou, Moret, 2009). In 1883, however, Theodore

Mommsen considered the limes not a fortification, but returned two years later to this opinion, under the influence of Colonel O von Cohausen's work, so he defined the limes as the space between the wall on one side and the field defense line on the other side (Cagnat - in Daremberg, 1257 col. 2). The research areas, for which these meanings were established, were the ancient territories of Germany and Raetiei. The Romanians did not use this term too often. (Isaac 1990, 125).

At present, the scientific explanation of the concept of limes, based on evidence and their interpretation, has greatly expanded the possibilities of approach, through interdisciplinarity and complementarity. Thus, beyond analyzing the archaeological testimonies placed in a certain geographical space, for which exact dates can be determined, we can blind and interpret them, using various plans: economic, social, administrative, political, historical, military, cultural, religious, ideological and so on.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In this context, the theory emerged in the background of the analysis of the borders of the vast Roman Empire, is supplemented a century after the emergence, by the attempts to redefine the relations, under the coordination of the specialists Michael Rowlands, Mogens Larsen, Kristian Kkristiansen (1989, 38) between the center (Rome and the Italian Peninsula) and the periphery (provincial territories and barbarians on the edge) for example. Or it may be a cosmology, in which the territory is not delimited but the power of Rome establishes the reporting space (Whittaker, 1994, 12-13). Let us not forget that at the beginning of the Empire, the delimitation of a temple was done by a priest, and then by the military for military fortifications or by architects if it was about constructions meant to bring and manage water reserves. With the expansion of the Empire, the measurements were passed to some professionals: agrimensori. (Minow, 2003, 14). At the same time, cosmology is the basis of an ideology, on which the political and military strategy of Rome will be practically built. Even during the Republic some experts believe, such as Stephen L. Dyson (1985, 174 sqq), that there was a coherent and sustained „*frontier strategy*”. Moreover, Edward Luttwak (1976) speaks of a great imperial strategy that deals with borders and agrees with all or part of it Arther Ferrill (1986, 23 sqq) and Everett L. Wheeler (1993, 7 sqq). But the idea is contradicted by John C. Mann (1979, 175 sqq), Benjamin Issac (1990, 372 sqq), Charles R. Whittaker (2004, 28 sqq), who don't think there was a planned and sophisticated strategy. From a cultural point of view, Paul Claval (1978, 109), speaking of space and power, observes that the Empire stops its expansion at the edge of the civilized/cultivated universe. For his part, Charles R. Whittaker (1994, 18) notes that the Roman attitude towards the frontier combines the practice of divination with the delimitation of the enclosure. Rome is the one that creates order in chaos, and the sacred, organized space is delimited by the profane, unorganized space. Moreover, Rinaldi Tufi, S. (1990, 271 sqq) speaks of the Roman presence across the border as the bearer of civilization models over „Limes”.

Edward Luttwak (1976) believes that one can even speak of a „scientific frontier” (*Limesforschung*), understood as a permanent search for the optimal line for military defense. In the same idea, the author distinguishes between two models: „*Hegemonic Empire*” and „*Territorial Empire*” (Luttwak, 1976). On the other hand, carrying out a lexical study on the term of fines, *terminus* and *limes*, Benjamin Isaac (1990, 427) shows that an exclusively military perspective must not be accepted in order to understand the nature of the Roman frontiers, defining the *limes* as being between the centuries. I and III, „*a land border*”, an arbitrary political line, which does not impede relations between its two parts (Issac, 1990, 417), so that in the fourth century it indicates a border district. under the command of a dux, following an administrative concept first and only secondly military (Issac, 1988, 125 sqq). Moreover, the military character of the frontier was stronger during the Severian dynasty, when a series of measures and reforms favorable to the military were adopted, in general (Willems, 1989, 40).

At the same time, Benjamin Isaac (1988) criticizes the opinion of Edward Luttwak (1976, 27, 60), who speaks of the „invisible” border, with the belief that the *limes* is a symbolic military limit, through which the population non-Roman was kept at a distance and its movements were controlled on the outskirts of the Empire. He believes that borders are often more administrative boundaries than boundaries of separation of Romanians from Barbarians (Luttwak, 1976, 187.), so that relations with *nationes (or gentes) externae*, whose geographical delimitation was neutral, being established in various forms: *amicii* (Kienast, 1968, 330 sqq), *socii*, *Soci et amici Populi Romani*, *foederati* by signing a *foedus* et al. (Cimma, 1976, 25-27).

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the present paper, we set out to determine the historiographical landmarks of the approaches to understanding the concept of limes, in order to understand its great semantic complexity, which is the basis for the construction of limes theory. The approach we set out to be of an interdisciplinary nature and the objective was to overcome the positivist perspective, the ideologies as well as to use as a cultural model totally inappropriate modern realities in order to correctly reconstruct the realities of Roman Antiquity.

### 4. FINDINGS

The ancient author Strabo (*Geographia* XVII, 3, 24) allows us to understand that the territories governed by kings are considered an integral part of the empire, just like the provinces, based on the *foedus*, which transform them into *Soci et amici Populi Romani* (Matthaei, 1907, 182 sqq), the authority of the Imperium being extended to them as well (Whittaker, 1994, 24-25). Moreover, the deep presence in the territory considered barbarous of Roman products (ceramics, especially amphorae that show imports of wine, metal and glass artefacts probably received as gifts), as Philippe Leveau (1990, 898.) observes highlight the existence of a market economy, in which the producers migrate from the center to the periphery, resulting in a decentralization accompanied by the development of cities in the latter area. In these conditions, the specialists speak of an economic expansion (Owen Latimore, in 1962, introduces the phrase “zone of economic integration”), and in certain areas such as Gallia, elites become intermediaries in commercial relations (Willems, 1989, 35-36; France, 2001, 205 sqq.).

Starting with the end of the 3rd century, after the transition from the Principality to the Dominated, the defense no longer targets the space in front of the border, but focuses on the border itself (Polverini, 1975, 1013-1015), which will be disposed, starting with the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great, troops from the border (Janniard, 2015, 1 sqq), recruited from barbarians.

Edward Luttwak (1976, 185) also captures this change of strategy, since the third century, when the barbarians are under great pressure on the Roman borders, so that the emperor Gallienus begins a reform of the defensive system, reorganized by Diocletian and later, by Constantine the Great (Whitby, 2004, 156 sqq), and by brothers Valentinian I and Valens (Bishop, Coulston, 1993, 19 sqq), with consequences and on the state apparatus to be militarized. (Polverini, 1975, 1013-1015)

In addition to the new units, the emperors will be concerned, as evidenced by the archeological testimonies of the 4th century, and the activity of building the border fortifications, along the borders on the Rhine and Danube, as well as in North Africa, in Egypt, offering a clear picture of the differences regarding the solutions adopted by Romanians for very different spaces (Birley 1981, 39 sqq.; Willems 1984, 39 sqq; Fulford 1984, 129 sqq.).

With all these efforts, as a result of the definitive split of the two *partes imperii* after 395, the *Rhine limes* will collapse under the blows of the Swedes, Vandals and Rallies in 406/407, which will compromise the unit of action of the Roman army on the border after this date. In fact, the administrative separation had begun from 364, during the emperors Valentinian I and Valens. (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Roman History*, XXVI, 5, 1-6).

Regarding the problem of the Roman roads, André Piganiol (1963, 122) initially considered that the *limes* can be understood as a perpendicular road on the border, after analyzing the chronology of its evolution he came to the conclusion that it would be a road parallel to the border. Even the mentioned author observes that starting with Hadrian's reign, the military significance is replaced by a legal one, given that Traian remains the last great conqueror. Subsequently, specialists such as John C. Mann (1974, 350.), Benjamin Isaac (1988, 417), nuanced the definition, speaking of a border complex with a total control role, representing the extent of Rome's authority, a moral barrier (Fodorean 2006, *passim*). Returning to the analysis that we set out to carry out, from a political, administrative and economic point of view, Edward Luttwak (1976, 27, 60) believes that it is a porous barrier, indeed, sometimes non-existent, a space transient. The argument would be that the Latin historian Appian (*Roman History*) mentions that the Romans brought certain Celts from the Rhine into the Roman space. So, the *limes* was an area of influence of Rome that extends to the whole of the oikumen, an allied intermediate zone that separates it from the limits of the universe. Confused with the territory, the space must have a limit, and

from this perspective, the *limes* is at the base of the administrative institution of the border and of the „indefinite and floating finish that bases the legal theory of the border” (Leveau, 1990, 896).

Much later, Charles R. Whittaker (1994, 19-20) lists two types of Roman-specific frontiers: the first - *arceo* (*land*), which represents an organized space that is in the jurisdiction of a civil administrative authority and the second - *arcifinius*<sup>1</sup> (*boundary beyond*), bounded by a mountain range or a river, placed under the responsibility of a military authority. Synthesizing the ideas set out above, we find that if in the period of the Roman Republic there were no militarily protected borders and as a result, the isolation of barbarians was achieved through a cordon of half-subject populations, only through legal agreements, everything will change with the creation Empire, which had the mission to ensure the security of the borders of the Romanian state against the barbarians. The specialists in historical-legal studies have found that at one point, in the dynamics of their expansion, the Romanians transfer to the *potestas* from the private world to the public one (Buono-Ccore Varas, 2003, 23 sqq.), under the conditions in which the Romanians accept that they have they were appointed by the gods (*providentia*) to spread the culture and civilization of the other nations. Now comes the idea of delimiting the Roman possessions from the uncharted, independent territories<sup>2</sup>, suspected of an acculturation process, sometimes forced, which explains their revolts. (Dyson, 1971).

Originally conceived as a means of delimiting the Roman world of *barbaricum*<sup>3</sup>, the *limes*<sup>4</sup> meant the defense system, represented by a natural border<sup>5</sup>, such as the Rhine or the Danube, given that the river delimited in the minds of the people the sacred space, Charles R. Wittaker (2004, 7) thinks. Moreover, the watercourses were considered by the Romans as *usus publicum riparum* (Scapini, 1998, 11-12, 53-55), and the right of navigation and even fishing were recognized and protected by the Roman Law (Costa, 1919 *apud* Tomás, 2001, 361-372)

As a result, in the beginning, this system was established on a natural obstacle (watercourses - *ripa*, flumen, mountain ranges), because later, in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, to it becomes a true fortification, organized behind a security territory created in the enemy territory. (Vlădescu, Barnea 1994, 313, col. 2; Liuşnea 2009, 101-102)

The beginnings of the organization of the border of the Empire in the form of the *limes* have been set since the beginning of the first century of the Christian era, under Octavian Augustus, as Rufius Festus (*Breviarium*, VIII, 1) allows us to understand: “*et limes inter Romanos et barbaros ab Augusta Vindellicorum per Noricum, Pannoniam et Moesiam est constitutus* ”), given the fact that Rome conquered the gents and sought to include in the Empire the entire territory they belonged to (Cătăniciu, 1997, 32; Da Costa, 2000, 17 sqq) and, as a consequence, to establish clearly the *locum in parte limitis positum*

---

<sup>1</sup>The land that was delimited but not measured and divided was called *ager arcifinius*. (Schulten, 1922,89-92).

<sup>2</sup> For the role of *limes* in maintaining a *Pax Romana*. (Souza, 2008, 76 sqq.)

<sup>3</sup>Strabo explains the word barbarian as having to do with the hostile terrain that is unfit for the genesis of civilization. (Strabon, *Geographia*, III, 3.8). As a result, it is normal for barbarians to be aggressive, savage and dangerous individuals. (Lomas Salmonte 1982, 16, 20 Populations beyond the Romanian frontier. (Kolendo, 1994, *passim*).

<sup>4</sup>In Latin, it meant a dividing road, having the meaning, during the republican period, of a limit for the division of a land. (Vlădescu 1982, 436. Vlădescu, Barnea 1994, 313sqq). R. Cagnat explains it as a technical term originally used in the language of those who measured the land (*agrimensori* ), who to divide a territory, drew two lines, one with North-South orientation, and the other with East-West orientation, these intersecting at the center of the territory they were supposed to measure. The first line was called *cardo*, and the second *limes decumanus*. But this *limes* was only a simple line “*destined to mark a separation between the different properties, private or public: it constituted the road of communication between neighboring areas*”. (Daremborg ....p. 1255).

<sup>5</sup> An obstacle, beyond which the environmental conditions are radically different from the Mediterranean ones, unfit for agriculture and therefore for the Roman civilization. (Armario 1999, 218 sqq). The great rivers were military and commercial arteries. (Issac, 1990, 410 sqq.)

*gentilium* ....<sup>6</sup> Florus (*Epitome*, II) and Tacitus (*Annales*, IV, 44.), states that Augustus had asked General *Cn. Cornelius Lentulus* to deal with the dangerous peoples for Rome, and he executing the order, fixed the first military garrisons on the right bank of the Danube. Shortly after, Sextus Aelius Catus, consul in the year 4 AD, the proconsul of Macedonia and imperially bound in Thacia during the 1st and 4th years AD, (Syme 1934 113 sqq.) Crossed the river and defeated three chiefs. of the Geto-Dacians (Suetonius, Augustus, 20, 1, 2. Strabo, VII, 2, 13), after which he ordered the transmutation of 50,000 geets from the left bank of the Danube in the year 6 AD (Pârvan, 1926, 95). At about the same time, year 6 (Premenstein, 1898; Mommsen, 2009, 50), 11<sup>7</sup> or 13 AD. (Patsch, 1932, 19) *Cornelius Lentulus* applies a military choreography to the Geto-Dacians (*Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, V, 47-49).

The term itself appears mentioned for the first time in the work of Tacitus (*The Life of Cnaeus Julius Agricola*, 41, 1, 2: „*nec iam de limite imperii et ripa, sed de hibernis legionum et possessione dubitatum*”), in the year 97/98 AD., with the sense of border line strengthened, fortification, in front of a territory still undiscovered, in the case of Lower Germany, the reference of the ancient writer being to the *limes* on the Lower Rhine<sup>8</sup>. The civilization / barbarian dichotomy is interpreted by Leopoldo Zea (1988, 21) as „a sign of power and dependence, of center and periphery”.

Benjamin Issac (1988, 125 sqq.) Notes that in Tacitus the term of *limes* („*land boundary*”) is different from the *ripa* („*river boundary*”), although it escapes, as Pol Trouset (1993, 26, n. 6) notes, the fact that the two terms evolved in parallel in the sense of military territory. Thus, in the second half of the second century, a *praefectus ripae fluminis Euphratensis*,<sup>9</sup> appears, and in the third century a *praepositus limitis Tripolitanae* is attested. (Rebuffed, 1977, 1985, 127 sqq.; Alföldi, 2002, 145)

The purpose of the *limes*, thus understood, was to defend the borders of the Empire of Europe (Germany<sup>10</sup>, Britannia<sup>11</sup>, Pannonia, Dacia), Africa<sup>12</sup> (Egypt, Mauretania, Numidia)<sup>13</sup> and Asia (Syria) respectively. Its forms varied, however, depending on the geographical and historical conditions, in the

<sup>6</sup> The inscription discovered at Troesmis, attesting a *dux limitis Scythiae*, Sappo, under the reigns of Constantine, Constans and Constant, in Scythia Minor. (Toutain, 1981, 243).

<sup>7</sup> Maria Chitescu connects the monetary treasures with coins minted in the years 2-4 AD, dating from the time of the emperors Tiberius (Pinceşti and Fitionaşti in Moldova and Fotos in Transylvania), Claudius (Niculiţel) and Vespasian (Poiana, Galaţi county), with the events from the beginning of the first century AD, when Catus's campaign coincides with that of an anonymous general, perhaps *M. Vinicius* and that of the general *Cn. Cornelius Lentulus*. (Chitescu, 1982, 159)

<sup>8</sup> Starting with the reign of Emperor Claudiu, the *limes* are formed on Yssel and Rhine. Then the emperors of the Flavian dynasty will realize the *limes* of Upper Germany on a length of 25 Roman miles. Marked from place to place by gates and towers, the *limes* were not a material obstacle, intended to prohibit passage, and the towers were also used for communication with fire. (Daremborg, 1256).

<sup>9</sup> The inscription is undated, which Pol Trouset (Tousset, 1993, 26, n. 6.) mistakenly dates to the middle of the third century. The text recalls an elite unit, *Legio XXI Rapax* (ILS 2709 = CIL 1357), brought from the Rhine to the Danube during the period 70-107 (Cheesman, 1914, 73, n. 2) or 69-101, at the same time as the relocation and other military units, among which the *Legio XI Claudia pia fidelis*, whose garrison was established at Vindonissa in Upper Germany (Zahariade, 1999b, 600). The *Legio XXI Rapax* is no longer mentioned after Domitian's reign. (Cheesman, 1909, 155; Raschke, 1978, 879, No. 934; Erdkamp, 2007, 332). Probably the unit fell into disgrace, because it is not mentioned next to *Legio V Alaudae*, disappeared in the campaign against the Dacians organized by Domitian and as it seems to prove the deletion of the name of the unit from the inscriptions on two tombstones (CIL XIII 5201 and 11514) discovered in Vindonissa (Webster, 1998, 105, 107 n. 32; Erdkamp, 2007, 332).

<sup>10</sup> The organization of the *limes* begins during the reign of Claudius. (Willems, 1989, 38.) and „The frontier in Lower Germany was one of the earliest to be created; surviving into the early 5th century, it illustrates the whole range of Roman military installations”. (Graafstal, Willem & Bödecker, 2018, 7).

<sup>11</sup> For organizing the *limes* in Britannia (Hingley, 1997, 81-82).

<sup>12</sup> Leveau, 1977, 201 sqq.

<sup>13</sup> In North Africa, Charles. R. Whittaker believes that there is a relationship between *limes* and the cultural boundaries of wheat and olives. The concept of cultural boundaries involves three conditions: ecological, plant-specific, agricultural techniques and economic conditions. (Leveau, 1990, 896).

conditions in which the conquest itself was not a problem but the maintenance of authority, constantly using military force (Willems, 1989, 38). The most concrete example being the limes in Britannia, where the system will be completely different, Hadrian building 110 km of wall, with a north-facing ditch, with fortifications at a distance of 6.5 km between them<sup>14</sup>, the only one for which - could accept the phrase "linear fortification". And in Africa, Charles R. Whittaker (1994, 135) recalls the high areas of the Kabylas (Bénabou, 1976, 584. Leveau, 1977, 201 sqq) of *Caesarensis* (Mauretania), where there was a world of vast fortified domains, the *castella* and the *centenaria*, where banditry was endemic and where the populations inside created more problems than those at the borders.

Giovanni Forni (1959, 1076-1081; 1987, 272-294), followed by other authors (Forni, Malavolta, Fentress, Benseddik, 1960 - 1985, 1074-1376 / 80.), Considers that limes is not a concept linear as claimed by Ernest Fabricius (1926, 572-671), but two-dimensional, like a strip, where its longitudinal development is maximum, at least during the Principality period, that is, a road, probably continuous or a road network guarded by circulating troops and through which the supervision and connection between various units (Forni 1959, 1076-1081) „fortified border and defense of the Roman Empire” was ensured. (Forni, Malavolta, Fentress, Benseddik, 1960 - 1985, 1074-1376 / 80. Forni, 1987, 272-294.)

The *Limes* includes, among the auxiliary constituent elements, the military units and their trimmings *castra legionum*<sup>15</sup>, *castra auxiliariorum* (Zahariade, 1999a, 199), *castella*, *praesidia*, *centenaria*, *quadriburgia* or *burgi* (is small castella), *turres* (towers square or polygonal towers with supervisory role: signaling and observation), *oppidum* (fortified settlements), "roads to and between fortifications" and even "a series of rural settlements [Roman or barbarian]" (Gudea, 1999-2000, 211) and fortifications with role of supervision of water sources, bridges. To these are added the integrated elements or accessories such as: *fossae*, *vallum* and bastions of stone, wood or earth (Forni 1959, 1086-1092.), representing the "linear fortifications", imposed by certain relief conditions or "political" situations "strictly local. (Gudea, 1999-2000, 211.) But it must not be confused with "*Elements*" of additional reinforcement (*waves*, *palisades*, *walls*, *dams*) ..... or only subsidiary elements of commercial traffic control ". (Gudea, 1999-2000, 211). Thus, Valeriu Sârbu and Vitalie Bârcă (2000, 47) erroneously use the term limes, in order to define the defense wave on the route between "Prut and Siret", Tuluceşti - Serbesti Vechi, given that most specialists admit that this was just an additional element of fortification. In fact he delimited the neutral zone in sec. I-II, a file beyond the boundaries as Henry Lattimore called it, a *Vorlimes*. (Wheeler, 1993, 7 sq. Liuşnea, 2000.78 and 2008, 28). If they were isolated waves, without being linked to the other constituents of the limes, they could have only political importance and not military purpose. (Rocco, 2010, 47). At the same time, Ioana Bogdan Cătănicu (2009, 196) is of the opinion that "*vallum* was built only where the land did not offer a natural landmark, where the plains did not offer a „barrier "for circulation", referring to the *limes transalutanus*.

As for the constituent elements of the fortification type *limes*, they were classified by specialists according to the geographical criterion, such as those in Scythia Province, (Torbatov, 2002), according to functionality such as those in Northern Gallia for example (Brulet, 1990, 118 sqq) or according to the legal status.

Another criterion is used by Denys Pringle (2001, 139 sqq.), who performs a classification of all types of fortifications, from the Byzantine period in Africa, according to their size, distinguishing three types: 1. "Towers" (*turres*, *burgi*) with areas between 0.05 and 1.75 ha, 2. Fortresses / "Fortlets and forts" (*castra*, *castella*) and 3. Fortifications, citadels, cities protected by the wave / "fortresses, citadels, town walls" , those with an area greater than 1.75 / 1.80 ha.

The *Limes* practically protected against aggression with the help of constituents, as it artificially created the feeling of a „moral barrier” in front of what was the unknown world. It does not close but allows the peaceful migration of nomads, the passage of merchants and the departure of Roman troops from the Roman territory to carry out explorations in the barbarous territory (Rocco, 2010, 47).

---

<sup>14</sup> Historia Augusta. *Vita Hadriani*, XI, 2. „... Britanniam petit, in qua multa correxit murumque per octoginta milia passuum primus duxit, qui barbaros Romanosque divideret ”, with direct allusion to the German-rethic limes, where the border was no longer established on the river but on an artificial boundary of the ground-bound and tied between them. (Historia Augusta. *Vita Hadriani*, XII, 6).

<sup>15</sup> These could be *hiberna* (fixed) or *aestiva* (mobile).



In Europe and Africa, the border area could include not only the border provinces but also spaces under the supervision of the Roman military units located in Barbaricum, and when Romanization was advanced it could be moved to a linear structure, where troops were concentrated (Rocco, 2010, 48). The concept of "advanced defense" can be used for the Dacia reality. (Rocco, 2010, 49), where the *Dacian limes* was made (Gudea, 1997, passim.) The Roman state, which became Empire under Augustus, never actually admitted the idea of negotiating an external boundary for the sovereign power - *imperium* (Mommsen, 1981, 45 sqq.; Halgan, 1981, 79 sqq.), Since it was confused with the entire known world, even though in practice it was necessary to have a limit, argues Pol Troussset (1993b, 115 sqq.) and Javier Arce (1996, 71 sqq.). There is no principle of reciprocity of border rights in relations with *externae gentes* (Cadiou, Moret, 2009, 5). In other words, that „Roma<sup>16</sup> that gave other nations boundaries could not have them for themselves" (Troussset, 1993ab, 120), because the Romans believed in *imperium sine fine* (Vergilius, *Eneida*, I, 280), being a state continuously expanding and as a result with dynamic boundaries (Willems, 1989, 34) or open borders (Isaac, B., 1993, 105).

However, the governors could know precisely what belongs to their province or not, and the reason for this rigorous delimitation is administrative and fiscal, given that before being a territory, the province represents, according to Patrick Le Roux (2003, 15), the essence of the legal-political relations established between Rome and the subject populations. The political limit is evident especially in the east, where Rome has never succeeded in integrating the populations from its axis of jurisdiction, in the Roman ideology, so that it put in place the author's belief, an imaginary geography, which included the respective world in an anti- world (Seneca, *Lettres a Lucilius*, CXXII, 2.), becoming an identity folding place. In fact, more than territory, this border delimits human communities with religious, civil or military practices, very different mentalities, which, in the chosen space, creates the feeling of belonging to the Roman reality, more global.

In the 70s of the last century, Owen Latimore (1962, 480) made a distinction between areas that could be determined geographically:

1. unified by military actions,
2. centralized through uniformization of the civil administration
3. economically integrated.

Starting from the vision of Owen Latimore and from the concrete case of Muntenia (Bogdan Cătănicu, 1997, 57), which was annexed by Traian, but then „left in the middle” by Hadrian (Eutropius, *Brevirium ab urbe condita*), it is possible to speak we believe of the territories that belong to the Empire at one time, but the situation does not become definitive. Ioana Bogdan Cătănicu (2009, 198) explains the different treatment of the territories conquered in the North of the Danube by the fact that the Romanians did not refer to the geographical space but to the populations that inhabited them. Thus, although it was occupied for two decades, Muntenia was not colonized nor integrated into the urbanization process. The same will happen with Dacia, from which Aurelian orders the withdrawal of the army and administration after previously the Roman authority over the province had been lost during Gallienus.

Charles R. Whittaker (1989, 209), will return to the opinion of the 80s of the twentieth century and would later assert that the Romans never had a planned and sophisticated imperial strategy. Basically, borders were for Romanians, often administrative boundaries rather than a line of separation between Romanians and barbarians (Leveau, 1990, 896). Thus, they were not a barrier but a transient space (Leveau, 1990, 897). The idea of a transition zone is also accepted by Alexandru Madgearu (Madgearu 1999, 51.). At the same time, Immanuel Wallerstein (1983, 300) and James I. Miller (1998, 170) propose a comparative analysis of two social systems, the Roman and the barbarian that come to interact, one from the center position and the other from the periphery. The Romanian territory, is defined by Jean Michel Carrié (1995, 49) by its tax obligations, by the legal status of its inhabitants, by the obedience to the laws of the Empire, which legally determines that the border is between the Roman and the non-Roman ones. it is precisely known what it is. At the same time, the territory is a legal-political space to

---

<sup>16</sup> The Roman world (*Orbis Romanus*), which is clearly individualized by the other numerous populations beyond the Rhine and the Danube, does not recognize any limit to its domination, nor to the annexation of a neighboring barbarous territory, imposing then a policy of peace (*Pax Romana*), which does not it will allow later withdrawal beyond the space already conquered. (Mommsen, 1981, 64 sqq.)

which individuals belong to different extent, depending on their personal status, and the border delimits the change of their rights and obligations towards the state (Carié, 1995, 49).

Regarding the structure of the border, and the Hungarian professor Zolt Visy (2002, 71-75) makes a classification according to the local geography: *ora* (maritime border), the *ripa* (river border)<sup>17</sup> and *limes* (artificial land border). For Pannonia the same specialist speaks of „*limes road*” or of the *ripa* (Visy, 2003, 131-134). In the same sense, Pol Trouset (1993a, 26; 1993c, 141-152). carries out a suggestive lexical analysis. Indeed, in Latin there are four terms that can be grouped two by two, in relation to metonymy or antinomy: *finis*<sup>18</sup> and *terminus* on the one hand and *limes*, respectively *ripa* on the other. Also, the meanings of the concept of *limes* are different from those of the term of *ripa*, geographical name and then notion of military administration. In Tacitus (*Annales*, II) and in *Vita Hadriani* (12), the latter appears with the significance of the shore of a flowing water, natural boundary: „places where barbarians are not separated from the Roman territory by rivers, but by mere conventional borders (*limitibus*)”. With time and these two notions will merge. (Tudor 1976, 132 sqq.)

Thus, if the *terminus* and *finis* belong to the ideal semantic field, one sacred and the other profane, the *limes* belongs to the material-profane field, having the sense of military border (Issac, 1988, p. 125 sqq.), The control area in which it is located. in garrisons legions and auxiliary units (Trouset, 1993b, 115-120). The term of *finis* means the imperceptible and fluctuating limit of the periphery of what is *orbis Romanus*. From a *limes* perspective, it is difficult to determine exactly where *finis imperii* are (Trouset, 1993b, 120). In turn, C.R. Wittaker, (1994, 68) writes: „It is true that two places are marked as *fines Romanorum* on a section of the *Peutinger Table* depicting Syria and Mesopotamia, a medieval copy of a fourth-century A.D. Roman road map. But apart from dating difficulties, these *fines* look as if they were the boundary between the provinces of a client state (possibly Palmyra), since underneath one is written *fines exercitus Syriaticae*, showing where the military responsibility of the Roman army ended.” Same author is convinced that: "*Termini* and *fines*, therefore, referred to the limits of internal order, not of military power. *Propagatio terminorum* did not contradict the idea of fixed boundaries." (Whittaker 1994, 24-25). It was a religious formula for the proper advance of the boundaries, establishing a "dynamic stability" in order of the state. "As a result, the two terms, *fines* and *limes* are antithetical.

In this context, being semantically from the concept of *fines* (borders, borders), finishes (border, limit), the *limes* reaches its classical period of evolution, the 2nd-4th centuries AD, to represent a space under Roman military protection, an area at the same time contact and asserting the supremacy of a superior civilization. To be beyond *limes*, in exile, was equivalent to the Romanians with a legal death, a deprivation of "water and fire", that is to leave the city, to live among the monsters ("*wilder people fiercer than wolves*"), as the poet Ovid (*Tristele*, V, 7, 45-46) suggests. When a prisoner of war returned to the Empire, he returned "*in fines nostros*", by virtue of "*jus postliminium*" (Smith, 1875) or right of return „*jus postliminium*” (Smith, 1875) sau drept de reîntoarcere « *Postliminio redisse uidetur, cum in fines nostros intrauerit, sicuti amittitur, ubi fines nostros excessit. sed et si in ciuitatem sociam amicamue aut ad regem socium uel amicum uenerit, statim postliminio redisse uidetur, quia ibi primum nomine publico tutus esse incipiat.* » (*Digeste Justiniani*, 49, 15, 19, 3.).

In the second century it is completed by a road (Issac, 1988, 125) following the border line, along which are arranged: troops (legions and auxiliary troops) enclosed in fortifications (*castra, castella, burgi, turres, specula*<sup>19</sup>), and in some cases, the defense is reinforced with waves of earth that have defense ditches and sometimes palisades or stone walls. There is practically a dense road network, which mobilizes, in the second and third centuries, the whole Roman army from the Lower Danube for example (Vlădescu 1994, 436-437; Vlădescu, Barnea 1994, 313, col 2.). The communication between the fortifications is ensured by means of strategic roads (*via militaris*), parallel to the wave (Vlădescu, Barnea

<sup>17</sup> *Ripa Thraciae*, corresponding to the customs constituency between the Haemus Mountains and Danube (the prefecture of the Danube bank in the pre-provincial period (Bogdan-Cătănciu, 1993, 2004, n.2.) or *ripa Histri*.

<sup>18</sup> With the sense of border or limit, beyond which was *Barbaricum*. (Fabian, 2006, 219).

<sup>19</sup> *Specula* – square shaped observation towers that signaled to each other through torches, as represented on Trajan's Column.(Vulpe 1988, 21 sqq.; Timoc, 2001, 97) .

1994, 314, col.1.) In this way, the limes becomes what is called a fortified border in continuous dynamics or "constantly evolving" (Chevallier, R 1972, *passim.*). A macro-regional boundary between the empire and the barbarian world, preserving until the Byzantine era this line between Oikumene and Barbaricum (Madgearu, 1999, 41). The *Limes* is a military boundary and a symbol by which populations are kept at a distance and their movements controlled. At the same time, politically, administratively and economically, we are talking about a permeable, "fluid" barrier (Maxfield, 1989, p. 157), which facilitates communication, does not prevent it. Of course, there are many different situations depending on the region. In the East, for example, where the Romans failed to integrate the parties, in their axis of Roman jurisdiction and ideology, the barrier is practically an imaginary geography, which includes them in a sort of antilume, if they were to we give Seneca (*Lettres à Lucilius*, CXXII, 2) belief.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As a result, the meaning of the term, which is merely a technical name of the border from a military point of view (Zahariade 1994, *passim.*), Will know different connotations in time, given that, as part of the strategy applied to the borders of the Empire, the emperors Romanians will constantly try to adapt to various situations. Moreover, Charles R. Whittaker (1994, 223) observes that during the crisis of the Empire, during the centuries II-III, the border area will be enlarged continuously, so that the barbarian provincial could no longer be distinguished. In the second half of the third century, a change in military architecture can be noticed, which borrows from the civilian the lavish style, as R. Fellmann (1976, 186) observes.

From the point of view of Roman jurisprudence, the *limes* of the provinces is only a tactical border, lacking a formally attested legal value, a de facto border, which does not include all the territories subject to the Roman Empire and which enjoys *Pax Romana*, after as Marco Rocco (2010, 48) observes. In other words, the *limes* is a military fortified control line and not a political demarcation, based on the concept of "frontier-territory" specific to the Roman people promoting an expansionist policy.

Later, in the IV-VI centuries, the idea of the natural obstacle, in political and military practice, returns to the meanings of the two terms, *finis* and *limes*, respectively, to coincide, so that during the reign of Justinian the role of limes disappears (Mann, 1974, 531).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Alföldi, G., 2002. *Kaiser, Heer und soziale Mobilität im Römischen Reich*, Ángelos Chaniótis și Pierre Ducrey (eds.), *Army and power in the ancient world*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 123-150.
- [2] Arce, J., 1996. *Orbis Romanus y Finis Terrae*, în Carmen Fernández Ochoa ed., *Los finestrros atlánticos en la antiqüedad. Epoca preromana y romana*, Gijón, 71-74.
- [3] Armario, Fr. J. G., 1999. *Ammianus adversas externaes gentes: la geografía del Barbaricum en Amiano Marcelino*, în "Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie II, Historia Antigua", 12, 217-227
- [4] Bénabou, M., 1976. *La résistance africaine la romanisation*. Paris: Maspero "Textes à l'appui", 635 p.
- [5] Birley, A. R., 1981. *The economic effects of Roman frontier policy*, A.King și M. Henig ed., *The Roman West in the Third Century*, BAR, S, 190, Oxford, 39-53.
- [6] Bishop, M. C., Coulston, J. C. M., 1993. *Roman Military Equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome*, Londra. B. T. Batsford, 224 p.
- [7] Bogdan Cătănicu, I., 1993.. *Despre apariția orașelor și statutul acestora în Dacia romană*, [About the appearance of cities and their status in Roman Dacia]"Ephemeris Napocensis", III, 17, 203-227.
- [8] Bogdan Cătănicu, I., 1997. *Muntenia în sistemul defensiv al Imperiului roman sec. I-III p.* [Wallachia in the defensive system of the Roman Empire, 1st-3rd centuries A. D. Chr.] , Alexandria.
- [9] Bogdan Cătănicu, I., 2009. *Limes Daciae Inferioris. Cercetări și ipoteze*, în Buletinul Muzeului Județean Teleorman, Seria Arheologie, 1, 195-203.
- [10] Bouno Ccore Varas, R., 2003. *Los tratados en el mundo romano*, în "Revista de estudios histórico-jurídicos", 25, Valparaíso, Chile, 23-34.

- [11] **Brulet, R., 1990.** *Le Galle septentrionale au Bas-Empire. Occupation du sol et défense du territoire dans l'arrière pays du limes aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Trier. 433 p.
- [12] **Cadiou, F., Moret, P., 2004.** *Rome et la frontière hispanique à l'époque républicaine (IIe-Ier s. av. J.C.)*, în D. Lafazani și C. Velud (eds.), *Empires et Etats nationaux en Méditerranée : la frontière entre risques et protection, Actes du colloque international tenu à l'IFAO – Le Caire, 6-8 juin 2004*, Presses de l'IFAO, Le Caire. [http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/41/36/51/PDF/Cadiou-Moret\\_2004.pdf](http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/41/36/51/PDF/Cadiou-Moret_2004.pdf)
- [13] **Cagnat, R., 1969.** *Limes Imperii*, în Daremberg, S., *Le Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, tom 3, vol 2, 1255-1258
- [14] **Carrié, J. M., 1995.** *1993: ouverte des frontieres romaines?*, în Rousselle A. Ed., *Frontières terrestres, frontières célestes*, Paris, 31-53.
- [15] **Cheesman, G. L., 1909.** *The date of the disappearance of Legio XXI Rapax*, în „The Classical Review”, 1909, 23, 155.
- [16] **Cheesman, G. L., 1914.** *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. 192 p.
- [17] **Chevallier, R., 1997.** *Les voies romaines*, Paris: Picard. 343 p.
- [18] **Chişescu, M. 1982.** *La numismatique et les evenements politico-militaire des années 2-4 de notre ere en Dacie*, în „Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne”, 8, 153-165.
- [19] **Cimma, M. R., 1976.** *Reges socii et amici populi Romani*, Milano: Giuffrè. 33 p.
- [20] **Claval, P., 1978.** *Espace et pouvoir*, Paris : Presses Universitaires de France. 257 p.
- [21] **Costa, E., 1919.** *Le aque nel diritto romano*, Bologna: Zanichelli. 120 p.
- [22] **Da Costa, N. G., 2000.** *Presence et activités militaires romaines au nord et au nord-est de la Mer Noire (Ier VIe siècle de nôtre ère). Réflexion sur la notion de frontière dans le Pont-Euxin à l'époque romaine*, Travail d'Étude et de Recherche, Université Bordeaux III.
- [23] **Daremberg, C., Saglio, E., 1969.** *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, Tome I, Graz: Akademische Druck, 946 p.
- [24] **Dyson, S. L, 1971.** *Native Revolts in the Roman Empire*, în *Historia* 20, 239-274.
- [25] **Dyson, S. L, 1985.** *The Creation of the Roman Frontier*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 324 p.
- [26] **Erdkamp, P. 2007.** *A Companion to the Roman Army*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. 600 p.
- [27] **Fabricius, E., Hettner, F., Von Sarvey, O., 1894-1937.** *Der obergermanisch-raetische Limes des Römerreichs*, 14 Bände - Abt. A: Streckenbeschreibungen; Abt. B: Beschreibungen der Kastele. Berlin, Leipzig, Heidelberg: Verlag Otto Petters
- [28] **Fabricius, E., 1926.** *Limes*, în *RE*, XIII, 1, coll. 572-671.
- [29] **Ferrill A., 1986.** *The Fall of the Roman Empire. The military explanation*, Londra: Thames & Hudson, 192 p.
- [30] **Ferrill A, 1991.** *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, în P. Kennedy (ed.), *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, New Haven & London, 71-85, 196-199.
- [31] **Fodorean, F., 2006.** *Drumurile din Dacia romană*, [The roads of Roman Dacia] Cluj-Napoca: Publisher Napoca Star, 448 p.
- [32] **Forni, G., 1987.** *Limes: nozione e nomenclature*, în M. Sordi (ed.) *Il confine nel mondo classico*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 272-294.
- [33] **Forni, G., Malavolta, M., Fentress, E.W.B., Benseddik, N., 1960-1985.** *Limes*, în E. De Ruggiero (ed.), *Dizionario Epigrafico di Antichità Romane*, IV, fasc. 34-40, 1074-1380.
- [34] **France, J., 2001.** *État romain et romanisation: à propos de la municipalisation des Gaules et des Germanies*, în „L'Antiquité classique”, 70, 205-212.
- [35] **Fulford, M., 1984.** *Demonstrating Britannia's economic dependence in the first and second centuries*, în T.C.F. Blagg și A.C. King (eds.), *Military and Civilian in Roman Britain*, BAR, 136, Oxford, 129-142.
- [36] **Graafstal, E. P. Willem. W. J.H. & Bödecker, S., 2018.** *Frontiers of the Roman Empire. The Lower German Limes*, Leiden: Published by Sidestone Press, 142 p.

- [37] **Gudea, N., 1997.** *Der Dakische Limes Materialien zu Seiner Geschichte*, în *Janrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentral Museum*, 44 Mainz. 113 p.
- [38] **Gudea, N., 1999-2000.**, *Noţiunea de limes: frontieră sau concepţie de apărare? Câteva reflecţii în legătură cu o carte recent apărută*, în *Ephemeris Napocensis*, IX-X, 209-230. [The notion of limes: frontier or defense concept? Some reflections in connection with a recent book]
- [39] **Guzmán Armario, F. J., 1999.** *Ammianus adversas externaes gentes: la geografía del Barbaricum en Amiano Marcelino*, în „Espacio, Tiempo y Forma”, Serie II, Historia Antigua, t 12, 217-227.
- [40] **Halgan, C., 1981.** *La administracion de las provincias senatoriales*, în „Revista de Administración Pública”, 47-48 julio-diciembre, Mexico, 76-148.
- [41] **Hingley, R., 1997.**, *Resistance and domination: Social change in Roman Britain*, în Mattingly, D., J. ed., *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire*, ”Journal of Roman Archaeology”, supplementary Series 23, Postmouth, RI, 81-100.
- [42] **Isaac, B., 1988.** *The Meaning of the terms limes and limitanei*, în „The Journal of Roman Studies”, 78, 125-147.
- [43] **Isaac, B., 1990.** *The Limits of Empire. The Roman Army in the East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 492 p.
- [44] **Isaac, B., 1993.**, *An Open Frontier*, în *Frontières d'empire. Nature et signification des frontières romaines. Actes de la Table Ronde Internationale de Nemours, 21-22-23 mai 1992*, Nemours, 105-115
- [45] **Janniard S. 2015.** *Field Officers: Late Empire*, in *Y. Le Bohec (dir.), The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. 2015. 1176 p.
- [46] **Kienast D., 1968**, *Entstehung und Aufbau des römischen Reiches*, în *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Romanistische Abteilung*, 85, 330-335.
- [47] **Kolendo, J., 1994.** *Les armes romaines entre les mains des barbares*, în „Dialogues d' Historie Ancienne”, 20.1, 21-27.
- [48] **Latimore, O., 1962.** *Studies In Frontier History*, Collected Papers 1928-1958, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 579 p.
- [49] **Le Bohec, Y., 1989.** *L'armée romaine sous Haut-Empire*, Paris: Picard. 287 p.
- [50] **Le Roux, P., 2003.** *Les territoires de la peninsule Iberique aux deux derniers siecles de notre ere*, Introduction a la Table ronde *Defensa y territorio en Hispania de los Escipiones a Augusto (espacios urbanos y rurales, municipales y provinciales)*, în Angel Morillo, Francois Cadiou și David Hourcade (eds.) *Actas reunidas por Coloquio celebrado en la Casa de Velazquez (19 y 20 de marzo 2001)*, Leon-Madrid, 13- 22 .
- [51] **Leveau, Ph., 1990.** *C.R. Wittaker, Les frontières de l'Empire romain, M. Rowlands, M. Larsen et K. Kristiansen ed. , Centre and Periphery in The Ancient World*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1989, în „Annales. Économies, Sociétés”, *Civilisations*, 45, 4, 896-899.
- [52] **Leveau, Ph., 1993.** *C.R. Wittaker, Les frontières de l'Empire romain, M. Rowlands, M. Larsen et K. Kristiansen ed. , Centre and Periphery in The Ancient World*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1989, în „Annales. Économies, Sociétés”, *Civilisations*, 45, 1990, 4, p. 896-899.
- [53] **Liuşnea, M. D., 2000.** *Consideraţii privind limes-ul roman în perioada Principatului, la Dunărea de Jos*, [The considerations regarding the Roman limes during of the Early Roman Empire, at the Lower Danube], în *Carpica*, XXIX, Publishing Documentis: Iaşi, 71-82.
- [54] **Liuşnea, M. D., 2008.** *Organizarea limes-ului roman la Dunărea de Jos. Studiu de caz pe flotila militară*, [The organization of the Roman limes at the Lower Danube. Case study on the military fleet], Bucharest : Publishing Cartea Universitară. 152 p.
- [55] **Liuşnea, M. D., 2009.** *Aspecte juridice privind navigatia in perioada Principatului*. [Legal Aspects Regarding Navigation in the Early Roman Empire], Peuce SN, VII, Tulcea, p. 97-110.
- [56] **Lomas Salmonte, F. X. 1982.** *Bárbaros y barbarie en Estrabón*. In: Higuera Maldonado, Juan (Coord.). *Actas del I Congreso Andaluz de Estudios Clásicos (Jaén, 1981)*. Jaén: Instituto de Estudios Giennenses, 1982, p. 15-27.

- [57] **Luttwak, E. N., 1976.** *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire, from the First Century AD to the Third*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 255 p.
- [58] **Madgearu, Al., 1999.** *Dunărea în perioada bizantină (sec. X-XII): o frontieră permeabilă, [The Danube in the Byzantine period (X-XII century): a permeable frontier]* în "Revista istorică", X, 1-2, 41-55.
- [59] **Mann, J. C., 1974.** *Power, Force and the Frontiers of the Empire*, în "Journal of Roman Studies", LXIX, 175-183.
- [60] **Mann, J. C., 1979.** *Power, force and the frontiers of the Empire*, în "Journal of Roman Studies", 69, 175-183.
- [61] **Matthaei, L. E., 1907.** *On the Classification of Roman Allies*, în *The Classical Quarterly*, 1, 2/3 Cambridge, 182-204.
- [62] **Maxfield, V., A., 1989.** *L'Europa continentale*, în John Wachter, ed., *Il mondo di roma imperiale, I, la formazione. Parte quarta.: le frontiere*, Bari, 157-217.
- [63] **Miller, J. I. 1998.** *The spice trade of the Roman Empire, 29 BC to AD 641*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 294 p.
- [64] **Minow, H., 2003.** *Vermessungsprobleme in den Schriften der römischen Agrimensoren*, în "Mensuration, Photogrammétrie", "Génie rural" 1, 14-19.
- [65] **Mommsen, Th., 1981.** *La administracin publica de la Roma imperial*, în „Revista de Administración Pública”, 47-48 julio-diciembre, Mexico, 37-76.
- [66] **Mommsen, Th., 1990.** *Istoria romană, [Roman history]*, vol IV, Iaşi: Editura Polirom. 368 p.
- [67] **Paribeni, R., 1922.** *Foedus*, în *Dizionario epigrafico di antichita romane*, E. De Ruggiero ed., Roma, 172-176.
- [68] **Pârvan, V., 1926.** *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei*, [Getica. A protohistory of Dacia], Bucharest: Cultura Naţională. 850 p.
- [69] **Piganiol, A., 1963.** *La notion de Limes*, în *Quintus Congressus Internationales Limitis Romani Studiosorum*, 1961, Zagreb, 119-122.
- [70] **Polverini, L., 1975.** *Da Aurelio a Diocleziano*, în „Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt“, II, 2, Berlin, 1013-1035.
- [71] **Premmerstein, A. v., 1898.** *Die Anfänge der Provinz Moesia*, în „Jahrbuch des Österreichischen. Archäologischen Instituts“, Beiblatt, 1, 1898, col. 145-196.
- [72] **Pringle, 2001.** *The Defence of Byzantine Africa from Justinian to the Arab Conquest: An Account of the Military History and Archaeology of the African Provinces in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series, vol. 99, Oxford. 699 p.
- [73] **Raschke, M., G., 1978.** *New Studies in Roman commerce with the East*, în Hildegard Temporini și Wolfgang Haase, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, II 9.2, De Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 604-1378.
- [74] **Rebuffat, R., 1977.** *Une Zone militaire et sa vie économique: le limes de Tripolitaine*, Paris, 395-419.
- [75] **Rebuffat, R., 1987.** "Viae Militaris", în Latomus, Brussel, XLVI, I, 52-67.
- [76] **Rinaldi Tufi, S., 1990.** *Oltre il «Limes»: presenza romana al di là delle frontiere dell'Impero*, în SETTIS S., (ed.), *Civiltà dei Romani. La città, il territorio, l'impero*, I, Electa, Milano, 271-286.
- [77] **Rocco, M., 2010.** *Persistenze e cesure nell'esercito romano dai Severi a Teodosio I: ricerche in ambito socio-politico, istituzionale, strategico*, teză de doctorat, Padova: Università degli Studi di Padova, 568 p.
- [78] **Rowlands, M., Larsen, M. și Kristiansen, Kr., (eds.) 1989.** *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient world*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [79] **Salvino, E., 1999.** *Città di Frontiera nell'impero Romano: Forme della Romanizzazione da Augusto ai Severi*, Bari.
- [80] **Sîrbu, V., Bârcă, V., 2000.** *Daci și romani la începutul secolului al II-lea la Nordul Dunării, în Daci și romani la începutul secolului al II-lea d.Hr., la Nordul Dunării, [Dacians and Romans at the beginning of the IInd century in the North of the Danube]* Editura Mirton, Timișoara, 29-78.

- [81] Scapini, N., 1998. *I limiti legali della proprietà: nell'evoluzione storica del diritto roman*, Parma: Casanova Edizioni Universitarie, 159 p.
- [82] Schulten, A., 1894., *Das territorium legionis*, în *Hermes*, 29, 481-516.
- [83] Schulten, A., 1922. *Finis*, în Ettore Ruggiero ed. *Dizionario epigraphico*, III, F-H., Roma.
- [84] Smith, W., 1875. *Jus postlimium*, în John Murray (ed.), *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Londra, 949-951.
- [85] Souza, Philip de, 2008. *Parta victoriis pax: Roman emperors as peacemakers*, în Souza, Philip de, France, John, eds., *War and Peace in Ancient and Medieval History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 76 -105.
- [86] Stickler, T., 2010. *The Feederati*, în P. Erdkamp, (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 495-515.
- [87] Suceveanu, Al, 1996. *Fines*, în *Enciclopedia arheologiei și istorie vechi a României*, II, 146-147.
- [88] Syme, R. 1934. *Lentulus and the origin of Moesia*, *JRS*, 24, 2, 113-137.
- [89] Syme, R. 1971. *Danubian Papers*, Bucharest. 256 p.
- [90] Timoc, C., 2001. *Despre dirijarea navigației fluviale în zona Porților de Fier ale Dunării în epocă romană*, în *In memoriam Dumitru Tudor*, , [About the management of river navigation in the Portile de Fier area of the Danube in Roman times] *Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisiensis*, IV, Editura Mirton, Timișoara, 97-115.
- [91] Tomas, G., 2001. *Limitations à la propriété riverane et libre navigation fluviale*, în „Revue Interantionale des Droits de l'Antiquité”, XLVIII, 361-372.
- [92] Torbatov, S., 2002, *Укрепителната система на провинция Сцития (края на III – VII в.)*. Издателство [The Defence System of the Late Roman Province of Scythia (the end of the 3rd - the 7th century A.D.)], Faber. Велико Търново, (Faber, Veliko Târnovo).536 p.
- [93] Tudor, T., 1976, *Arheologie romană*, [Roman archaeology], București: Editura științifică și Enciclopedică, 282 p..
- [94] Toulze, Fr., 1993. *Centre et périphérie à Rome*, dans *Uranie*, 3 , *Espaces mythiques*, 87-118.
- [95] Troussel, P., 1993a. *La Frontière romaine et ses contradictions*, în « Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient », *La Frontière. Séminaire de recherche sous la direction d'Yves Roman. Lyon 1988-1991: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux*, 21, 1, 25-33.
- [96] Troussel, P., 1993b. *La frontière romaine: concepts et représentations*, în Patrice Brun, Sander van der Leeuw și Charles R. Wittaker (eds.) , *Frontières d'Empire. Nature et signification des frontières romaines*, Actes de la Table Ronde Internationale de Nemours, 21-23 mai 1992, Nemours, 115 – 120.
- [97] Troussel, P., 1993c. *La Notion de Ripa et les frontières de l'Empire*, în *Le Fleuve et ses*, Paris, 141-152.
- [98] Toutain, M. J., 1981. *Une nouvelle inscription de Troesmis (Iglitza)*, în « Mélanges d'archéologie et de l'histoire », 11, 214 - 260.
- [99] Visy, Z., 2002. *Similarities and Differences in the Late Roman Defence System on the European and Eastern Frontiers*, în Freeman, Philip-Bennett, Julian-Fiema, Zbigniew- Hoffmann, Birgitta, *Limes XVIII. Proceedings of the XVIIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies held in Amman, Jordan (September 2000)*, I, BAR, seria 1084, Oxford 2002, 71-77.
- [100] Visy, Z., 2003. *The ripa Pannonica in Hungary*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 166 p.
- [101] Vlădescu, Cr., M., 1982. *Limes*, în *Enciclopedia civilizației romane*, coord. D. Tudor, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 436-442.
- [102] Vlădescu, Cr., M., Barnea, I, 1994. *Limes*, în *EAIVR*, II, 313-315.
- [103] Vulpe, R., 1988. *Columna lui Traian. Monument al etnogenezei românilor*, [Trajan's Column. Monument of the ethnogenesis of the Romanians], București: Editura Sport Turism. 230 p.
- [104] Wallerstein, Im., 1983. *Historical Capitalism*, London, New York: Verso. 168 p.
- [105] Webster, G., 1998. *The Roman Imperial Army of the first and second Century A.D.*, 3th ed., University of Oklahoma Press. 343 p.
- [106] Wheeler, E.t L., 1993. *Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy*, I, în “The Journal of Military History”, 57, 1, 7-41.

- [107]Willems, J.H., W., 1984. *Romans ans Batavians. A Regional Study in the Duch Eastern River Area*, II, în Berichten, ROB, 34, 39-331.
- [108]Willems, J.H., W., 1989. *Rome and its Frontier in the North: The Role of the Pariphery*, în Klaus Randsborg ed., *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, L'Erma din Bretschneider, Roma, 33-45.
- [109]Whittaker, Ch., R, 1989. *Les frontières de l'Empire romain*, Les Belles Lettres, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon-Paris, Besançon: Université de Franche-Comté, 218 p.
- [110]Whittaker, Ch., R, 1994. *Frontiers of the Roman Empire. A Social and Economic Study*, Baltimore -Londra: Johns Hopkins University Press. 341 p.
- [111]Whittaker, Ch., R, 1997. *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study (Ancient Society and History)*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 360 p.
- [112]Whittaker, Ch., R, 2004. *Rome and its Frontiers. The Dynamics of Empire*, London,. New York: Routledge, 246 p.
- [113]Whitby, M., 2004. *Emperors and Armies, AD 235-395*, în S. Swain și M. Edwards (eds.), *Approaching late antiquity: the transformation from early to late empire*, Oxford, University Press, Oxford, 156-186.
- [114]Zahariade, M., 1994. *Limes-ul roman în secolele 4-6 între Singidunum și gurile Dunării*, (rezumatul tezei de doctorat), [The Roman Limes in the 4-6 centuries between the Singidunum and the mouths of the Danube], (PHD thesis summary), Bucureşti.
- [115]Zahariade, M., 1999a. *The Roman Frontier in Scythia Minor (1980-1995)*, în Nicolae Gudea ed., *Proceeding of the XVIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Zalău, 199-213.
- [116]Zahariade, M., 1999b. *How and when the Legion XI Claudia arrived in Lower Moesia*, în Nicolae Gudea ed., *Proceeding of the XVIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Zalău, 599-607.
- [117]Zea L. 1988. *Discurso desde la marginación y la barbarie*. Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial del Hombre. 284 p..





<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.115-121>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM IN OUR SOCIETY

**Andreea Elena Matic (a)\***

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: amiricass@yahoo.co.uk, emirica@ugal.ro

### *Abstract*

In the present paper we aim to analyze two important ethical concepts altruism and generosity. Our research will focus on the philosopher Peter Singer's ideas of efficient altruism and generosity because we consider that his insight regarding this matter is adequate and realistic. How much money do we actually need in order to live at a decent level and how much we can dispose of in order to help other people and to increase the quality of life for everyone? In the second part of the paper we will refer to the situation in the Romanian contemporary society in which the multiples flows in the medical system is causing the necessity of important amount of donated money for medical investigation and treatments, mostly in foreign countries. It is clear that a generous attitude towards the other people (and not only people) can be an important source of personal satisfaction as well as a real salvation for the ones in need. We will mostly refer to the possibilities of donating in Romania taking into account the specificity of our social problems. At the same time, we are aware of the fact that we are not the poorest or the most helpless country and that Romanian people can also be generous with the less fortunate persons from the third world countries where children die of diseases that are now easily curable.

**Keywords:** effective altruism; generosity; morality; law; society;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Even since ancient times, people have taken a special interest in identifying the origins of ethical and moral behavior, and have recognized the importance of complying with moral norms for the evolution and survival of society. The moral norms (dictated by the divinity, religion or the group leader) have always been essential to the proper functioning of human communities.

Almost everyone agrees that the essence of humanity contains a moral part. If initially, ethical issues were considered as belonging exclusively to the spiritual, rational, and not physical, part of the human being, the theories developed today by neurophilosophy and philosophy of science are directing in entirely new directions, if not opposed to the original ones. Several philosophers and neuroscientists, among which is Patricia Churchland, argue that "mammals — humans, yes, but also monkeys and rodents and so on — feel moral intuitions because of how our brains developed over the course of evolution. Mothers came to feel deeply attached to their children because that helped the children (and through

them, the mother's genes) survive. This ability to feel attachment was gradually generalized to mates, kin, and friends" (Sigal Samuel, 2019)

In Churchland's opinion, morality of human being is not a set of absolute true norms, but a set of rules that can keep a society or a group together. In order for the group to survive and prosper a certain amount of trust is necessary. The members must be trustworthy and keep their promises; otherwise no task can be fulfilled. Even though the idea that morality has a biological (neurological) origin can be shocking at first, it is undeniable that other animals show empathy, compassion and altruism for other beings. The fact that the origin of these emotions come from our brain does not diminish their value or importance: "there does not seem to be something other than the brain, something like a non-physical soul. So I think it shouldn't be that much of a surprise to realize that our moral inclinations are also the outcome of the brain. Having said that, I don't think it devalues it. I think it's really rather wonderful. The brain is so much more extraordinary and marvelous than we thought. It's not that I think these are not real values — this is as real as values get!" (Churchland Patricia, in the interview took by Sigal, 2019).

Churchland also offers a definition of morality as being "the set of shared attitudes and practices that regulate individual behavior to facilitate cohesion and well-being among individuals in the group. Social practices regarding how to get along create expectations that figure into decisions about what to do. Expectations concerning how others will almost certainly behave and react entail energy relevant efficiency in decision making, and failed expectations may generate a sense of something being wrong or at least amiss." (Churchland Patricia, *Conscience, the Origin of Moral Intuition*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2019, p. 169).

Over time, philosophers have identified positive emotions and the satisfaction of the human being who keep to moral norms, giving proof of altruism and generosity. Just that, traditionally, these values were considered rather spiritual and not pertaining to the physical body, the biology. According to Plato, Aristotle and Christian ethics, the good is objective, a value in itself, independent of any context, situation or being. On the other hand, in the concept of utilitarians the good is subjective, in relation to the beliefs or desires of individuals. And so on, the list with opinions and arguments related to the nature of morality and good may continue.

One of the philosophers concerned with morality and answering the question of "what should I do?" Was Immanuel Kant who considered that "our demands of knowingness are limited to the natural world, but we have no reason to believe that the natural world is the only one. [...] people are moral beings capable of action, and they could not live if they were not considered so. The concept makes sense as long as it is based on the assumption of free will. Kant holds that the latter and causality are compatible, provided that human freedom - the capacity to act autonomously, not be considered an aspect of the natural world. " ( O'Neill Onora, *Kant's Ethics*, editor Singer Peter, *A Companion to Ethics*, First Edition, 2006, pg. 206). Kant's concept is original as it is based on a moral law called the categorical imperative: "it acts only according to that maxim through which you can also want it to become a universal law" (Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Moral*, 1972, pg. 29) and to always treat humanity, that is, every human being, as a purpose in itself and never merely as a means.

Finally, despite the great diversity of ethics developed by philosophers or theologians, we all agree that a morally correct social conduct is necessary. As Peter Singer noted in the afterword of the *A Companion to Ethics* paper, whose editor is, "it would be easy to regard ethics as a discipline in which, since ancient times, the proponents of opposing views have entered into endless disputes without any prospect of settlement. After all, does each culture have its own ethical tradition, being in a hopeless disagreement with all the others? and are there, even within the narrow framework of modern Western philosophical ethics, irreconcilable differences concerning what is good or compulsory? Even worse, philosophers cannot even agree upon what we do when we launch such ethical judgments: if we describe some kind of moral reality or express our own attitudes, prescribing what is to be done. " (Singer Peter, *Afterword*, in: Editor Peter Singer, *A Companion to Ethics*, First Edition, 2006, p. 573)

Values such as: justice, freedom, equity, altruism and generosity are good simply because they make our lives better, easier and, according to Peter Singer, that is what we must concentrate on. The nature or origins of these values are issues that, probably, will not be solved in a manner that everyone agrees on. The purpose of applied ethics is to move forward theories and never ending discussions and get to what each of us can actually do in order to live better and help others live better and this is what we will try to analyze in this paper.

## 2. SOCIETY, DEMOCRACY AND EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM

According to Wikipedia altruism is "the principle and moral practice of concern for happiness of other human beings and/or animals, resulting in a quality of life both material and spiritual. It is a traditional virtue in many cultures and a core aspect of various religious traditions and secular worldviews, though the concept of "others" toward whom concern should be directed can vary among cultures and religions. In an extreme case, altruism may become a synonym of selflessness which is the opposite of selfishness." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altruism>)

Peter Singer says that altruism is based on the idea that "we must do the most good we can" (Singer Peter, *The Most Good You Can Do, How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*, Bucharest, Litera Publishing House, 2017, p. 19). It is not enough to respect the law and not harm others in any way (by stealing, killing, cheating and so on). We have to actually do all we can in order to improve other people lives. "An ethical life at a minimum acceptable level implies the use of a substantial part of the resources that thrive us to make the world better. A fully ethical life means to do as much good as possible. " (Singer Peter, *The Most Good You Can Do, How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*, Bucharest, Litera Publishing House, 2017, p. 19).

Effective altruism is a way of living for some people who organize and donate significant parts of their lives and resources in order to do good to others. They may use their money, talent or work in order to help others and save lives. Effective altruists keep to themselves only what they need in order to live at a decent level and give everything else to others whom are in need of money, medicine etc.

Some of Peter Singer's books abound in examples of people who either have drawn from the applied ethics courses, or have felt themselves the need to act so and consistently donate much of their income to charitable organizations, working in such organizations to do good for as many people as possible, donated one kidney to strangers, and so on. All these selfless people feel great satisfaction that they can, through their effort, make the world a little better place.

Among the questions Singer is trying to answer is the following: what type of society and what kind of economy make possible the most significant occurrence of effective altruism? And the philosopher's answer is that the greatest development of effective altruism can take place within democratic societies with a capitalist economy. Although capitalism does not totally exclude poverty, nevertheless, through it, the general standard of living is higher, and some people may get to earn very large amounts of money which they can subsequently donate for charity.

This idea of keeping for oneself only the amounts of money needed to ensure a decent standard of living and of donating the remaining looks a bit like the communist slogan: 'from each according to his/her availabilities and to each according to his/her needs'. But another form of government other than democracy implies the fact that the distribution of the goods or amounts earned is done by those who lead authoritatively (and, for the most part, arbitrarily and abusively) excluding the possibility for individuals to donate as much and to whom they consider to be more appropriate. But effective altruism implies a free and individual decision to do good to others or to save the lives of strangers.

In his book, *Democracy and Disobedience*, Singer accomplishes a lucid and complex analysis of democracy and the individuals' obligations to observe the law and social order. In totalitarian regimes, an individual is entitled to violate the law since, many times, it is abusively and unfairly imposed upon him. On the other hand, democracy, ie the exercise of power by a group of people nominated by free, secret and equal vote, is much more permissive as regards the popular initiative. If a law is improper or unfair, members of the society have available legal levers to request its amendment. That is why democracy is preferable: any of us can get involved and act legally in order to amend or recall an unfair law.

Peter Singer argues that democracy is a fair compromise and " can be justified by virtue of the procedures with which decisions are made. These procedures involve a fair compromise among the alternative positions from which a choice is to be made. It gives everyone involved in the decision - making process an equal opportunity to influence the final outcome by allowing their views to be heard; everyone is allowed to explain their position and justify why it is worth adopting. Thus, the final decision represents the best and the fairest compromise that can be achieved when all the known factors are considered" (Policarp Iquenobe, *Introduction to Peter Singer, Democracy as Fair Compromise*, [http://homepage.westmont.edu/hoeckley/Readings/Symposium/PDF/201\\_300/235.pdf](http://homepage.westmont.edu/hoeckley/Readings/Symposium/PDF/201_300/235.pdf))

The basic and original model for democracy is direct democracy. Even though the representative democracy is far more realistic as a model for any society, by choosing a small number of people whom will govern us for a certain period of time, decreases very much the level of individual implication. Singer very well noticed that “the idea of representative democracy implies representatives who will take the place of or are present instead of others. Representative democracy is therefore in the virtue of the meaning of the term a substitute for something else, and that something else can only be direct democracy.” (Singer Peter, *Democracy and Disobedience*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, p. 106). And, as for any society to function properly is necessary that the individuals obey the law, another question arises: which one is entitled to make us obey the law: direct democracy or representative democracy? Singer feels that the right answer for that question is that direct democracy would be the correct answer as the representative democracy is a very difficult concept. To what extent the representative actually sustains and harmonizes the very different opinions of all the people he/she represents? To a quite low level actually, so, we return to the idea that, at the moment, democracy seems like a fair compromise, as most of the decisions are taken by voting and the final result is chosen by the majority, even if sometimes it is clear that majority is wrong.

On the other hand capitalism seems to be the best type of economy for the largest number of people. Even if capitalism doesn't eliminate poorness, it helps increase the level of life for a significant amount of population. If democracy is our best solution, it comes along with the capitalist economical system. Capitalism was, down the ages, subject to a large number of criticisms, on the ground that it does nothing but richens a small number of people while others (the majority) remain just as poor. But from the perspective of efficient altruism, the fact that some become wealthy or very wealthy is a good thing, for they will donate much of what they earn to the poor or in need. However, a totalitarian regime, involves a small number of wealthy people who also possess the power and who are unwilling to share neither power nor wealth with those less lucky than them.

Holding the benefits of capitalism, Singer states the following "Capitalism seems indeed to deepen inequality, but that does not prove that it really pushes people towards extreme poverty since inequality goes up when the rich become richer and the poor remain as poor, or even when the poor earn something, but not as much as the rich. [...] It is not clear whether the increase in the wealth of the rich, without the poor becoming poorer through this, has overall negative consequences. It is getting easier for the wealthy to help the poor, and some of the richest people in the world, including Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, have done this exactly, becoming, through the amounts of money donated, the greatest effective altruists in the history of mankind. " (Singer Peter, *The Most Good You Can Do, How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*, Bucharest, Litera Publishing House, 2017, p. 79-80)

While it is true that there are very poor people in capitalism as well, however, this system has enabled hundreds of millions of people to go out of a state of extreme poverty. From the analysis of the economic situation of individuals in capitalism, it rather resulted that the number of the poor decreased and not the opposite. The philosopher's conclusion is that, until now, no one has succeeded in giving an alternative economic system that proves to be more efficient than capitalism.

### **3. EFFECTIVE ALTRUISTS IN ROMANIA AND ELSEWHERE. THE POWER OF EXAMPLE**

Effective altruism is different from normal altruism because effective altruists are guided by the principle “do the most good you can”. This means that the effective altruists, whom want to spend a certain amount of money on charity, will document and choose the best way to help the biggest number of people and so on. While a normal altruist will just look around and give his money, talent or effort on a random case of charity, the effective altruism will search and make sure that every amount or money, talent or effort is spent in the most effective way.

Peter Singer offers in his book “The Most Good You Can Do, How Effective Altruism Is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically” a lot of examples and names of trustworthy charity organizations. So, if you want to help others, by reading this book you can actually find out a lot of ways and methods that will insure a good spending of your money and effort. I find these documentations very good because the power of the good example and the right information can actually improve a lot all the good that anyone can do.

As we are social beings it is clear that the behavior of others around us influences us. In the book we mentioned above, Peter Singer presented effective altruists from around the world, but a significant number of the charity cases were made by the students whom attended his classes of ethics or by himself and his family. Several students decided to attend classes of ethics in order to find a way to do the most good they could. Others changed their normal life style and became altruists by attending these classes.

So, it is probably easier to become an altruist when you see others around you doing it and feeling good about it and, actually not suffering for giving away to charity a significant part of their time and incomes. In a very recent study— Ethics Classes Can Influence Students Behavior (<https://schwitsplinters.blogspot.com/2019/07/ethics-classes-can-influence-student.html>) presented at the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, 2019 meeting, Peter Singer and his colleagues have argued that by attending classes of ethics and listening to argument pro vegetarianism, the students were inclined to by less meat. And we think that the same thing is valid with charity and donations.

We think that the arguments presented by Patricia Churchland and others philosophers and scientists that it is in our nature to be empathic and help, that our moral behaviour has a biological origin are valid and, also, precisely because we are able to feel empathy, seeing others do good inspires us to also do it or do it in the same way. So, basically, seeing others around us do the most good they can is an inspiration for us to also do it.

Romania people are generally known as generous, welcoming and altruists. But as our society in not as well organized as the American society or the West Europeans ones, it is clear that our altruism has different ways of manifesting. Effective altruism is not so powerful in Romania, but altruism and donations are to be met. Unfortunately, our medical system has a lot of gaps and a lot of treatments for severe and incurable diseases are not insured by the state so the patients and their families are obliged to organize public campaigns in order to gather the necessary amount of money for expensive treatments, usually outside the country. And this is how charity is done in Romania (mostly). Of course we have charity organizations but, many times, people choose to make their own campaigns to raise money on the internet, usually on Facebook. I myself have donated money directly to mothers with ill small children that needed treatment for cancer and got it in Italy or Turkey and fortunately those children are doing well now. For me the personal example and the tragedy of the event described by the mothers and fathers was the trigger to altruist behavior. I confess I didn't put aside an amount of money and then looked for the best way to spend it, but when I saw the pain that a mother and daughter went through (I am a mother of a daughter) I reacted and helped. Now, after reading Singer' arguments I begun to think if maybe, Romanian society could be better organized in the donation compartment. Surely, it is place for a lot better. In Romania there are NGOs and other form of charity associations which are concentrated to help ill people, pour children and so on. But it seems that many of them are not trustworthy enough and most people prefer to donate directly to the ones in need, rather than to organizations. Of course that this is not a scientific conclusion but rather an observation made by analyzing what happens in our society.

A recent example of Romanian charity action is the one where people are getting together for helping Mr. Vintilă Mihăilescu, a well known Romanian professor of antropology. He suffers from an incurable disease and needs a transpland and very expensive treatment which he is given in France. He has a public facebook page ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) which is edited and administred by some of his students. In order to help him, were organized a lot of events and a quite big amount of money was gathered quickly. On the 5th of July, on this page, the professor posted the following information: "The President of the Besançon Tribunal signs us some transcripts of legal acts, and when she finds out we are Romanian and we have no French insurance, she looks up to us and asks us with obvious compassion on where to get all that money. - We already have a group of over 4,000 people who donated and ... - my son starts explaining to the judge. - All my admiration for this solidarity! In France, I do not think that would be possible... I have not commented, I have only accepted the sincere admiration of a French court president and I will send it to everyone, hence, from Besançon. I have no more words ..."

I don't know to what extend are altruist the people of France, but I think that they don't have these kind of money problems in order to receive normal medical treatments and probably their charity is guided in other directions. In Romania, even doctors tell patients and their families to appeal to charity and go abroad for treatment. Unfortunately, this is our situation now. Romanian people are very giving, especially if the patient is a small child and there are a lot of groups and pages on Facebook (for example, *Împreună pentru Eva – Together for Eva etc. – [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)*).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Maybe our effectiveness in matter of altruism is focused on the particular problems of our society and we are more inclined to help people we know or heard of rather than to give money to organizations that will decide how to spend it better. The way we donate reflects our realities and that is a fact we must accept. Probably in time, as we will get to a better developed society (economically speaking) we will also be more effective and opened to donate more. Maybe we will learn that all lives are equally valuable and deserve the best chances to medical treatment, education and level of life. And when we will get to that point we will keep for ourselves only what we need to live decently and give the rest to others.

Helping people you know and donating for familiar causes is a source of satisfaction. But is there a satisfaction or any happiness when you donate money for somebody totally unknown? Asks Peter Singer. And the people who answered said yes (Singer Peter, *The Most Good You Can Do, How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*, Bucharest, Litera Publishing House, 2017, p. 131-133). Those who live by the principles of effective altruism feel very good about their actions and don't think of them as sacrifices.

"Perhaps we imagine that money is important to our well-being as we need them to buy consumer goods, and shopping has become an obsession that prevents us from understanding what exactly brings us well-being. A detailed survey carried out on 32 families in Los Angeles reached the conclusion that three-quarters of them could not park their cars in garages since they had too many things stored there. [...] Are they happier for having so many things? " (Singer Peter, *The Most Good You Can Do, How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*, Bucharest, Litera Publishing House, 2017, p. 133-134). Most probably not. Buying as many things as possible does not bring up the happiness of individuals.

Also, those who donated a kidney or part of the liver to strangers did not regret that deed later. The level of satisfaction in regard to such a donation remained high, especially through the fact that donors did not subsequently have a health problem that would make them regret the gesture. We are talking here strictly about those who made such donations to strangers, not to family members.

Singer argues that self-esteem is a more significant component of happiness than earning and spending some amounts of money. Thus, effective altruists have more reasons to be happy than those who have earned the same amounts of money, but kept them only for their personal expenses.

Therefore, if we want to live a life with the highest contentment and to be as happy as possible, it is advisable to choose the professional activities we enjoy, to earn as much money as we can and to keep for us and our families only as much as we need for living peacefully and decently.

The remaining of the money, time, effort and talent should be invested in the interests of the others, whether we are talking about people from poor countries, sick children, defenseless animals or any other good cause. It is in the human nature to have an empathic and altruistic behavior, and the more we let this side of ours develop, the more we will enjoy life and the world we live in.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Churchland Patricia, *Conscience, the Origin of Moral Intuition*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2019, 307 pages.
- [2] Iquenobe Policarp, Introduction to Peter Singer, Democracy as Fair Compromise, [http://homepage.westmont.edu/hoeckley/Readings/Symposium/PDF/201\\_300/235.pdf](http://homepage.westmont.edu/hoeckley/Readings/Symposium/PDF/201_300/235.pdf) , accessed at 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2019.
- [3] Kant, Immanuel, *Întemeierea metafizicii moravurilor [The Metaphysics of Moral]*, Bucharest: Stiintifica Publishing House, 1972.
- [4] O'Neill Onora, *Etica lui Kant [Kant' Ethics]*, In: Editor Singer Peter, *A Companion to Ethics*, first Edition, Iassy: Polirom Publishing House, 2006, p. 205 – 215.
- [5] Sigal Samuel, How Your Brain Invents Morality. Neurophilosopher Patricia Churchland explains her theory of how we evolved a conscience (<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/7/8/20681558/conscience-patricia-churchland-neuroscience-morality-empathy-philosophy?fbclid=IwAR29BIwDpn5oz3BRNsNOKQipgd2KmDHI1exgS2Uam9KLxC2tBvMXkCpnKrY>, accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2019)

- [6] Singer Peter, *Democracy and Disobedience*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, 150 pages.
- [7] Singer Peter, *The Most Good You Can Do, How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*, Bucharest, Litera Publishing House, 2017, 256 pages.
- [8] Singer Peter, Afterword, In: Editor Peter Singer, *A Companion to Ethics*, First Edition, 2006, p. 573-575



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND SOCIETY FROM THE EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE; THE "EVOLUTIONARY WAGER OF RELIGION"

Viorel Rotilă (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: viorelrotila@yahoo.com

#### *Abstract*

The article analyses the social utility of religion from an evolutionary perspective, identifying some important contributions that religion may have had in the emergence of man and humanity. The article can be interpreted as a reformulation of Pascal's wager in which we bet on the social utility of religion: If God exists, I have won! If God does not exist, but we are immersed in a system of religious beliefs that support community development we have also won! The condition is the social utility of religion. At the same time, we propose "Rotilă's wager": in order to have a chance of survival, religion must bet on the evolutionary approach of its purpose in the history of humanity, namely on the identification of its own domain of competence in the existence of the humane through scientific approaches. Religion risks focusing on issues for which there is no evidence, missing the importance of what it can prove. The chance of religion is to identify its own domain of competence in the existence of the humane through scientific approaches. The truth about religion can be found through the understanding of the emergence and evolution of religion. Religion is based on illusions that have generated useful social institutions; these are part of the category of social fictions, their role being similar to legal fiction. Religion is a precursor to laic institutions, as it is part of their history. We also operate with the "religious mind" hypothesis: the social brain hypothesis includes the hypothesis of the religious brain; if the "dialogue" specific to social existence has led to the increase in the volume (and a form of structuring) of the brain then we can consider that the complex relationships with the deities have played the same role.

**Keywords:** religious mind; Rotila's wager; evolutionism; social utility; useful fictions; the evolutionary wager of religion;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this article, we do not intend to analyse the impact of a certain religion, by identifying within it each of the contents that justify our hypotheses, but we limit ourselves to suggesting research directions for what might be called the social utility of religion, demonstrated from an evolutionary perspective. We maintain our initial idea (Rotila, 2018): identifying the evolutionary role of religion, thereby understanding an analysis of the place religion has in the evolutionary path of humanity.



So, we try to identify important contributions that religion might have had in the emergence of human and humanity, exploring both the hypothesis of its evolutionary role and that of religion as a by-product of evolution. Considering that religion is, at the same time, a set of behaviours necessary for the adaptation and an environment that involves adaptation to it, we also consider the hypothesis of adapting to this environment as a survival strategy.

Questioning the adaptive role of religion does not automatically imply stating the necessity of maintaining it. We specify that we do not have an interest in supporting the removal or maintenance of religion. The story is primarily about people and secondly about religion. The starting point is the question of what makes us what we are. In this context, we are interested in the contribution that religion has in developing effective survival strategies. The subject of this article is not the status of religion as a stage that has been overcome in human history (we do not intend to analyse the usefulness/absence of the usefulness of religion at present), but its contribution to the birth of humanity. It is not a goodbye letter addressed to religion, but an attempt to recover what is essential in a relationship that oscillates between inappropriate relationships.

### **1.2. Some methodological issues**

The eidetic reduction suggests that we can find out what the role of religion is (in fact, if it is a fundamental element of the community, something without which the existence of the community would be impossible) if we imagine what happens when we eliminate it. If we could prove that humanity had been impossible without religion, then we would have the strongest argument for a revival of religion in historical order from an evolutionary perspective. We cannot build experimental frameworks to verify such a hypothesis. Apart from the fact that the experimental elimination of religion is a risky intervention, we must keep in mind that this is a society-that-was-religious-and now-it-is-no-more, not a society without religion; in other words, a society over which religion has already exercised its influence, leaving its trace in the mentality. With all these difficulties, the eidetic variation can give us some clues for a first hypothesis check.

A second method of research is the pragmatic analysis of religion, considering that the importance of an idea is given by its contribution to the survival of those who assume it. The approach involves redefining rationality from the perspective of survival interests, justifying the discussion of evolutionary rationality.

## **2. THE "RELIGIOUS BRAIN" HYPOTHESIS OR THE "RELIGIOUS MIND" HYPOTHESIS?**

The hypothesis of the social brain opens the possibility of an argument in favour of religion: since the social requires organizational rules, religion has provided the most effective examples in this respect for a considerable period of time. If brain development has been determined to a significant extent by the existence of social groups, as the social brain theory asserts, then the variables that facilitate social existence are included in the brain/mind structure. To the extent that religious beliefs and behaviours contribute to the regulation of social functioning, we can prove the existence of a place of religion in the evolution of man. In a synthetic formulation: the social brain hypothesis includes the hypothesis of the religious brain because moral religious rules streamline the functioning of the society. If the "dialogue" specific to social existence has determined the growth in volume (and a form of structuring) of the brain then we can consider that the complex relationships with divinities played the same role. Perhaps we can even speak of a mixture between the two classes of relationships, the transfers that allow the birth of morality - as exemplary patterns of behaviour - and the preservation of experience - religion as a form of moral codification through rites. Two questions can guide this research direction: Is there a limit to the size of groups the existence of which is possible in the absence of religion? Is Dunbar's (1993) number overrun possible by means of religion mediation? We are not trying to find the answer to this in this article.

We admit, however, that this is a poor hypothesis to explain the emergence of religion, being challenged by the evidence of the existence of moral behaviours in different primates (De Waal, 2013). This this level, we consider the gradual intervention, by developing morals starting from rules encountered in other primates, in the way De Waal suggests. However, we consider that such a gradual approach, step by step, cannot explain the appearance of religion by itself. That is why we resort to a

complementary hypothesis, namely that of the role of the context of meaning (determined by the closings of the speech universe it puts on stage) of religion. In this way we may find ourselves before a strong argument in favour of the evolutionary role of religion (that is, in challenging its character as a by-product of cultural development).

The attempt to identify brain structures that could be responsible for the religious dimension of existence presumes the possibility of "religious brain". Through the "religious brain" we suggest the hypothesis of religion as an important element in the brain/ mind functioning for millennia. Quoting indicates both the limitation of effects in time and the reduction of religion to a brain dimension/ domain of mind. For the first limitation, we only refer to a stage of evolution, understanding this hypothesis as part of the social brain meta-hypothesis. For the latter, we take into account the role the religious mind can play in what we considered to be the structure of consciousness (Rotila, 2013).

The hypothesis of the religious mind is a specific direction of interrogation. We specify that we are thinking of a weak sense of the term, in the sense of a possible formation of the mind by religion, with a likely impact on brain structures. The attempts to identify brain substrates specific to religious beliefs may face the ontological problem of the differences between the brain and the mind (the ontological problem in its entirety is that of the differences between brain-mind-consciousness). The hypothesis of the religious brain in the strong sense of the term (that of a possible formation of the mind by religion, with a likely impact on brain structures) is unlikely, whereas the hypothesis of the religious mind has sufficient grounds to deserve to be researched. The fundamental difficulty for this hypothesis generates overlapping of the different functions of the mind (namely "of different minds") on the same brain structures. The problem is represented by the multiple cognitive solutions and strategies of action, the religion coming with its own systems. Through the religious mind we are thinking of a dominant area of the mind, which generates its fundamental orientations, not a mental structure that excludes any other form of existence. We discuss the dominant orientations according to which meaning is born in a mind, including the various existence enclaves in which questions (and, consequently, links) to the general (religious) context are missing.

### **3. TWO WAGERS: A REFORMULATION OF PASCAL'S WAGER AND "ROTIŁĂ'S WAGER"**

If the moral role and the effects in support of socialization remain the most important from a contemporary perspective on religion then religion must bet on the evolutionist approach of its meaning in the history of humanity in order to have a chance of survival. This is the first wager we propose ("Rotila's Wager"), considering that the chance of religion to survive is to identify its own domain of competence in human existence through scientific approaches. We have in mind that the concentration of religion on the supernatural brings with it the risks associated with the absence of scientific evidence for its existence. In other words, religion risks to focus on the issues for which there is no evidence, missing out on those it can prove.

The essence of our argument is that society risks being impossible without the contribution of religion. In this context, we propose a reformulation of Pascal's wager in which we bet on the social utility of religion: If God exists, I have won! If God does not exist, but we are immersed in a system of religious beliefs that support community development we have also won! The chance of religion is that through scientific approaches we have to be able to identify its own field of competence in the human existence. Reversing the perspective of Merrigan (1997: 691), which takes on an idea of Smith (1981), the truth of religion can be found through the understanding of the emergence and evolution of religion, not by immersing into a religion through the path of faith.

## **4. FUNCTIONAL / SOCIAL ROLES OF RELIGION**

### **4.1. Adaptive role or side effect?**

If we consider that religion is a secondary effect of evolution, there is a variant in which we have not yet emerged from the evolutionary framework of the problem: religion could be a by-product with useful effects. Obviously, in this case the discussion moves to the adaptive role of religion, which exists in the absence of its adaptation character (Sosis, 2009: 321). From the perspective of a methodological

prudence we opt for the need of two lines of argumentation: a) to demonstrate the character of structure of religion that is part of the evolution (proof of the evolutionary role); or b) to prove the possibility of being considered at least a by-product with useful effects. Both supporters of the theory of the evolutionary role of religion and those who rely on its by-product character need to explain why evolution would allow the emergence and perpetuation of something as costly as religious behaviour. The hypothesis of social signification, which we discuss in the next section, seems to provide a satisfactory response, located within the social importance of religion.

#### **4.1.2. Social signalling**

To the extent that religion entails very high costs for its practitioners, the principle of disability in the evolutionary selection proposed by Amotz Zahavi (1975: 213) can be applied to it: selection favours individuals displaying high cost signals because they have the least probability to cheat. Mutual altruism designates the ability of mutual help of people who are not relatives, being a prerequisite for the community. To the extent religion promotes mutual altruism doubled by signalling systems, it contributes to optimizing the chances for community formation and development.

The behaviours which are costly from an evolutionary point of view which are assumed by religion are useful from a social perspective, signalling the belongingness to a religious community and observance of its rules (Rossano, 2006: 348). These behaviours thus participate in building trust beyond family relationships. We discuss the cost borne out in order to benefit from the advantages of trust. The model is part of what Cosmides and Tooby (1992: 180) have called *deception detection procedures*: For society to exist, a deception detection system is needed. Alongside the specific mental skills developed throughout evolution, religion could add: a) a system of emphasizing compliance with rules, which can increase the probability of honesty (morality); b) a context that increases the chances of deception detection by: b.1) community support; b.2) the pressure for the manifestation of the signs of deception. It is enough to meditate on the confessional role of Catholicism to observe ways to materialize these social mechanisms. The theory of social signalling also has explanatory power for the hypothesis of religion as a by-product.

#### **4.2. The role of social organizer**

The historical evidence tends to suggest that the transition to a superior level of inter-group co-operation is simultaneous with the emergence and development of religion. Even if the evidence of direct individual benefits is weak, the impact of religion on the organization of social existence remains under discussion. While the existence of moral rules in the absence of religion can be imagined within the same group, it becomes more difficult to argue in the framework of inter-group co-operation, which increases the likelihood that religious moral rules prove more effective. The relation to a context of common significance is essential, the personal distance towards it making it more likely to be adapted by other groups as well. Religions provide contexts that enable the consensus on important aspects of existence.

##### **4.2.1. Socially useful knowledge**

In the horizon of pragmatic approaches, we must take into account the hypothesis of religion as an intermediary of a series of practical knowledge useful for everyday life. The *Illusion of Knowledge* (Sloman and Fernbach, 2017) indicates the role the community has in supporting individual knowledge. However, religion participates in this form of extension/externalization of knowledge, namely cognitive trust, through its institutions and practices. The context of relevant analysis is social knowledge, within which it is possible that precisely the cognitive contribution is the most important part of the social utility (in evolutionary order) of religion. In this case, there are two levels of evolution. Sloman and Fernbach (2017: 147) argue in favour of shared thinking, that is, a form of *social mind*. To the extent that the assumptions are correct, we believe that an interrogation of what created the possibility of this sharing is justified. Our suggestion is that common visions (most of them of religious nature) could have contributed to this settlement in common cognitive prospects. *The division of cognitive work* (Sloman and Fernbach, 2017: 144-147) may have been facilitated by the type of cognitive specialization that characterized the emergence and development of religion. This direction of investigation assumes the

hypothesis of religion as the first step towards science, both being part of the same collective intentionality.

#### **4.2.2. Mediators of co-operation on a wider scale**

The solutions for closing the speech universe proposed by religion had a secondary effect (related to the reason for their occurrence): they generated the set of symbols that allowed the unification of larger groups. It is even possible that the emergence of religious symbols responds to the evolutionary pressure generated by population growth and the need for exchanges, namely the need to identify symbols of common understanding. Before the appearance of writing, forms of symbolic codification of the rules were needed to ensure their transmissibility (often including a symbolic presence of ancestors). Partial proof might be that the sliding of religion to the secondary background was possible only after the explosion that the written codification of the experience recorded anywhere through the appearance of the book. Negative social aspects can highlight the importance of religion's symbols as mediators of socialization. If we consider, for example, the practice of placing the foreign element under the sign of the barbarian / sub-human, we can see that it is always based on the highlight of differences. All existences that do not share the values of a group tend to slip into the imaginary of that group towards the non-human/ the deficit of being area. Misunderstandings caused by linguistic differences are part of the story, as does the absence of language. Entities that do not communicate and those whose communication we do not understand are pushed into the secondary background of existence, being excluded from the strong area of social rules (they do not have the legal status of the person).

The possibility of exchanges is conditioned by the existence of similar value structures. The substance of money is trust. The first currency (understood as a mediator of trust) was religion, managing for the first time to achieve forms of trust catalysation on a large scale. In this context, we might consider that the emergence of the economy was supported by religion.

Religion is a system of guaranteeing social investments made by the individual. The idea of their relation to a superior authority may be the one that has ensured their functionality. From this perspective, it contains the evolutionary settings specific to the second level / group level selection.

We consider the hypothesis that each religion favours certain human types (gives them a more favourable social context of affirmation), disfavouring others, as relevant to the research of the role of religion. It raises an essential question: to what extent do religions have mechanisms of integration/exclusion of individuals whose behaviours are located in the area of deviations from the average? Their exclusion could be thought of as a disruption of pre-social evolutionary mechanisms, as it is equivalent to removing accidental mutations (considering that accidental mutations can provide better adaptation solutions in some cases).

Human existence is based on a system of beliefs in a world structure, which is essential for survival. Religion is one of the integrators of these systems. We believe that the role of religion as *moral worldviews*, described by Teehan (2018), reflects a relevant perspective. Even if we do not share the emphasis on the moral dimension of this perspective, considering the term *welthanshaung* (perspective on the world) to be more appropriate, we must agree that each religion is an ethical system containing the set of minimum rules necessary to ensure a form of social organization. Religion is an atypical social contract: you did not initiate and sign it, but you are born into it, adhering to its provisions through behaviour; alternatives are often few.

#### **4.3. The role of rituals. Rituals before morality and religion as a system**

The mediation of social signalling by religion (Teehan, 2018: 277) is an important factor in socialization, regardless of the costs associated with different signalling systems. The hypothesis of the support that the moral obtains from the idea of punishments applied by divinity, even if it is questionable for the initial stage of the development of religion, is at least relevant to morality (Teehan, 2018: 276). Since Supernatural Punishment Hypothesis (SPH) proves to be limited, REACH (Religion-Empathy-Cooperation Hypothesis) becomes relevant: „Prosociality results from the triggering of our empathy system by signalling of in-group status. It does not seem to matter whether such signals are religious or

not.” (Teehan; 2018: 277). Even though all rituals have such a role, the spread of religion shows that it probably played the most pro-social role.

Through rites, religions have facilitated the transfer of experience. It is true that we cannot know for sure what the causal order was: the rites were codification models of the experience, after they were embedded in religious models or religions opened the possibility of rituals? The arguments in favour of the hypothesis of the precedence of rituals in relation to the emergence of religion as a system seem to prevail. For example, analysing 414 societies that span the past 10,000 years from 30 regions around the world, using 51 measures of social complexity and 4 measures of supernatural enforcement of morality Whitehouse et al (2019) came to the conclusion that „powerful moralizing ‘big gods’ and prosocial supernatural punishment tend to appear only after the emergence of ‘megasocieties’ with populations of more than around one million people (...) ritual practices were more important than the particular content of religious belief to the initial rise of social complexity.” (Whitehouse and all., 2019).

An argument in favour of the hypothesis of primordality of rituals towards complex social organizations and moral systems is brought by Di Paolo et al. (2010: 70-72), the authors pointing to the importance of spatial coordination and to the capacity to identify social rhythm as primary forms of meaning generation. The experiments presented by the mentioned authors (Di Paolo and all., 2010: 63-69) suggest that there may be fundamental conditioning of mutual relations applicable to all agents with which it comes into contact whom we might consider as having the value of "transcendentals of cooperation "in this type of environment. One of the explanatory assumptions is to regard rituals and religion as a form of social choreography that belongs to the destiny of the social evolution of humanity, being the intermediaries of the complex socialization level.

#### **4.4. Specific ways to see**

Religion brings with it a complex of settings of intentions, opening up specific ways of seeing it. However, it uses a lot of predetermined evolutionary functions (it joins them in a system), in parallel with the launch of new paths of evolution. While the widening of the field of vision, determined by the bipedal position (we do not know the causal relationship here), contributed to the cognitive leap represented by the perception of the future (the entrance into time), then the expansion of the horizon that religion had ensured also had a cognitive contribution.

The whole story of the changes brought about by the shift from animism to theism, presented by Harari (2017: 85-90), is an illustration of the establishment of a way of seeing (and being) useful from a pragmatic perspective. To the extent that the author's perspective can be sustained, we can observe the use of religion to generate cognitive solutions that put man first. In a causal order from the evolutionary point of view, it is difficult to determine whether religion was favoured by the emergence of agriculture, or whether the social bonds favoured by religion enabled the emergence of agriculture. We believe that the correct solution is offered by the hypothesis of the directly proportional relationship between the degree of socialization and innovation.

## **5. THE IMPERSONAL OF PRESCRIPTIONS AND USEFUL ILLUSSIONS**

The dogmas of religion postulate the over-natural character of the foundation to circumvent the difficult social adherence that would be needed to launch them. It is easier to talk about transcendent (or transcendental) rules than to say, "I think that it should be like this!", waiting for everyone to support you. Religions thus implicitly reveal one of the great problems of humanity (another fiction, perhaps): the lack of confidence in its powers. The encounter of humanity with itself has often been mediated by religion. To a great extent, the persistence of religion in the present age is due to the fact that people fear other people (especially people without religion/of other confession). Prudence seems to be justified by the magnitude of the consequences of major contemporary errors. The idea of consensus as the only source of values brings along with it the fear of future changes (emphasized by the examples given by history). In a way, the persistence of religion betrays the lack of confidence in democracy, the fear of the precariousness of the traditional values that the community agreement can generate.

Religion could be a precursor to laic institutions, as part of their history as of right. We have in mind the religious illusions that have generated useful social institutions. These are part of the category of social fictions, their role being similar to legal fiction: they are constructs of the social mind, participating in the generation of what we call an extended mind (in its turn one of the sources of support for the individual mind). An example is the design of a model of social behaviour in gods and the imagination of an agent that pursues continuously the observance of the rules and sanctions deviations from the norm. The road to people trusting themselves goes through the empowerment of the gods with the value-making ability and their use in highlighting the value of the human being. In this variation, religion is a mediator of self-knowledge of humanity.

Religion is a fiction that draws us close to the truth of our existence. Its role as a mediator is essential, religion facilitating social existence, through a) the prosociality given by rituals respectively b) the rules created by morality, and the intuition of something more important than us: This is the evolutionary basis for the felt need of connection to something larger than ourselves.” (Teehan, 2018: 278). But the importance of cooperation is part of the evolutionary rules.

The advantage of religious morality is the foundations they generate, namely the fact that they provide plausible explanations (effective from a pragmatic perspective) for the opening of the cognitive universe that man is going through in this period of evolution. At the limit, we even consider the hypothesis of a limit in cognitive evolution in the absence of closures (the universe of discourse) that religious fictions have provided.

## 6. COGNITIVE SUPPORT POINT

Divinity must be seen from the perspective of a point of support of knowledge. The cognitive support point proposed by religion can be transcendent or imminent, there or here. But, every time, people have relied and rely on it, being a form of common encounter and thinking that often extends over generations. This form of outsourcing of the mind, of sharing is essential, as it ensures the development of humanity. Implementation solutions appear to be secondary. Since some have proven to be more effective than others, we need to remember the need to identify the mechanisms that generated the efficiency and the contexts that supported their success. One of the dimensions of the analyses is the historical one, the forms of development and evolution over time being under discussion.

Certainly, the cognitive horizon specific to each age and every place has its role (albeit to a varying extent), as there are several choices. However, only some options were chosen, some of them proving to be particularly effective for humanity. How could we call the set of characteristics of the Divinity (doubled by the whole systemic system) that proved to be effective, since the creators of the solution called it God (in its different forms)?

## 7. RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE

The attempt of philosophy to take the place of religion, started about 2500 years ago, failed in a first phase, in that context. Even if its possibilities were optimized by the advance of Roman law, it was not enough. The struggle took place on the area of cognitive solutions, on the forms of closing the speech universe and on the understanding of what knowledge means (reflexive relation of knowledge to oneself). Philosophy would have ended by remaining an alternative to religion, but not sharing the social success of the latter. However, the preoccupation for knowledge staged by philosophy succeeded after approx. 2000 years after its appearance to generate a "daughter", namely science, the pragmatic success of which made it a winner before religion. The success was not so much the richer imagination in inventing causal mechanisms but rather the *use of the method* in the investigation. Perhaps the success of identifying more and more challenging causal contexts would not have been sufficient if it did not bring about the pragmatic technology-specific results.

## 8. RELIGION PREPARED THE EMERGENCE OF SCIENCE

This is a hypothesis that requires the construction of an experimental framework capable of verifying it. It could be born in the horizon of mistaking succession for causality. Here we are trying to point out some arguments that might support it.

Preparing for invisibility could be one of the important social contributions of religion. We are mindful of the mental exercise that religion has created throughout its existence through the veneration of invisible deities. The idea is also suggested by Horton (1993), the invisible being part of the comparison criteria of religion and science. Guthrie (1980: 190) indicates he agrees with Horton on the fact that there is no difference in the relation to the invisibility of religion as compared to the one postulated by science. The cognitive relation to the invisible is a human practice, as in some cases is assumed to be an existential strategy (the various reasons why people resort to camouflage). The invisibility of deities could be a good strategy to address the issue. A partial argument is represented by the effects of confusion experienced by the Aztecs when they met Cook and Cortez (Guthrie, 2002).

The orientation towards the invisible and the attempt to guess its contribution to the existence and behaviour of the visible ones has prepared the mind for the "invisibles of science." The existence of this orientation is often related to the behaviour of the mind in the face of cognitive ambiguities, namely its expectations of seeing agents / intentions coupled with false positive signals. By analysing the possible similarities between religion and science, Guthrie (1980:186) indicates that both are struggling with the ambiguity of the world. From this perspective, both are ordering systems that protect against chaos. Removing ambiguity is the key role of *useful illusions*, beyond their pragmatic effects (which has to be analysed to identify their level of effectiveness). This function can be understood as one similar to the assumptions in science: these are testable theories by means of the pragmatic effect, having a degree of precariousness measured by different variables (all of which are part of the evaluation of the success of these illusions).

## 9. LIMITS AND DIFFERENCES

The thesis of establishing the social hierarchy concomitantly with the development of religious meta-narrative, thus indicating the co-belongingness to the same way of understanding and adjusting reality (Rossano, 2006) seems to be supported by the present way of being of knowledge: the religious academic discourse is based on the cultivation and indication /quoting of personalities, that is, on a form of elitism. Instead, scientific knowledge is mainly focused on the community of scientists (somewhat similar to that of hunter-gatherers). Religious academic discourse is focused on thinkers while scientific discourse is community-centred, emphasizing experimental verifiability of assumptions and assertions. The religious discourse does not favour effective knowledge, but rather the authors' suitability to the expectations of the audience.

Symbolically speaking, the problem of meaning is that it must be present in the direction of sight (of cognitive concern). The absence of a meaning in an area of our interrogations is likely to generate cognitive fears. The solution (of satisfying the need for meaning) put on the stage by religion raises another problem: it does not just consist only of the closing of the speech universe (meaning context), it also brings with it a change in the direction of sight, limiting the alternative possibilities of interrogation. In other words, religion highlights the same meanings (the same causal mechanisms with explanatory role) wherever the believer turns his/her attention and, at the same time, limits the possibilities of focusing attention on the world specific to religion (it's true, this cognitive closure is specific to any world). It is no surprise that innovation in such societies has such a low impact, such a narrowing of the cognitive horizon being added to the investment of ingenuity in religious explanations.

Since one of the social features of meaning is accessibility, in case of alternative meanings for the same fact, the most accessible one will gain. However, one of the characteristics of science-specific meanings is the difficulty of accessing them (if we add the character of the provisional, emerged on the backdrop of the skepticism that characterizes the truths of science, we are no longer surprised that they

are not very accepted). Which makes it easy to explain the social success of religious explanations as compared to those of science.

## 10. DANGERS. ABOUT THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF RELIGION

There are some limits to the effectiveness of being immersed in a system of religious beliefs. One of the most visible is the Talibanism. Religious fundamentalism could be determined rather by a cognitive-imaginative incapacity of restructuring the context of meaning (namely the world reality thesis) to the new information. Adherence to the old world generates comfort. Fundamentalists may manifest an inability to bear the burden of meaning of the world, denying their own role in the genesis of the meaning of reality. The aggravation is the incapacity of indifference towards the threats to the reality thesis of the consecrated world. Synthesizing, we discuss about the determination of religious fundamentalism by the absence of cognitive flexibility.

Enlightenment, rationalism, Marxism are some examples of trends that have the claim to identify the negative effects of religion. Beyond these argumentative frameworks based on systematic approaches, we can mention some relevant examples.

Cacioppo (2008) considers that *learned helplessness* (Seligman concept, 1975) is characteristic of all systems the operation of which depends on the level of dependence they manage to determine. This would be an obvious secondary effect of religion. *The orientation of energy in inappropriate directions* is part of a similar picture, with energy consumption exceeding in some cases the acceptable levels according to signalling theory or being invested in directions other than signalling.

Harari (2016: 72-73) suggests that monotheistic religions have broken the approach of hunter-gatherers to the rest of the animals (maintained by the animist ones), the *distancing the world of the living* mediating the possibility of agriculture. In this case, we can talk about the losses generated within the evolutionary path of religion or, more precisely, the sacrifices necessary for the birth of humanity (assumed inhumanity).

Some possible solutions: a) the relation between contributions and dissolutions may be the analysis criterion; b) there are multiple scales and analysis contexts: namely which seems useful at this time could prove negative effects on the long-term.

## 11. CONCLUSION

The omnipresence of religious behaviours in all communities situated at certain levels of evolution suggests that the direction of search for the causes/reasons for their occurrence is that of identification of the common elements existing either in individuals or in the results of their co-operation. To the extent that we admit that religion participates or has significantly participated in social regulation, we have to admit the existence of differences between the success levels of each religion, which means to implicitly admit the existence of differences between their cognitive intakes in relation to the humane and to the social. In this case, the social differences generated by religious diversity have the character of exceptions to the common denominator to which religion seems to have contributed: humanity.

If the social brain's hypothesis is correct and if the existence of society in its initial forms was fundamentally supported by religious structures, then the social brain hypothesis includes the hypothesis of the religious brain. In other words, the religious structures have contributed to the development of the brain/mind by participating in the emergence of the current human type.

Within the analysis of the relation between religion and society from an evolutionary perspective we used two alternative levels to argue the evolutionary role of religion: a) demonstrating the character of the religion as evolutionary structure (the proof of the evolutionary role); or b) proving the possibility of being considered at least a by-product with useful effects. Our suggestion is that demonstrating b) is a necessary and sufficient condition in order to speak thoroughly about the "evolutionary wager of religion".



## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Cacioppo, J. T., Patrick, W., *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*. New York: W.W. Norton Co; 2008. 317.
- [2] Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. Barkow, *Cognitive Adaptations for Social Exchange*. In *The adapted mind: Evolutionary psychology and the generation of culture*. New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press; 1992. 163-228.
- [3] De Waal, F., *The Bonobo and the Atheists. In Search of Humanism Among the Primates*, New York: W.
- [4] W. Norton & Company; 2013. 289.
- [5] Di Paolo, E. A.; Rohde, M.; De Jaegher, H., *Horizons for the Enactive Mind: Values, Social Interaction, and Play*. In *Enaction: Towards a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*, J. Stewart, O. Gapenne, and E. A. Di Paolo (Eds), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; 2010. 33-87.
- [6] Dunbar, R. I. M., *Coevolution of neocortical size, group size and language in humans*. In *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16 (4); 1993. 681-735.
- [7] Guthrie, S., *A Cognitive Theory of Religion*. In *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 21, no. 2, Aprilie; 1980. 181-203.
- [8] Guthrie, S., *Animal Animism: Evolutionary Roots of Religious Cognition*, In: *Current Approaches in the Cognitive Science of Religion*, eds. Pyysiäinen, Ilkka, and Veikko Anttonen. London & New York: Continuum; 2002. 28-67.
- [9] Harari, Y. N., *Homo deus. A Brief History of Tomorrow*. New York: Random House; 2016. 450.
- [10] Horton, R., *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Science, and Religion*. In *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1993. 155-187.
- [11] Merrigan, T., *Religious Knowledge in the Pluralist Theology of Religions*. In *Theological Studies*; Vol. 58; iss. 4; 1997. 686 – 707.
- [12] Rossano, M. J., *The Religious Mind and the Evolution of Religion*. In *Review of General Psychology*, Vol. 10, No. 4; 2006. 346-364.
- [13] Rotilă, V., *The Evolutionist Role of Religion; Some Arguments*, In *International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education*, 2; 2018. 160-167.
- [14] Rotilă, V., *The Structure of Consciousness: The Concept of Domain of Consciousness. Dilemmatic Restructuring*, Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut. 2013. 54-69.
- [15] Seligman, M. E. P., *Helplessness: On depression, development and death*. San Francisco: Freeman; 1992. 250.
- [16] Sloman, S., Fernbach, P., *The Knowledge Illusion: Why We Never Think Alone*, New York: Penguin Random House; 2017. 304.
- [17] Smith, W., *Towards a World Theology. Faith and the Comparative History of Religion*, London: Westminster Press; 1981. 206.
- [18] Sosis, R., *The Adaptationist-Byproduct Debate on the Evolution of Religion: Five Misunderstandings of the Adaptationist Program*. In *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, 9; 2009. 315–332.
- [19] Teehan, J., *The cognitive science of religion: Implications for morality*. In *Unisinos Journal of Philosophy* 19(3); sep/dec 2018. 272-281.
- [20] Zahavi, A., *Mate selection—A selection for a handicap*. In *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, Volume 53, Issue 1, September; 1975. 205-214.
- [21] Whitehouse, H.; François, P.; Savage, P. E.; Currie, T. E.; Feeney, K. C.; Cioni, E.; Purcell, R.; Ross, R. M.; Larson, J.; Baines, J.; ter Haar, B.; Covey, A.; Turchin, P., *Complex societies precede moralizing gods throughout world history*, In *Nature*. Mar 20; 2019.



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### REVELATION, COMMUNION AND COMMUNICATION - THE COORDINATES OF LIFE AND HAPPINESS IN CHRISTIANITY

**Bugiulescu Marin (a)\***

(a) President of IFIASA, Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association,  
Professor, PhD., Member of Dumitru Stăniloae Scientific and Interdisciplinary Research Center,  
Valahia University, Târgoviște, Romania. Email: [m\\_bugiulescu@yahoo.com](mailto:m_bugiulescu@yahoo.com)

#### Abstract

We live in a pluralistic, secularized and technological society, wherein each person promotes personal interests and seeks to solve the problems, most of the time, independently, without taking in consideration the reality and social environment. In this context, the Church is involved in solving the problems of people and society, especially the ones regarding the community, from the position and with the specific means. Mostly, the reality of the man locked in insufficiency, the human sufferance and of the other difficulties have always been problems to be solved for every society. Modern societies have created a complex of social assistance structures and institutions based on modern social ethics and on strictly institutionalized relationships. Even if modern society satisfies man's material desires, yet he does not deal with the spiritual ones. Material pleasure is exhausted with its consumption, while the spiritual life bears the feature of eternity.

**Keywords:** education; communication; ethics; morality; communion.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The motive of interpersonal communication, based on the Divine Revelation mentioned by the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, can be summarized by the fact that man is a theological being, a personal quality that pertains to his special creation according to the image of God in order to attain the likeness, by which he is the administrator of the world created.

In theology this is brought to attention by The Apostle Saint Paul of the mysterious Body of Christ - the Church formed, by analogy with the human body, from several members who fulfill several roles, according to the grace they received from the Holy Spirit, but all contribute to the strengthening and building of the whole Church. Although there are more, they cannot act separately because "the eye cannot say to the hand: I do not need you! And the head cannot say to the feet: I do not need you!" (I Cor. 12:21).

The basis of harmony and life is communication and love. The different treatises and rhetorical courses highlight the communicative dimension of the Christian message, as an essential factor of persuasion. Starting from this ecclesiological reality, education understood as lifelong learning, is a synergistic and theatrical act, which implies the communication generis. Communication is the first element of communion, connection with God and fellow human beings. The Christian life has a

supernatural imperative that goes beyond the possibilities of conceptual expression, aiming to elevate every human person to holiness, to perfection. According to the Christian teaching, this is accomplished through Christ, Him being the Great Teacher who through the Church and the Holy Saints lives in our being and therefore the Christian education perpetuates what is noble in our soul. Christ, God-Man, is still anchoring our life in true existence, as carriers of God.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The theme REVELATION, COMMUNION AND COMMUNICATION - THE COORDINATES OF LIFE AND HAPPINESS IN CHRISTIANITY aims to identify and analyze the communicative potential of the revealed Christian teaching.

The results of the research in the field of communication sciences will be used to highlight the communicative function of each component of the teaching of the Orthodox Christian Church. From this perspective I will start from the following research questions: how can Theology, the dimension of communication and communion be valued in a dogmatic and existential approach; what is the role and mission of Theology in the context of the challenges of the era of communication, secularization and globalization; how can the Orthodox Theology be confessional, in the current ecumenical and interreligious context; what are the principles of interdisciplinary dialogue and what is the relationship between theology and psychological counseling, in the perspective of communication and spiritual communion?

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The coordinates of an entirely new message in the universe of human spirituality, from the beginning to the present day, needed reciprocity. The etymological meanings of this idea lead us to a communication term (Latin *communis* – ‘which belongs to many or all’, communication - sharing). The Greek *ὁμιλέω* – ‘to speak’ – ‘to be in a relationship’, is used in the Roman League with Eucharistic meanings. If, in the early stages, addressing the Jewish or Hellenistic public of radically different cultural orientation, the Christian teaching of the Gospel was accepted, today the apercptive parameters are presented quite differently because the contemporary man has other perceptions about life and happiness. The Christian message is undoubtedly unchanged, perhaps even better known and contextualized in the informational level, but in terms of its application the reality shows that man aspires to ephemerality. Of course, everything starts from the conceptual framework given by the divine revelation.

God has revealed His will to man in two ways: natural and supernatural. For the faithful man the whole creation is an “open book” in which he can read about the Almighty, the goodness, the justice, the love, the beauty, the all-knowingness of the Creator. This natural way of discovering with the mind and feeling of the Creator, His creation, is called natural revelation.

Because of sins, man's mind was darkened, and he “worshiped and served the created things rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25). Therefore, God has revealed Himself directly to man, to be known (as He is); to know His will; to enter into communion with Him. God reveals himself in the supernatural way, communicating His will directly to the people chosen by Him, and finally, through His own Son Jesus Christ. This discovery is called, supernatural revelation, because it is made by God directly; man cannot reach his knowledge alone, he receives it by the means of God.

The Holy Apostle Paul says that “in the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son”, (Hebrews 1,1-2), emphasizing the character of revelation through Christ, the incarnate Divine Logos. “The revelation also means revealing hidden mysteries, communicating some teachings about God, but it is also about the gospel of salvation and the grace of salvation in Christ. In this respect, Christ is the Revelator and the divine revelation itself, our Savior and our salvation” (Ion Bria, 1964, 184).

Revelation is a mysterious process, a direct communication from God to man for his salvation. It represents the word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, and God Himself fully revealed in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Incarnate God.

#### 4. FINDINGS

Through Jesus Christ, God reveals himself to man supremely, fulfilling all his other discoveries. The Savior Christ says: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5: 17-19). Reverend Father Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, in his studies in which he deals exhaustively with the teaching and work of the Savior of Christ, notes that in the words of Christ are the mysteries of God, spoken with human voice, that is why he says: "No one has spoken from the beginning of the world so much, so wise referring to the life of the kingdom of heaven .... That is why He spoke through human voice to introduce to people divine power" (D. Stăniloae, 1991, p. 99). The supernatural revelation deepens and illuminates the natural revelation, so as to eliminate the danger of confusing God with creation. By the way of the supernatural knowledge that is based on the Holy Scripture, man comes to understand that God is not only a creative force, above the world, but also that this divine force is both personal and even personal (Sorin Cosma, 1986, 78). ). Based on this personal character of God, he not only created the world and man, but also loves it, and out of love for man He was incarnated to sacrifice and resurrect. This is the object of supernatural knowledge.

The supreme revelation in Jesus Christ results from His divine-human Person who realizes by word and deeds discovering that all the mysteries of creation are fulfilled. Only in Him all the reasons of creation find their meaning, which is why Saint John the Evangelist puts in the prologue of his Holy Gospel the words: "in the beginning was the Word and the Word was from God and God was the Word" (John 1, 1), showing that in He, the Word made flesh (John 1, 14), we know the glory of God. "The words of Jesus, expressing Himself, are a direct irradiation of His Person as their source and a self-revelation of Himself. This means that He as a person is the Word as a divine hypostasis, which has also become a human hypostasis" (Dumitru Stăniloae, 1997, 84). Christ is the fulfilled revelation of the Father and His power (John 1, 14,18; 17,6), which in the Church through the grace of the Holy Spirit is revealed to the members who form His Sacred Body. Analyzing the similarities of man with God we notice that the reason of God, the Father is not only Logos or Word, but also autologous with non-hypostatic character, while the rationality of man is the self-logos, the man being also like God, source of God. thoughts and words, coming out of him as a manifestation of his own person, but ontologically his reason is intimately united with Christ, becoming "theologian". "The notion of" the word of God "appeared in the sphere of divine revelation of the Old Testament, having a rich content and a major importance in the life of the believer. Due to the concrete and realistic way of Semitic thinking, the word-word noun - had the meaning of "the reverse of things", revealing to man what always remains invisible in the expressed object. And to speak, means "to be back and to push forward". That is why, the Semitic peoples were convinced that beyond the expressed word there is a force, the secret thought, which causes its appearance as a reality spoken through the mouth of the one who pronounces it. So it is "the man speaking, expressing himself", manifesting the depths of his being. For the Greek translation of the word, it was used the concept of logos, the meaning which is quite different in Hellenistic thinking. The root "leg", from which this word is composed, has the meaning of gathering, collecting, counting, calculating. By *logos*, the Greek philosopher expressed the result of the intellectual effort obtained by examining, discovering and briefly expressing the intelligible content of the surrounding realities. It was the result of the highest intellectual function of Greek thought. The same word had the same meaning in Jewish thought, but the resemblance did not exceed this limit. The *logos* and the Hebrew *dabar* (word) are related in the two thoughts as the static with the dynamic.

At one time, especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, due to insufficient studies on these two notions, which determined in ancient times the two powerful, but opposite spiritualities, it was believed that the Logos of Saint John the Evangelist (John I, 1) did not it is something other than Filon's logos from Alexandria. In light of the new research, it was found that the Logos of which St. John the Evangelist speaks maintains the indissoluble connection with the meaning of the old word taken from the Old Testament, while Filon's logos is profoundly influenced by Greek philosophy, which makes the

distinction between the John's logos and the logos be so profound that this theory was definitively abandoned. While the true existence of Philosopher's logos cannot be affirmed with certainty, the Logos of Saint John the Evangelist is the life and light of those who believe in Him, the only Son of God, existing from eternity and incarnated for our salvation. Although the Holy Fathers approached the notion of "the Word of God" embodied with the 'logo' of Hellenistic philosophy, its content remained wholly biblical. "In the Septuagint, the Hebrew term *dabar* (word-thing) is translated 56 times *Logos* and 147 times *rhêma*. We have the impression that John, speaking of the single word (ho logos), intends to put himself in opposition with the many words of the law, especially with the ten words that will always be of greater importance in Judaism. The Jewish tradition states, among other things, that the world was created in ten words" (Ioan Chirilă, 2005, 56)

All the mysteries of creation are realized and discovered in Jesus Christ. The Logos is transcendental, offering His transcendence to those who come in contact with Him, but also immanently full through His Incarnation, when our humanity assumed and deified by Him, fully reveals God. So "through Christ the gifts and words given and spoken to us through our things and our fellow men are crowned, illuminated, updated and perfected. Through Him we upgrade ourselves to the highest degree as ourselves as gifts and words" (Dumitru Stăniloae, 1973, 14). We understand that the attainment of the supreme communion can be done, as in the case of knowledge, only through love, through the love as Revelation of the divine being. "The more people are united by love, the more important are to each other. The more are united, the better they treasure each other and behave more kindly with one another because in their clean union they reveal Christ" (Dumitru Stăniloae, 1991, 205).

In the Hypostasis of the Logos, the divine wisdom has made possible the revealing of the meaning of humanity. The "Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." (John 6, 63). The Church in relation to the world implies a permanent relationship. This reveals the iconography of Christ, the Creator and Savior of the world and founder of the Church for the salvation of men, but also for the sanctification of the whole creation. By the constitution and the theatrical work of the Church in the world and thus by the Church as an institution of human salvation, by the presence of Christ in it, and by the Holy Spirit, by the divine revelation addressed to all people, of faith, of the Sacred Saints, the missionary work of the Church holds.

The Church is a theatrical missionary institution, of the highest degree, because there is a worker in it, Christ the Redeemer, the whole humanity, or the Savior and the salvation of those who have joined, are united and will be united with Him through the Sacrament, being nourished by the Holy Spirit, in order to obtain perfection.

The Church is a missionary theatrical institution, because it itself has its origin in the mission of the Incarnate Son (teacher, sanctifier and leader), in the mission of the Holy Spirit, which is in a continuous fifth in it, fulfilling God's plan for the Father's salvation. That is why, through the mission of the Church, God "who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (I Timothy 2, 4).

The mission of the Church: preaching the word, sanctifying man and creation, and leading to salvation, a ministry dedicated to man, the source of this mission being the sacrificial service of Christ the Savior, a service entrusted by investing in the power of the Holy Spirit, the priesthood 20, 2. 3). Following the preaching of the gospel, conversion, is, an act of profound change and spiritual renewal, takes place. Receiving the word of God preached by the Church is the precondition, the incorporation of man as a member into the mysterious Body of Christ, through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism (Mark 16: 15-16, John 5: 3, 24). As a Supreme Teacher, Christ teaches the Church, in the context of each time, for its members, Christians to unite in His sacrifice, in the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which he participates not only as sacrificer but also as sacrifice, as a general priest (I Peter 2: 5). , 9-11), a sacrifice made by Him through the special priesthood (I Cor. 4: 1), in which He exercises His Archery, leading them into the heavenly kingdom, He is the Head of the Church, His community body extended over centuries and spaces, in which the communion life of God through the Holy Spirit dwells in it and in the world (Romans 12:15). Thus the work of the Church in the world: "there is nothing else and nothing less than manifestation, that is, Epiphany and the fulfillment of God's plan in the world and in its history, in which God, through mission, visibly brings to an end the history of salvation (Christos Yannaras, 2000, 159).

The mission of the Church necessarily involves the connection between the vertical and the horizontal dimension of salvation, with its two aspects: personal and community-Church. "In relation to

the world, the Orthodox Church does not adopt either the triumphalist attitude, that is, of world domination, nor of the denial of the world, but neither of the reserve or of resignation and, even less, of the capitulation in front world. On the contrary, Orthodoxy has a positive attitude, of genuine employment and service of the world, a realistic attitude appropriate to each historical moment of the complex evolution of the society in the context in which the Church carries on its activity” (Dumitru Radu, 1987, 427).

Christian service in society is embodied in two forms: individual and collective service. The individual ministry has a limited form and area, which is why it must be integrated into the collective ministry, as Christ does through the Church in communion with the whole Church. At the mission of the Church, the whole community is involved: clergy and believers, the whole mysterious Body of Christ, because all the members participate in His ministry, all in communion and inter-communion with Him and with themselves. Today the Church must: “use more courage and power more than the socio-cultural language of the time we live in, depending on the geo-political and ethnic space, so that the gospel message is proclaimed with great power” (Gheorghe Petraru, 1999, 103) without renouncing the truths of faith given by Christ, through the Holy Apostles (Matthew 28, 18-20; Mark 16, 15-16), regarding the salvation of those incorporated in Christ as members of it.

In today's society we are surrounded by many modern means of communication, but nonetheless, more and more people are feeling isolated and lonely. We live a true drama of communication without communion, a deepening of communication.

The new means of communication facilitate the transmission of information, encourage interactivity and also exploit individualized communication. The advantage of these new technologies is that they mediate the communication between people in different corners of the world, but there is a disadvantage: the feeling of living communication is lost. Thus, communication becomes artificial, electronic and even virtual. Many people end up living in a virtual, unreal reality.

Can we speak, then, about a real crisis of communication in contemporary society?

One of the greatest existential problems of the contemporary man is the lack of communion, a problem that arises as a result of the lack of interpersonal communication.

Communication has become impersonal, the individual is promoted and not the person (losing the character of human being, in communion), individualism, selfishness and self-sufficiency are strongly encouraged, on the exchange of a life in communion and solidarity. The values are no longer promoted, but the non-values, the lack of ideals and, finally, the lack of meaning.

Unfortunately, today's world is pursuing more depersonalization and desacralization, both as a result of secularization. So we are also facing an identity crisis.

The modern man has everything, but nevertheless he is not satisfied, he is not fulfilled, he is agitated, tense, he is restless and unhappy. Happiness is acquired only through communication and communion with God, not in selfishness and finite materiality, which produces unhappiness when consumed. Consumerism hides irresponsibility and individuality, but also existential dissatisfaction.

There is no relationship anymore, the man feels misunderstood, abandoned and unhappy, having feelings of worthlessness and anxiety, of desolate souls, unable to communicate neither with himself nor with others, running away from “agglomeration”, isolating himself and shaking his soul. for the worries of life and death (developing a true phobia of death).

The Church has the responsibility to assure man that he is not alone, but always with God. God's love is an invitation to respond to His love of being together. Only through communication and in communion with God can we understand the meaning of our existence. Only through communion with Christ, the Word of God, do we enter into relationship with God, the Church promoting integration in sobriety and helping others in solidarity. The offer of the Church is happiness in eternal communion with God and with loved ones. This is what the modern man is looking for, i.e. immortality, but most of the time, not where it should be.

In this context, we can understand the theology's duty to update its language, in the sense of people less familiar with the Church terminology and at the same time, and the theology's responsibility to confess the Truth and in the public space.

In the Church, the communion life of people with God, through union with Christ in the Holy Spirit, is manifested concretely by faith, through participation in the same Holy Communion committed by Christ, through the special priesthood: bishops, priests and deacons, according to their divine

investment. In the Church, people are personally united with God, by extending Christ in the grace of the Holy Spirit, in those who by faith, in the Holy Sacraments, receive the fruits of the Redemption, and grow in Him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The people's part of the ecclesial community is divided into: laics and clergy. Members of the Church: myriads (believers), together with the clergy (bishops, priests and deacons), "the icons of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4, 1; I Peter, 5,1-6), cooperate with Christ the Head of the Church (I Col. 1, 24), and the fullness of Him (Ephesians 1: 22-23).

In the ecclesiastical community each of the members have their own role and work: "as in one body we have many members and the members do not have the same work, so many are one body in Christ and from him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4: 15-16).

## 5. CONCLUSION

Man is gifted by God with a reason, through which he understood the realities and the specific way of life but also all that belongs to the world, the universe, as far as he is able to acknowledge them. The argumentation of knowledge was based on empirical, innovation and especially logical thinking. Fundamental questions about the ontology and phenomenology of human nature have received different answers over time. Man is born as a person, and depending on what he does, he becomes a personality.

The peak of personality, the humanity is reached by Jesus Christ, the God-man, Paradigm and the ultimate goal of the world. Christ, as the fulfillment of the human being, is in a permanent openness to every human being, because only in cooperation with Him, man realizes the path from death to life without end. Therefore, both within the earthly temporal framework man remains human no matter how religiously, intellectually, technically and socially evolved he would be, as well as in the timeless, eternal dimension he enters through death, remaining in dependence and relationship with God, as endless joy and happiness of those in Christ in the state of eternal communion and dialogue. This is the meaning of the man as a rational being, conscious, free and affective, this is the path from non-being to being, which is reached only through the union with Christ, "The Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14: 6).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Ion Bria, *Despre revelația dumnezeiască*, [About the divine revelation], in: *Glasul Bisericii*, Nr. 3-4, (1964),
- [2] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Chipul evanghelic al lui Iisus Hristos*, [The evangelical image of Jesus Christ], Deisis, Sibiu 1991.
- [3] Sorin Cosma, *Revelația dumnezeiască*, [The divine revelation], in: *Mitropolia Olteniei*, Nr. 6, (1986),
- [4] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, [Orthodox Dogmatic Theology], vol. 2, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1997,
- [5] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Chipul lui Hristos în Biserica Răsăriteană*, [The image of Christ in the Eastern Church], in: „*Ortodoxia*”, An. XXV, Nr. 1, (1973),
- [6] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Studii de teologie dogmatică*, Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei, Craiova, 1991.
- [7] Christos Yannaras, *Persoană și Eros*, [Person and Eros], Ed. Anastasia, București, 2000,
- [8] Dumitru Radu, *Indrumări misionare* [Missionary guidance], Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1986
- [9] Gheorghe Petraru, *Aspecte misionare în scrierile creștine de început*, [Missionary aspects in early Christian writings], in: *Dialog Teologic*, nr.5, 1999,
- [10] Ioan Chirilă, *Sofia și Logos sau despre dialogul dintre cei doi Iisus: Hristos și Ben Sirah*, [Sofia and Logos or about the dialogue between the two Jesus: Christ and Ben Sirah], in: *Studii Teologice*, Nr. 1, (2005).



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcfsare.2019.3.138-142>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## LOCALISM AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY – LIBERTARIAN PERSPECTIVES

Alexandra Lucia Teodorescu (a)\*

(a) Lecturer PhD at Dunărea de Jos University, Galați, 111, Domnească Street, Romania,

E-mail: [alexandra.teodorescu@ugal.ro](mailto:alexandra.teodorescu@ugal.ro)

### *Abstract*

The current political context of the European Union indicates a disconnection between the people and those who rule greater than ever in contemporary history. This paper will show how libertarianism, as political philosophy, contributes to reducing this democratic gap between citizens and rulers, through the specific instrument of localism. Localism represents a set of political orientations that focuses on local values, resources and involvement of citizens. It generates public policies supported and implemented by citizens because they have ownership over them. The paper will include a brief conceptual framing of libertarianism as well as localism, presenting the evolution of both concepts in contemporary political sciences. Starting from the famous words of Tip O'Neill, former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives that "All politics is local", the paper will analyze libertarian ideas on localism and will discuss them in the context of an increasing interest for these ideas in the Romanian political sphere.

**Keywords:** libertarianism; localism; democracy; participation; active citizens;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2016, 51,9% of British citizens voted in favour of their country leaving the European Union ([https://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/brexit\\_en](https://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/brexit_en), retrieved May 2019). This sent a shockwave all over the world and the entire process of Great Britain leaving the European Union (process that is still not finalised at the time of writing this paper) is called *Brexit*. Besides being one of the most commented issues in international affairs, *Brexit* is a symptom of a phenomenon that I will discuss in this paper. This is the gap between the European Union's philosophy of promoting the local, through subsidiarity and "unity in diversity" and the perception of the European Union's institutions in the eyes of the citizens.

The principle of subsidiarity is a general principle of European law and it refers to the fact that, when an issue occurs, the best approach is to deal with it at the closest level of its occurrence, thus favouring the local approach. In fact, European institutions have often been accused of making decisions for all European countries, without even consulting local or regional institutions. This was one of the key arguments of Brexiteers in their effort to convince the British that their country would have been better



off outside the European Union. The media propaganda painted a very grim picture of grey, sober, occult European public servants performing negotiations behind closed doors, keeping the public away from real decisions (Betts A, 2019).

The motto of the European Union, “unity in diversity”, suggests the idea of a common effort towards peace and prosperity while at the same time cultivating local traditions and values of all European countries.<sup>30</sup> This has also been a controversial issue along time, since the defenders of national values have been faced with the promoters of a federation-like European Union in which the national level bears no more importance. This aspect too is considered to have been one of the reasons for the surprising result of the Brexit vote in June 2016, since the British have always been considered to have a more particular attitude towards the idea of integration in a super-national organism.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

These facts show that the issue of local versus national and super-national is still a very current debate, with concrete consequences in world politics. My effort in this paper is to show that libertarianism, as political ideology, offers valuable solutions for issues related to localism and becomes a real political alternative in contemporary Romania, a country with a heavy load of Communist and totalitarian heritage.

The most important aspect of libertarianism is the relation with the State: in order to ensure social rights, the State breaches individual freedom by imposing taxation on almost everything: property, work, public services etc. This also has consequences on a deeper level: for example, public services such as education and health become fully controlled by the State, as their main sponsor, and are seldom used as biopower tools of social control. Biopower is a concept defined by the French philosopher Michel Foucault (Foucault M., 1978) referring to the idea that the human being in its biological aspects becomes the core of political action. This kind of biopower has a huge potential for totalitarian action of the State against individuals.

The most prominent libertarian thinkers are Friedrich Hayek (Hayek F., 1989), Ludwig von Mises (von Mises L., 1996), Murray Rothbard (Rothbard M., 2006) and Robert Nozick (Nozick R., 1974), all arguing for a minimal State. The minimal State is the state that only ensures internal and external defence and the proper execution of contracts between private parties. In fact, with all its diverse orientations, libertarianism favours private action, as natural manifestation of individual freedom.

Localism is a larger range of political orientations that promote local values and, mainly, local control of resources and lack of centralised government. Its theoretical background connects it to the concept of deliberative democracy (Ercan, S.A.; Hendriks, C.H., 2013, 422-440), in which citizens play a major role in decision-making not just by delegating political power in electoral votes but by directly participating in political debates and decisions close to their area of interest.

## 3. ARGUMENT OF THE PAPER&ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE THESIS

The argument of this paper is that localism, in its libertarian ideological version, is one possible answer to the issue of citizen political participation in Romania.

The argument arose from the following research questions:

- Is the libertarian version of localism a potential solution to increasing the interest of citizens for political issues?
- Are there any Romanian political or civil society movements that promote libertarian localism?

As mentioned in the introduction, Brexit is just a symptom of the gap between citizens and political institutions seen by the citizens as abstract, obscure entities that impose their political agenda. This phenomenon is present all over Europe and it mainly manifests by political disengagement and electoral absenteeism (<https://www.idea.int/data-tools/continent-view/Europe/40>). The voter turnout by country for the most recent parliamentary elections places Romanian on the last spot on a list of 55 European countries, with a percentage of only 37,8.

The communist heritage of excessive centralism, corruption at the highest level of government and precarious civic education (the State controlled education system does not focus on this aspect) have led to this result. The consequences can only be negative: lack of interest and political participation leads to the ascension of extremist political movements, as well as to the perpetuation of corruption practices.

The solution provided by libertarianism as political ideology of the minimal State is a return to localism. Inspired by the much cited words of Tip O'Neill, the former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, "All politics is local" (O'Neill T., 1995), some political movements argued that, in order to improve democracy, the focus must shift from the national government to the local. This refers to taxation, meaning that taxes are better spent in the jurisdiction where they are collected. This means investments in public infrastructure that allow economic development of private local companies, creating jobs and making citizens feel like their money is well spent at their own interest.

It also refers to institutional mechanisms that encourage political participation of citizens such as participatory local budgets, in which citizens can directly decide on how a certain amount of the local budget is spent. Moreover, libertarian localism favours decentralisation of public services such as education and health. The central idea is that citizens should have the freedom to decide for themselves regarding the necessities of education in their area in accordance with the local labour market.

Local referendums, town-hall meetings, public debates on local issues of interest, civic movements of citizens are also an essential part of the instruments proposed by libertarian localism.

During the past years, the Romanian political arena diversified by the appearance of such libertarian movements, especially at a local level. The first movement is the Party of Free Men (Partidul Oamenilor Liberi) founded in 2015 in Targu-Mures, a city in North-Central Romania. (<http://oameniliberi.com/>, accessed 20 June 2019). They promote fiscal decentralization, using the Swiss model in order to encourage local economic development. In favour of deliberative democracy, POL fights for debureaucratization of public services and transparency of public decision. In order to allow more participation in political life, POL supports electoral reform, by eliminating obstacles to participation, such as the minimal number of support signatures for a candidate or a party as a prerequisite of taking part in an electoral competition, provided in the electoral law in force.

Brăila Nouă, founded in 2017, defines as the "first independent, localist, center-right party in the city" of Braila, South-Eastern Romania (<http://www.brailanoua.ro/>, accessed 13 June 2019). The party focuses on the self-sustainability of local administrations and the transparency of spending public funds. Brăila Nouă also has a common platform with another local party, PACT pentru Galați, in order to generate the actual unification between the two neighbouring communities. (<https://www.pactpentrugalati.ro/>, accessed 13 June 2019) Their inspiration is the so-called „Alliance of the West” (<https://aliantavestului.ro/>, accessed 13 June 2019), an alliance between the local administrations of Romanian Western cities of Arad, Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara and Oradea, was created in order to facilitate cooperation between these local communities with common interests in their region. The purpose is to contribute to local economic development by accessing European funding directly from the European Commission through an operational programme dedicated to this region, thus avoiding the bureaucratic and political conundrum of central government fund allocation.

These political movements are gaining speed at the local level, defining themselves as local movements interested in bringing about change in their own area. Their success is increasing, some of them already being voted into the local councils of their cities and having the opportunity to promote libertarian public policies.

The main arguments that have been brought to this approach are the danger of isolationism and the need for central government. The first one focuses on the idea that empowering local communities by letting them create and spend their own budgets will lead to a sort of autarchy in which the community closes in on itself by only accepting local products, local employees, and local businesses. The second argument comes from the long lasting tradition of big State, imposed by the communist regime, and that has led to the mentality that central government is a necessity. In its absence, local communities would have no focus, would lose control of local institutions and anarchy would install.

#### 4. DISMANTLING THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST

In fact, neither libertarianism as political ideology, nor localism promote any concept of isolation. Libertarianism argues that individuals should be free: free to choose what is good for them, free to perform the activities that best fulfil their potential and free to associate, willingly, with whoever they think is appropriate. At the same time, localism, in the libertarian approach, extrapolates these principles to local communities so that they are free to choose the best policies for that particular community, free to develop in the direction that best suits their traits and free to associate with other local communities with common interests. Thus, local communities, when allowed to do associate by the central government, do so in accordance with their local interests, such as the Alliance of the West. The political movements mentioned are all pro-European parties, understanding the enormous benefits of European funding and also the importance of external investors in less developed regions.

Regarding the necessity for a central government, as Horia Terpe, executive director of the Center for Institutional Analysis and Development (CADI-Eleutheria), puts it:

“All non-minimal alternatives only have three possible outcomes: to become corrupt and inefficient, to function as a dictatorship or both of them at the same time.” (Terpe I., 2019)

The minimal state should focus only on defence, justice and police, leaving the markets deal with the other issues in a much more effective manner.

Unfortunately, in Romania, the three possible outcomes outlined by Horia Terpe, have taken place in reality, first during the communist regime (the dictatorship version), then nowadays (the corrupt and inefficient version) and, if we let it, even the combination between them. The concentration of resources (human, financial, political) in the hands of one central administration leads to the high level of corruption as well as the ineffectiveness of such government that becomes rigid and unable to adapt to new trends.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the issue of citizen political participation in the context of the gap between central political institutions and local communities. The discussion stemmed from two main questions:

Is the libertarian version of localism a potential solution to increasing the interest of citizens for political issues? This appears to be a solution since both libertarianism as well as localism contain the ingredients necessary for the development of deliberative democracy: liberty, individual and community initiative and decentralization. I predict that the following years of Romanian democracy will show a growing interest for these ideas since their core, liberty, both of individuals as well as of communities, is the engine of participation. If people and communities are not free to decide for themselves, what is the meaning of democracy? I do not believe that democracy can survive without one of its most important components, citizen participation. Any initiative that supports more liberty for individuals and communities to determine their own fate is welcome and will lead to the consolidation of the rule of law and will not, as some critics tend to claim, lead to anarchy. All Western consolidated democracies have developed through the growth of local communities and this is only possible in the absence of a big, centralised State that controls all resources.

The second question of the paper was if there are any Romanian political or civil society movements that promote libertarian localism? As outlined in this paper, it seems that these movements, that started from civil society, through the efforts of associations such as SOLIB (Society for Individual Liberty) and CADI (Center for Institutional Analysis and Development), as well as intellectuals such as Bogdan Glăvan with his webpage *Logica Economică* (Economic Logic)<sup>31</sup>, have started to gain speed and assume the role of local political actors that propose libertarian and localist agendas for the development of their communities.

For any country, but especially for Romania, as post-communist country, the promises of libertarianism and localism should be appealing as they want to generate that individual citizen initiative that is at the heart of democracy.

## Acknowledgments

To my father, Professor Sergiu Mihail Tofan, who first showed me both the benefits and the moral value of liberty.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Ercan, S.A.; Hendriks, C.H. (2013), *The democratic challenges and potential of localism: Insights from deliberative democracy*, in Policy Studies. **31** (4): 422–440, 2013
- [2] Foucault M, *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979*, Palgrave MacMillan
- [3] Hayek, F.A, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989
- [4] von Mises, L., *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*, ed. Bettina Bien Graves, 1996
- [5] Nozick, Robert, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books, 1974
- [6] O'Neill T., *All Politics is Local: And Other Rules of the Game*, Random House Value Publishing, 1995
- [7] Rand, Ayn, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, New York: Signet, 1964
- [8] Rawls J., *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1971
- [9] Rothbard M., *For a New Liberty. The Libertarian Manifesto*, Alabama, Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2006
- [10] Rothbard M., *Anatomy of the State*, Auburn, Alabama, Ludwig von Mises Institute. [http://mises.org/books/anatomy\\_of\\_the\\_state.pdf](http://mises.org/books/anatomy_of_the_state.pdf).
- [11] Terpe, H., *Statul minimal ca destinație pentru România [The Minimal State as a destination for Romania]*, in Revista 22, București, ianuarie 2016 <https://revista22.ro/supliment/horia-terpe-statul-minimal-ca-destinatia-pentru-romania>, accessed 1 June 2019

### Online resources

- [12] Betts A., *Why Brexit Happened and What to Do Next*, [https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander\\_betts\\_why\\_brexit\\_happened\\_and\\_what\\_to\\_do\\_next?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_why_brexit_happened_and_what_to_do_next?language=en), accessed 1 June 2019
- [13] Brăila Nouă, <http://www.brailanoua.ro/>, accessed 13 June 2019
- [14] Brexit, the Movie, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvC3fbO-5ps>, accessed 5 June 2019
- [15] <https://cadi.ro/ro/>, accessed 3 July 2019
- [16] [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/motto\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/motto_en), accessed 1 June 2019
- [17] <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/continent-view/Europe/40>, accessed 1 July 2019
- [18] <https://logec.ro/>, accessed 25 May 2019
- [19] Partidul Oamenilor Liberi, <http://oameniliberi.com/>, accessed 20 June 2019
- [20] PACT pentru Galați, <https://www.pactpentrugalati.ro/>, accessed 13 June 2019



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### THE BYZANTINE HESYCHASM AND HUMANISM AND THEIR REFLECTION IN EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY

Cristian Gagu (a)\*

(a) Associate professor PhD at Dunărea de Jos University, Galați, 111, Domnească Street, Romania,

E-mail: pr.cristi\_gagu@yahoo.com

#### *Abstract*

The Palaeologos era was, paradoxically, a period of rebirth and flourishing of spiritual and cultural life, amid a deep political-military and economic decline, which led to the Byzantine Empire's disappearance from history. The two movements that brightened this era, the spirituality of Hesychasm and the palamite theology, on the one hand, and classical Byzantine humanism, on the other hand, influenced all the fields of life of the Byzantine Empire, including sacred art. The present study aims to highlight how and to what extent they have left their mark on the Byzantine iconography, enriching it both thematic and modal, that is, the way in which the painters of the past have transposed into the icons the influences of the two movements.

**Keywords:** hesychasm; humanism; icon; sacred art; Orthodox iconography; the Palaeologos era;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In his work *We and the Icon*, Sorin Dumitrescu stated that „any thesis of a historical evolution of the icon” should be excluded, which is considered to be „a mere cultural prejudice”, evidence put forward in support of this statement being „the frescoes from the Roman catacombs hair painted during the rebirth of the Palaeologos” (S. Dumitrescu, 2010, p.128).

Referring to the schism after Schism, as the rupture of the Duecento icon of the righteous belief in the West, the same author agrees that „the icon registers fine and accurately, as an unimaginable iconographic seismograph, the seismic waves detached from the terrible magnitude of the axiological and iconological earthquake from Duecento” (S. Dumitrescu, 2010, pp. 92-93).

Thus, without talking about a historical evolution of the icon, its iconography is imprinted in its being, and the spiritual, theological or cultural reverberations of the different epochs that crossed Eastern sacred art throughout the time can be observed. There is no exception to this rule nor the sacred art in the Byzantine Palaeologos, which has been felt in a positive, fortunately manner, by the influences of two opposing currents, the hesychasm and humanism, which left their mark both thematic, as well as iconographic and iconological.

## 2. HESYCHASM AND HUMANISM

The Renaissance of Hesychastic spirituality in Byzantine monasticism as a reaction to affirmation and defense of Orthodox identity and resistance to the attempts of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII the Palaeologos (1261-1282) to impose the church union ended in 1274 in Lyon between the Eastern Church and Rome ones through an unacceptable theological compromise on the basis of the Orthodox teaching of faith, led to the renewal and flourishing of spiritual life in the Byzantium of the 13th-15th centuries.

In parallel with the unprecedented spread of the spirituality of the Hesychasm, both among the monks and laity, theological disputes continued around the main doctrinal points separating the two Churches, especially around Filioque, reaching the apogee at the beginning of the 14th century, when, despite the failure of the union of Lyon, new covenants of church union were initiated.

If the initiator of the revivalist movement of spirituality was a Catholic converted to Orthodoxy, the nobility named Nikephoros (Pr. D. Stăniloae, 1993, p. 42), another Western monk, Barlaam of Calabria, a humanist formation, came from Italy to Byzantium to study Aristotle in the original, assumed the task of combating the Filioque thesis and defending the Orthodox faith teaching. Unfortunately, the rationalist-philosophical theory to which Barlaam had called, who had affirmed in one of the Filioque treaties that no demonstration was valid with regard to the truths concerning God as one that is inscrutable and incognostible in his being (J. Meyendorff, 1953, p. 118), was in flagrant contradiction with the Orthodox tradition. That is why he came into conflict with Saint Gregory Palamas, who defended the Orthodox faith teaching about the Holy Spirit's procession by appealing to the Holy Fathers of the Church.

Saint Gregory Palamas revealed that the God who is unknowable in His essence is fully revealed in the person of the Savior Jesus Christ and, after Ascension to heaven, reveals himself through uncreated divine grace and thus can be known in His works, thus touching for the first time the issue of essence and divine energies (J. Meyendorff, 1953, p. 118), a matter that would become the subject of theological controversies that marked the 14th century Byzantine and the central doctrine of its theology.

So, the controversy did not address the matter of the Filioque itself, but the way Barlaam addressed it and the importance given to it by profane philosophy and rational knowledge of God at the expense of theology and mystical knowledge, through revelation, knowledge that they valued the hesychasts.

Against Barlaam, who affirmed that the only possible knowledge of God is the rational one, the mind becoming „God-seeing when cleansed not only of passions, but also of ignorance” (Sf. Gregory Palama, 1997, p.278) because, according to him, the supreme knowledge of God was by negation, which necessarily followed the intellectual one – „So those who are pure in heart do not see God differently either by analogy or by cause or by negation. And the more God-seeing of all is the one who knows many parts of the world or the highest. But also the one who knows better what he knows. And the most God-seeing of all is the one who knows the visible parts and the unseen powers of the world. For he who can contemplate all these things can know God by analogy as the cause of all these things. And placing Him above all this by negation, he knows Him again as being above all. For only God is known of things. And the very way of God's knowledge through negation, which seems to despise the knowledge of things for God, can not be produced without the knowledge of all things. For we can only know the negations of the things we know of our existence” (Sf. Gregory Palama, 1997, p. 350), - Saint Gregory Palamas, without despising the knowledge gained by reason through the study of the sciences, said that he who devotes himself to this knowledge can only deduce and know that God exists, but without sharing with God.

For Saint Gregory Palamas the only means of knowing God is the union of the highest-minded view with and through the work of divine grace, not reason, which is clearly stated when it says: „Sensitive and Intelligent faculties are means of knowing beings; they are limited by beings and make known to God by departing from these beings. But those who do not possess only the faculties of sensation and intellectual understanding and who have acquired supernatural spiritual grace will not be limited by beings in their knowledge, but they will also know spiritually, above all meaning and reason, that God is the Spirit, for they become God in their entirety, and know God in God” (J. Meyendorff, 1959, p. 241).

In this union-mind view, and by the mind of the whole man, he shares the light of the divine grace that Saint Gregory Palamas learns to be enipostatic, subsistence in the Divine Persons. That light can not therefore be „the being beyond the being”, which is „inaccessible and non-shareable” (J. Meyendorff, 1959, p. 274), neither is it an angel, because „it has dominant features”, neither the mind itself, because this light is the deifying and „preface the body by adapting it and communicating it to its own splendor” (J. Meyendorff, 1959, p. 274), denying it. In this state of complete union with the divine and deifying light, the body itself becomes light and perceives this light even with the material senses: „it is seen - a miracle! - and the bodily eyes” (J. Meyendorff, 1959, p. 274, Saint Gregory repeatedly said.

We note from the words of Saint Gregory Palamas the importance given by the Hesychasts, according to the whole Orthodox anthropology up to them, to the body of man, who comes to bear the signs of deification, to be the bearer and seer of the uncreated divine light of the grace of the Holy Spirit. In fact, this deified body, the bearer of uncreated divine light through which the spiritual part of the human soul manifests itself, is the „object” whose likeness is surprised in the icon.

Also, from an iconological perspective, it is extremely important to clarify the meaning of divine darkness, to which Barlaam is often referred. To prove that the supreme knowledge of God is, as he believed, theology by negation and not knowledge through unity-view in the uncreated divine light, Barlaam has repeatedly referred to the theology of Dionysius Pseudo-Areopagite, but confusing the divine darkness that he spoke (Sf. Dionysius the Areopagite, 1996, pp.247-250) with his theology through negation and concluding that „the most perfect view is this darkness, or theology by negation. So the light that you speak, whatever it is, you have to leave it to go to your theology and vision through negation” (J. Meyendorff, 1959, p.327).

Saint Gregory Palamas responded to Varlaam that the divine darkness of the Areopagite is not a mere rational negation of what the mind knows for, on the one hand, this knowledge through negation is within everyone`s reach, even of those who do not restrain the passionate part and, on the other hand, by denying everything he knows, the mind is „in front of a void that does not unite with God” (Filocalia, VII, 1997, note 488). It is, on the contrary, the superabundance of the light of the divine glory and cites Dionysius himself, who, in the epistle To Dorotheus the liturgist (the deacon), said that „the divine darkness is the unapproachable light ... for the overflowing of overwhelming light above the being ...” (J. Meyendorff, 1959, p.329; Sf. Dionysius the Areopagite, 1996, p. 258).

So, the dark background, almost black sometimes, sometimes a very intense marine bleach, in the mural painting is meant to signify precisely this superabundance of uncreated divine light that the saints experienced in their mystical experiences and about which theologians spoke (N. Gusev, M. Dunaev, R. Karelin, 2007, p. 340). The same role plays, this time in icons made in mosaic, the gold background, which refers to the same superabundance of uncreated divine light.

The teaching of the deification of man by the mystical union with God and His vision in the uncreated divine light of grace in which God reveals himself to the whole, but being distinct from the Being above the Being of his actual work, is justified by Saint Gregory Palamas by the act of Incarnation The Son of God. According to him, the human nature assumed by the Incarnation of the Son in His divine Hypostasis is the only point of concealment between uncreated and created, between God and man, the only deck whereby the divine grace shares to the whole man, the body and the soul, interior and not just exterior until the Incarnation.

According to Saint Gregory Palamas, the deification of man is a teandric work, implying the gift of Christ, „which by the divine baptism, as by the grace of the divine Spirit who dwells in Him, has begot us again” (Sf. Gregory Palama, 2000, p.34), and the Christian's effort to live „according to the divine commandments”, a work that is fulfilled in the Church.

The theology of Saint Gregory Palamas is not, therefore, how it would appear from the writings of defense of mystical hesychast, a spiritualist and intellectualist theology, with a psychological mysticism, in which the body finds no place, but is a Christocentric and ecclesiological theology, with a monistic anthropology very well-defined and in accordance with the teaching of the Church, which saves the unity of man restored in Christ in the face of the danger of the Platonic dualism professed by Barlaam. In this context, the honoring of the icon of Christ the Savior and of the icons of the saints, the wood of the Cross that Christ suffered, and the image of the Cross of Christ, the holy vessels and holy places, finds their natural role in the teandric work of deification of man as means through who shares the sanctifying grace, „for God dwells in them” (Sf. Gregory Palama, 1985, pp. 210-211; 1991, p.157).

On the other hand, the cultural flourishing was under the sign of humanism, understood not as a rebirth of the interest of the Byzantine intellectuals for the Hellenistic antiquity and as rediscovery of it, whose heirs were increasingly aware that they were, and especially as an intensification of the study of the works of the authors belonging to the classical Greek antiquity and their revaluation (Pr. C. Gagu, 2007).

Reporting to the classical Greek antiquity did not just summarize the imitation of the forms, models and canons of rhetoric, or other humanities, and the cultivation of taste for good and beauty - καλοκαγαθία, but also borrowed from this rich treasure. These loans would also influence Byzantine sacred art, manifesting in a paradoxical symbiosis with the elements of the hesychast theology, „both in the actual conception of art and in its character or its subjects” (S. Dumitrescu, 2010, p. 156).

The pictorial style of this period, called the Palaeologoi`style by historians, reflected, therefore, both the Hesychast theology and the humanistic current.

The influences of the humanist current in the Byzantine sacred art of the Palaeologoi era are well emphasized both by L. Uspensky, in *The Theology of the Icon*, and by Charles Delvoye, in *Byzantine Art*. From ancient art, the Byzantine iconographers of this era borrowed the volume of forms, rendered by creating the deep feeling, the representation of the lost or back profile and the technique of the raccourci (a process of rendering a subject through painting, sculpture or photography reducing dimensions through the perspective effect). From the same source, through the miniaturization of manuscripts, they adopted the linear perspective process by converting the lines to an imaginary axis behind the scenes, a perspective that often coexists with the reverse perspective (Ch. Delvoye, 1976, p. 221).

The holy persons represented in the icon are no longer exteriorized to the viewer, but are often turned to themselves and closed as in a picture, losing or making it more difficult to realize the spiritual connection between the holy person in the icon and the believer in front of the icon (L. Uspensky, 1994, pp.156-157).

The taste of the narrative is more and more prevalent, exemplified by the diversification of subjects, some entirely new, borrowed both from the Holy Gospels and apocryphal writings, from the life of the saints or from the Acatist Hymn, with the presentation of scenes from the family life rich in pictorial details, which led to the diversification of the represented physiognomies. The looks of the characters are more expressive, conveying feelings of gentleness, melancholy, amazement in the presence of the miracle or fear of the torment of hell (Ch. Delvoye, 1976, p. 219). Also, to the simplicity of the backgrounds it is preferable to load them with trees, rocks, constructions between which curtains are made, elements that do not have a „rather ornamental than realistic” role, as Ch. Delvoye (1976, p. 220) says, but on the contrary, are symbols loaded with theological meanings of the highest, as S. Dumitrescu interprets in his work *We and the icon* (2010, pp.242-244, 307-316).

Uspensky shows that unlike the previous period, when Christian iconography caught the attitude, the hieratism of the saint at the expense of gesturing, the spiritual state rather than the emotions, one of the defining features of this period is precisely the surprise of the transfigured emotions, the expression of the most intimate movements of the soul (L. Uspensky, 1994, p.156). The faces are no longer hieratic, tried with harsh, but milder, more human lines, contributing to the colors used, brighter and more joyful, even compared to the austere ones. As the archimandrite Sofian Boghiu notices, the image of the Savior Jesus Christ Pantocrator represented at that time in the mosaics of the Chora monastery or those of the Virgin Mary's Church in Constantinople, expresses „both heavenly and endless love for men”, „an endless goodness” (S. Boghiu, 2001, p.80). Delvoye notes, however, that even in this context of the obvious influences of the humanist current, Byzantine iconography of the Palaeologos`era, both the mural and the icons, keeps the holy characters „in the world of transcendence, very far from Italian realism” (Ch. Delvoye, 1976, pp. 221, 256).

The humanist influence has manifested its influence in the sacred art of the epoch including the introduction of new iconographic themes or new elements in traditional themes, taken from liturgical literature, apocryphal or folk literature. In the churches adorned with mosaic or mural paintings there are scenes from the Virgin's childhood, according to the information in the Jacob's Proto-Gospel, scenes from the life of the Savior, such as the Bethlehem Road, The Quirinus census, The Purple Wreath Distribution, or episodes of the Old Testament interpreted in Christian hymnography as prefigurations of the Virgin. Representative is the church of the Chora monastery in Constantinople, the work of the great logothete Theodor Metochites (Ch. Delvoye, 1976, pp. 221, 256).



The victory of palamite theology led to a return to the traditionalist style prior to the rebirth of the time of the first two emperors of the Palaeologos, with solemn and severe physiognomies, with precise lines, with a stunning attitude to the movement, but without losing the elegance and charm that had acquired until then.

The influences of the theology and spirituality of the hesychasts did not materialize in the Byzantine iconography of the time only by returning to the more austere traditionalist style. The taboric light experienced by the Hesychasts is reflected in the iconography of the time in the form of the blic ((N. Gusev, M. Dunaev, R. Karelin, 2007, pp. 312-13, 339), defined by Sorin Dumitrescu as „the brightest point of an iconic morphology, indicating the place where it was short-circuited by the uncreated energies” (S. Dumitrescu, 2010, p.219). According to the same author, the blic represents the iconic figure of „the highest coefficient of diaphanicity”, that is, of the most intense manifestation of the uncreated divine light „nestling in the density of the proplasma, illuminating it either gradually from within or shorting it in depth and then gushing out, in the brilliance of the accents” (S. Dumitrescu, 2010, p.225).

The influences of the hesychastic movement manifested itself, like those of the humanist current, including in the presentation of new themes springing up in the context of the sacramental theology promoted by Saint Gregory Palamas, and especially by Saint Nicholas Cabasila.

The latter highlighted sacramental life as another side of the same spiritual life of the Church, showing that union with God is possible to any Christian through the holy mysteries by which men „become God and Sons of God” (N. Cabasila, 1989, p.139), emphasizing this on the Holy Mystery of the Eucharist.

For Saint Nicholas Cabasila, „the highest target to which our work can be directed”, the highest peak of spiritual life, is the Holy Communion (N. Cabasila, 1989, p.196), through which „the Lord Jesus Christ Himself fills our soul, crossing the depths and all the outflows, enveloping from all sides”, penetrating „into the marrow and our members” and becoming together with the one „one and the same” (N. Cabasila, 1989, p.195). That is why he calls the Holy Eucharist „the greatest mystery, because beyond it can no longer go, nor can any more be added” (N. Cabasila, 1989, p.195).

Under the influence of this Eucharistic sacramental theology, Byzantine iconography introduced new themes inspired by the Divine Liturgy, such as The Angelic Liturgy, The Communion of the Apostles, or the Old-Testament prefigurations of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, such as Abraham's Sacrifice or The Three Young People in the Fire Oven, The Abraham Philoxenia, whose origins go down to the age of primary Christianity.

In the context of the same hesychastic sacramental theology, the iconography of the time redefined the symbol, though it constituted a ground of theological dispute between Saint Gregory Palamas and Barlaam of Calabria (Pr. D. Stăniloae, 1993, pp. 67-69; J. Meyendorff, 1959, pp.260-261; C. Gagu, 2007, pp. 180-182), both through the representation of the Savior Jesus Christ as the Lamb (Ch. Delvoye, 1976, p. 236) and as the Angel of the Great Council, in the scene of The Holy Communion of the Apostles or in The Feast of Wisdom (L. Uspensky, 1994, pp.157-158).

The attempts of the sacred Byzantine art of this period to reveal the Holy Mysteries of the Eucharist iconographically led to the need to reveal the whole iconomy of salvation, which was to materialize in the Russian space in the fifteenth century in the appearance of the iconostasis, as it is known today (L. Uspensky, 1994, p.157).

### 3. CONCLUSION

The Renaissance of the Palaeologos, manifested both as a revival of spiritual life and theology, as well as as a cultural-humanistic revival, left its mark, through the two movements, and in the sacred art, the icon impressively and precisely recording the influences of the two currents, often in conflict, of the Byzantine spiritual-cultural life. The extremely hot conflict between the hesychastic spirituality and the humanist culture, whose reverberations were felt in almost all areas of Byzantine life at that time, was translated into the sacred art of time rather into a happy synthesis of the main elements of the two movements, enriching it both from the point of view of the new themes approached and from the modal point of view of how it recorded the influences of the two currents. This positive effect is due to the fact that the painters, both the traditionalists, who were not always sheltered by the influences of humanism,

and those who were passionate of this movement, understood to remain „faithful to the traditional forms of Orthodox art represented by the hesychasm” (L. Uspensky, 1994, p.158). Thus, the Byzantine sacred art of the renaissance of the Palaeologos produced the extraordinary mosaics of the Chora Monastery (Khariye Djami) and Pammakaristos (Fethiye Djami), who enjoy the sight and exalt the soul.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] CABASILA, Nicholas, *The Interpretation of the Divine Liturgy and About the Life in Christ*, translated by Pr. Ene Braniște and Pr. Theodor Bodogae, Publishing House of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, 1989.
- [2] SF. DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *Complete Works*, translation, introduction and notes by Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996.
- [3] SF. GREGORY PALAMA, *Homilies*, vol. I, translation by dr. Constantin Daniel, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000.
- [4] SF. GREGORY PALAMA, Word for those who reassure themselves with piety, The Third of the latter, About the Holy Light, translated by Pr. Dumitru STANILOAE in *Filocalia*, vol. VII, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997
- [5] SF. GREGORY PALAMA, Confession of Orthodox Faith, translation by Gh. Badea, in *Theology and Life*, 1st Year (LXVII) New Series, no. 9-12, 1991.
- [6] SF. GREGORY PALAMA, The Decalogue of the Law of Christ, Ioan. I. Ică jr., in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XXX (1985), no. 3-4.
- [7] BOGHIU, Arch. Sofian, *The image of the Savior in iconography*, Byzantine Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001.
- [8] DELVOYE, Charles, *Byzantine Art*, vol. II, translation by Florica-Eugenia Condurachi, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1976.
- [9] DUMITRESCU, Sorin, *We and the Icon*, Anastasia Publishing House, 2010.
- [10] GAGU, Pr. Cristian, *Theology and Humanism in the Palaeologos Age*, Edited by the Lower Danube Episcopate, Galați, 2007.
- [11] GUSEV, Nikolai, DUNAEV, Mihail, KARELIN, Rafail, *Iconographic Guidebook*, vol. I, cared edition by L. S. Desartovici, translation from Russian by Evdochia Șavga, Sophia Publishing House / Bucharest, Orthodox Book Publishing House / Alexandria, 2007.
- [12] MEYENDORFF, John, Les débuts de la controverse hesychaste, in *Bizantion*, v. XXIII, 1953.
- [13] MEYENDORFF, John, *Introduction à l'étude de Gregoire Palama*, Édition du Seuil, Paris, 1959.
- [14] STANILOAE, Pr. Dumitru, *The Life and Teaching of Saint Gregory Palama*, Scripta Publishing House, Bucharest, 2 1993.
- [15] USPENSKY, Leonid, *The Theology of the Icon in the Orthodox Church*, introduction and translation by Teodor Baconsky, Anastasia Publishing House, 1994.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcfsare.2019.3.149-152>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### THE CONCEPT OF LIFE BETWEEN GADAMER AND RICOEUR

Arieşan Ramona Nicoleta (a)\*

(a) PhD. Candidate, Faculty of Philosophy and History, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,  
E-mail: [cashmerephotography@gmail.com](mailto:cashmerephotography@gmail.com)

#### *Abstract*

Life. Such a simple word. Yet, such powerful meanings. The purpose of this paper is to show how life is seen by two strong names that hold a leading place in our history and in our minds. It is important to know where we are standing, what points of view we can have as guidance and how we can shift from one to another in order to achieve the perspective that truly defines us. We might agree with what others have to say but at the same we might be in complete denying of what they have to say. And it is more than alright to be this way. Because it all comes down to life, as one sees it, as one perceives it, as one describes it, as one feels it. This life is filled with paradoxes, almost everywhere we look. But I believe, that in the end, this is the beauty of it. You can never get tired or get bored because there will always be something else to look forward to or to try and comprehend.

**Keywords:** life; perception; mind; knowledge; understanding;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of life can be seen from two different points of view. The first one is the fact that we only have one life and we should make the most out of it. This translates into giving it our all, living every second like it is the last one, not wanting to please everyone around us but needing to please ourselves because it is our life after all. The second one is the fact that this life ends with our deaths and we should be careful just how we live it, what we leave behind and maybe dare to think is there is another life and it will turn out to be...for us, for me, for you.

“In thinking through the connection between different ideas we see that the soul as a life principle is necessarily connected with an idea, namely, with the idea of life, an idea that cannot be reconciled with death.” (Hans-Georg Gadamer, 2001,55). This is the vision that Gadamer stood by. And it is the right one for him. But that does not mean that it is the only right one. It is a starting point, it is a belief and it is true, but it is definitely now the general truth. I cannot stand by this belief because I stand behind other principles and other visions.

But his perception opens up another path, a path towards immortality. What that means and how people react to it is another different level of understanding because we are talking about a field that has somehow managed to draw attention from different parts and now it is being discussed by people who have such opposite points of view over the entire concept of life and death, that it is truly amazing what conversations are floating away from the field of immortality and into this current world. But again, we are faced with both positive and negative perceptions.

“The most widespread interpretation that puts particular emphasis on this passage is that, ultimately, immortality has really only been proven for the idea of life, for the idea of the soul, not for the indestructibility of the discrete individual.”(Hans-Georg Gadamer, 2001,58). As far as this perception is regarded I am both in acceptance of it and in denying of what it stands for. Yes, we are faced with a lot of different interpretations even for the smallest things or thoughts, and yes they can have a great impact on how we perceive life but at the same time, they are just interpretations, they are not the real truth. We can be influenced by something only if we let that become stronger than us or stronger than our values.

Immortality is a way of living for some people or for some religions. It is not seen as the end of this human life and the begging of another one but as a continuous road, a continuous path that leads us through different spaces, different life styles, different ways of thinking, different ways of understanding and different ways of coming together with who we are in the present.

## **2. THE CONCEPT OF LIFE FOR GADAMER**

“...Gadamer’s work always manifests a deep fidelity to the continuing effort of thinking out of a sense of the finitude of understanding and the enigmas of factual life.” (Hans-Georg Gadamer, 1994,18). I tend to believe that Gadamer was blown away by life, in general, by how it can change one person, how it can change perceptions, how it can change cultures and just how much influence it has, overall. I stand behind this idea because it represents me in some ways. And I say that because I am also fighting to think outside the box, to go further into what everything means, to try and find out where it is all coming from.

“Philosophical hermeneutics displays the éclat of a life-affirming mode of thought that recognizes that the (tragic) endurance of its own negativity contains the promise of its redemption. It understands that the possibility of hermeneutic transcendence follows on the affirmative embrace of its own negativity.”(Nicholas Davey, 2006, p.15). And yet, we cannot always stay on top of the situation, we cannot always control it. Sometimes we are being controlled by it and that is alright. We deserve to have a break from time to time. But it is something hard to understand. We tend to want to be at our maximum level all the time and have and also share just good and positive energy. And this is just the problem. It is something that we cannot achieve as long as we hold on to a non-realistic thought which in time transforms into negative energy. We need to learn to let go of it or to embrace it, not fight it.

Life is just a complex word. It is made out of everything and nothing at the same time. We cannot touch it but we can see it somehow. We cannot pin-point it, yet it is somehow everywhere. “For Gadamer, hermeneutics embraces the whole of the human life-world as its practical understanding of itself in all of its dimensions (art, scientific reason, the ethical, law, philosophy, the social and political relations of everyday life).”( Bruce Krajewski, 2004, p.44). And just like that, he has captured everything in a few words and has made us realize the fact that all is nothing and vice-versa and that life, as we know it, is an untouchable concept that touches everyone.

## **3. THE CONCEPT OF LIFE FOR RICOEUR**

“Ricoeur approaches the relationship between narrative and life by examining the repertoire of existential resources that emplote themselves discursively.”( Gadamer and Ricoeur, 2011, p.122). It is a completely different point of view which emerges from a person that has managed to make his own way of seeing this life. And I can agree with this because I believe that it starts from the bottom, it starts to analyze how everything has come into place and by doing this, it gives me the feeling that I might be able to understand at least where some things are going to be or how they are going to evolve.

“Ricoeur's critical hermeneutical ethics proposes a view of the moral life that is oriented in praxis, formed in tradition and community, responsive to plurality and otherness, and grounded upon core human capacities for interpretation, dialogue, and imaginative moral mediation.”( Paul Ricoeur And Contemporary Moral Thought, 2002, p.3).

What is interesting is the fact that he has so much confidence in what people can do, in their abilities, is like he has never been afraid of putting his faith in human kind. And it is indeed something that I admire and even the type of person I aspire to be. Because this is the life, the real life. Doing your own part but also expecting the best from the people around you.

The philosophy behind Paul Ricoeur's way of thinking and of seeing life helps us understand the main importance of narrative or human life in at least three fundamental ways:

(1) “as foundation of temporal identity and in particular of the more or less coherent lifestory of everyone by which he or she understands himself or herself as agent and person;” .”( Paul Ricoeur And Contemporary Moral Thought, 2002, p.33).

- I believe that we tend to be temporal human beings just in a small part of our lives and that is because we want to be able to reach everything that we consider to be major in this current history, or at least the part that we are aware of.

(2) “as foundation of the ethical identity of a person, by offering narrative models of life that express intentions of the good life and give rise to ideas about liberation from evil and creation of happiness;” .”( Paul Ricoeur And Contemporary Moral Thought, 2002, p.33).

- this stand with the vision in which in order for us to evolve we must embrace who we really are. One must accept the way he is portrayed in this world in order to be able to cut everything that might hold him back. And in most of the cases that “everything” is just the negative part of his life. But it is not because he wants it to be there but because this is how life works: it is filled with both good, positive and bad, negative energies and feelings. This is why the concept of life is just like the concept of “yin and yang”.

(3) “as foundation of the identity of a society by offering ideologies that are in permanent tension with a utopian guide for common social life and law.” .”( Paul Ricoeur And Contemporary Moral Thought, 2002, p.33).

- I believe that Ricoeur's way of seeing life was no to go with everything that you are told to be real or true but to ask yourself where is everything coming from. Just by doing so, we can reach the real life, where we start to behave how we feel like and how we see as us put into this scenario. It is an interesting point of view and I can go along with it because it definitely resonates with who I am as a person and with this current life.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

I do not believe that the vision which Gadamer portrays over life is much different from Ricoeur's. And I stand by this because they both have original perspectives which are not very far from one-another. They both have a huge power in changing this life, although the way in which they can do such thing is very interesting. They do not have the physical power, yet they can reach many just with the words they put out a long time ago.

This life will always be a paradox because it is based on things that are yet to happen, on people that are yet to be born, on thoughts that are yet to be expressed, on laws that are yet to be implemented. But they both found ways to reach us and to show us how we can cope with this. It all starts from the bottom. It all starts with our own persons and our own selves. We are not the problem. In fact we are the solution. And although it might seem as a non-ending fight, we just need to have faith in human kind and in humanity seen as a general aspect.

In life, we need to learn how to trust others, just like Ricoeur said, we must learn how to let go of the negative parts and negative energies, just like Gadamer said, and I strongly believe that we must learn

to trust our own strengths and our own minds. We have different ways of seeing life, we have different fundamentals and different values but despite everything it is the same world in which we are living.

Don't you think that life is just something that we all have to deal with, at the same time and somehow in the same aspects? Because I do. And I sure that the answer to coping with this situation is faith. Just like the authors mentioned in this paper do. It all comes down to faith however one might perceive it. Faith comes in all shapes and sizes but this also how the impact of life is seen.

Due to everything that is going on we need to try and go back in time, just a little bit, in order to find some answers to how it all started and from there to find the answers on how to manage the current situation. The concept of life is seen as something far from the normal definition. It is something that covers everything that surrounds us, everything that we know or that we want to know, it fully covers our thoughts, dreams and desires. But it also makes us embrace it all because just like the two authors mentioned in the title believe, there is no way around it, just through it, and just with the help of others. In the end, life is what makes us who we really are.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- [1] Gadamer Hans-Georg, *The Beginning Of Philosophy*, New York, Continuum, 2001
- [2] Gadamer and Ricoeur, *Critical Horizons for Contemporary Hermeneutics*, Edited by Francis J. Mootz III and George H. Taylor, New York, Continuum, 2011
- [3] *Paul Ricoeur And Contemporary Moral Thought*, Edited By John Wall, William Schweiker, And W. David Hall, New York, Routledge, 2002
- [4] Gadamer Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger's way*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994, *Heidegger's way*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994
- [5] Davey Nicholas, *Unquiet Understanding Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2006
- [6] Krajewski Bruce, *Gadamer's Repercussions Reconsidering Philosophical Hermeneutics*, California, University of California Press, 2004



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## GOD-OF-THE-GAPS ARGUMENTS IN LIGHT OF LUTHER'S THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

Eugen Spierer (a)\*

(a) Independent researcher from Haifa, Israel, E-mail: [eugenspiierer@gmail.com](mailto:eugenspiierer@gmail.com)

### *Abstract*

Barbour suggests several possible relations between science and religion. I explain why these relations are inadequate and propose a different way of relating the two. Drawn from the cross theology of Martin Luther, it dictates that we frame science within an encompassing fideist system centered around the cross of Christ. I further describe why such a “Crucicentric Science” approach would solve the God-of-the-Gaps problem concerning quantum indeterminacies.

**Keywords:** Theology of the Cross; Quantum Indeterminacy; God-of-the-Gaps;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In his 2007 book, Ian Barbour suggests several possible relations between science and religion: conflict, independence, dialog, and integration (Barbour, 2007).<sup>1</sup> His four views assume no epistemological hierarchy between science and theology and present a fundamental symmetry among scientific and religious claims about reality. Barbour presents no overarching framework in which one system encompasses the other. He describes science and religion as self-sufficient worlds capable of existing alongside each other or integrated as equals.

In this paper, I contend that the theology of the cross finds Barbour’s approach erroneous and propose a different way of relating science and religion, one which draws its inspiration from the theology of Martin Luther (1483–1546). Luther would not have accepted the assumption of symmetry and lack of epistemological hierarchy between science and religion. Along with others, Luther is a “theologian of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Barbour’s four views are: conflict (suggesting science and religion contradict each other), independence (suggesting science and religion coexist without any relation), dialog (science and religion having a dialog about contentious issues) and integration (where science and religion are combined in a way which complements both)- Barbour, I. G. (2007), *When science meets religion*, New York: Harper San Francisco.

cross” who places the cross of Christ at the center of what man can know about God and declares all other means of gaining knowledge about creation as subservient to the superiority of the cross. This approach is a “crucicentric” one. Yet Luther does not dismiss scientific discoveries as irrelevant to the study of God’s creation. Building upon his theology, it is possible for us to construct a worldview establishing a strict hierarchy between theology and science which corresponds to his distinction between the theology of the cross and the theology of glory.

My approach places science as a corollary to theology. I intend to support this claim using a crucicentric analysis of quantum indeterminacy, its relation to theology as presented by William Pollard, and the assertion that God intervening in quantum potentialities constitutes a God-of-the-Gaps explanation. Barbour’s analysis of this issue (Barbour, 1972) will serve as a case study through which I will describe what I hold to be the theology of the cross position on the correct hierarchical relation between science and religion.

Our discussion will start with a very brief introduction to the epistemological strands of Luther’s theology of the cross, after which I will present a brief introduction to quantum indeterminacy. These two sections will form the background necessary for an analysis of quantum indeterminacy, its theological explanation, and the God-of-the-Gaps rebuttal thereof which I will present in the third section.

## 2. LUTHER’S THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

“Cross theology” is the name given to a succession of ideas conveyed by various theologians since the days of Paul the Apostle. Their unifying theme emphasizes the centrality of the cross and crucifixion of Christ for human redemption and knowledge of the Divine. Its leading proponents were Paul, Athanasius and especially Luther, who consolidated its structure into a coherent theological system in his Heidelberg disputation.

Luther’s theology of the cross distinguishes between two types of theologians: those of the cross and those of glory. The theologian of the cross is someone who sees “what is visible of God through suffering and the cross” (Luther, 1518; McGrath, 2011). According to Luther, the theologian of “glory” does the exact opposite by deducing knowledge of God from the creature itself. Luther presents the theologian of glory as someone who “sees and speaks of God’s glorious manifestation among the heathen, how His invisible nature can be known from the things which are visible and how He is present and powerful in all things everywhere.” This contradicts the theologian of the cross who “teaches that punishments, crosses [that of Christ and that of the creature], and death are the most precious treasury of all.” (Pelikan, 1955)

The theologian of glory looks at God with the eyes of intellect; he learns through fundamental methodologies that we can gain knowledge of God speculatively. The theologian of the cross, however, looks at God through faith and learns from the cross that God reveals knowledge of himself solely through the crucified Christ (McGrath, 2011). Luther concludes that it is the theologian of the cross who is ultimately wise and that the methodology employed by the theologian of glory produces the image of a blind creator (McGrath, 2011; Bradbury, 2011).

For the theologian of the cross, understanding the meaning of the cross is always predicated upon faith. McGrath notes that for Luther *Crux Sola* is *Sola Fide*: “through faith alone can the significance of the cross be perceived.” Faith is the ability to see beyond what is visible to the eyes and perceive that which lies further, in the realm of *Invisibilia* (Mcgrath, 2011). McGrath adds that that is precisely the reason why empirical verification is useless in the case of faith - fideistic conclusions will always negate those reached by relying solely on reality as perceived by the senses.

God’s hidden revelation in the cross defies reason, and we should regard it as a mystery (Mcgrath, 2011, Quoting from Luthers Werke). Any authentic epistemological knowledge about God is, for Luther, only asserted and verified based on faith in Christ and the crucifixion, and is not a system of rationally verifiable axioms (Dalferth, 1982).



### 3. ANTHROPOCENTRIC METHODOLOGIES

A significant point of crucicentric theology is its rejection of all anthropocentric methods of gaining knowledge of God. The ability to gain knowledge of God solely through the cross excludes all other means of attempting to arrive at such knowledge. The creature is without an innate capacity to understand what God alone can fathom. When humanity attempts to arrive at knowledge of God using methods which do not heed the centrality of the cross, it establishes itself as the starting point for such knowledge and renders it flawed and anthropocentric.

What follows is a presentation of the relevant methodologies which the crucicentric theologians (including Luther) have refused to accept as legitimate for gaining knowledge of God:

Crucicentric point 1: Science ("Natural Theologies") is referred to by Luther as methods "seeking God from around the cross" rather than "through the cross of Christ." Knowledge of this kind imprisons its subject within the confines of human speculative capacity and limits it to the restricted scope of human reason.

Luther does not dismiss science entirely. He agrees that the natural world can point to the nature of God, but insists that relying on it for the full knowledge of God rather than the suffering and the cross of Christ would be foolish and constitute being blinded by pride (Luther, 1518). Creation cannot reveal the Creator - only He can reveal Himself. Von Loewenich notes that "There is no direct knowledge of God for man." (Loewenich Von, 1982) The knowledge conveyed by the cross is not just additional knowledge alongside that from other sources. Instead, it is the only real source of knowledge about the Divine. Any other method of acquiring such knowledge has to conform to and accept the cross's epistemic superiority.

Crucicentric point 2: Luther also rejects the authority of human reason itself. Reason cannot comprehend that which alone knows itself. Reason predicts its self-finitude by trying to achieve that which can only be known by the infinite mind of God. If humans were able to perceive that which only the mind of God can fathom, an inner contradiction would occur: The creaturely perception is not equipped to fathom that which only God can know. The idea that reason is an efficient tool for understanding divine reality leads Luther to a *reductio ad absurdum* argument.

Despite that, we should not reject human reason. Luther did believe it to be a useful tool in apprehending God's creation, as long as we do not regard it as the primary tool for understanding the Divine. Science and logic can be useful tools for developing new technologies and *ad hoc* theories about the universe, as long as these do not take the place of the cross of Christ in understanding the world's ultimate function and purpose. Furthermore, science and philosophy cannot dictate the theological method. The opposite is, however, legitimate for Luther: Theology is the queen of philosophy (science) as it can use the latter's methods and axioms at its discretion.

#### God's Revelation at the Cross

*"For God, who said 'Let light shine out of darkness' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6.)*

Inspired by this verse, the crucicentric theologians believed God created man in order to know his creator intimately. They believed the cross and suffering of Christ reveal God and that this revelation has certain specific characteristics:

Crucicentric point 3: Wisdom versus foolishness. The crucicentric theologians described the dichotomous differentiation between wisdom and foolishness in order for it to function as a tool emphasizing elements which are coherent within the crucicentric worldview and dismissing those elements which are inconsistent with it. Luther believed the cross of Christ manifests divine wisdom and also functions as a revelatory mechanism inappropriable by humankind. He also believed knowledge held by humankind about reality is inferior to the one emanating from and originating in the cross of Christ, essentially making divine wisdom antithetical to the "foolish" wisdom held by humanity.

Crucicentric point 4: God is both hidden and revealed at the cross. The cross is where suffering and humiliation abound, and it is also the site where God is most revealed. Luther emphasizes that the

degradation and suffering on the cross reveal God Himself and not a symbol or metaphor for God as humanity would prefer to believe. For in its vanity and adoration of materialism, humanity imagines a god like itself (Bradbury 2011). The revealed God manifests at the cross along with the hidden God: He is a being whose will and plans will always be unbeknownst to man. These revealed and hidden dichotomous natures co-exist at the cross.

Crucicentric point 5: The epistemological priority of the cross. God chooses to convey information of Himself primarily through the cross of Christ. The reasons for that are (McGrath, 2011):

A. The creature could not survive a full disclosure of the nature of God. Recalling the biblical story of Moses, the cross functions as “God’s back” which God revealed to Moses (Exodus 34:6.). God alone can know who and what God is. This knowledge cannot be comprehended naturally by the creature, but only as God bestows it upon him.

B. The true theologian needs to depend upon God for the location of divine disclosure. The cross is “the final, decisive and normative locus of the revelation of God.”(McGrath, 1987) Who Christ is and how the cross is to be understood constitute the message from the cross which is to receive precedence over all other Christian events, including Christ's resurrection and incarnation.

To conclude this summary of the theology of the cross, Luther asserts that the theologian who does not wish to look at God through the cross, but instead circles the cross and tries to look at the glory of God directly, draws an analogy of God upon himself and falsely self-appropriates divine attributes. Such a theologian tries to reduce God to the level of the creature (Bradbury, 2011). He states that the true theologian looks at God through the cross of Christ and that that is the only way to do so - through the cruciform lens. The cross tells us of God, of His creature and the relation between them through the crucified Christ. The theology of the cross stands at the center of all theologies wishing to describe God’s revelation honestly, and if Christian thought ignores the demands of the cross, it becomes a theology of glory (Bradbury, 2011).

Lastly, our discussion of Luther’s theology of the cross emphasizes two motifs which are abundantly present: The glory of God as contrasted with the ingloriousness of the creature and the epistemological principle according to which only God can know Himself in such a way as to be able to disclose His nature to the fullest. These two principles intertwine to accentuate the cross being the only place able to disclose real knowledge of God and that its reception is contingent upon the recipient’s faith.

I now turn to a brief introduction to the topic of quantum indeterminacy. By explaining this phenomenon using God’s providence, theologians have integrated theology into the scientific rhetoric in a way which, I contend, is incongruent with the theology of the cross.

#### **4. QUANTUM INDETERMINACY**

Classical Newtonian physics has always described a mundanely deterministic world: scientists thought that they could calculate and describe any future state of a system based on its present condition. Quantum physics, however, describes a much different reality. It was Erwin Schroedinger who described the wave function during the 1920s. Schroedinger’s function did not describe the exact location and trajectory of an electron with any precision but allowed for probabilities thereof. Physicists could calculate the chances of finding any specific location and momentum of an electron at any point in time.

Schroedinger’s equation describes probability waves corresponding to a large number of observations and presents the movement and nature of elementary particles as hazy and uncertain. We cannot observe the atomic and subatomic particles the same way we observe macroscopic entities, and we cannot describe their properties the way we describe everyday properties. When using concepts drawn from Newtonian physics such as space, time, and causality - those particles cannot even be coherently described.

In 1927 the uncertainty principle was articulated by the German physicist Werner Heisenberg. The principle states a fundamental limit to the accuracy with which the scientist can know specific pairs of physical properties of elementary particles, for example, their position and momentum. The more

accurately we measure a particle's position, the less accurately we can know its momentum, and vice versa (Barbour, 2007).

Several assumptions exist about the source of this indeterminacy. Einstein, Planck, and Bohm claimed this uncertainty is but a construct of our human mind and is caused by temporary human ignorance, which will be resolved in the future when we discover more precise laws (Barbour, 1972). Bohr and others believed the nature of our experiments causes these perceived indeterminacies and considered this to be an inherent flaw forever forbidding us from attaining full knowledge of our subatomic research subjects (Barbour, 1972).

The third option and the one I will work with in this paper assumes quantum indeterminacy to be a part of nature; It claims nature itself is indeterminate, and we are observing this indeterminacy in our experiments. This approach tells us that subatomic particles are very different creatures from what we know in our daily life (Barbour, 1972). It is not just a matter of the observer disturbing the natural system, but the natural system itself is indeterminate and functions without a strict causal relationship between events. When a human observer measures the system, he brings into actuality values of position and trajectory, which up until that point were in a state of uncertainty. The observer does not find out values which were theretofore precise but unknown. Instead, the observer's measurement becomes a part of the event's history by forcing one of the many potentialities into being (Barbour, 1972).

According to this view, classical causation does not exist. The future is not unknown, but undecided. It consists of a large number of possible outcomes, determined by the possibilities awarded to it by the past and chance alone. The potentiality of states is ontological, objective, and exists at every single moment. It is not just a construct of the human mind.

### **God and Indeterminacy**

Where does God fit into this scheme of reality? How does God influence physical events? Does His influence violate any physical laws? The priest and physicist William Pollard (1911–1989) tried to combine quantum indeterminacy with God's providence.

Pollard utilizes the biblical notion of providence: The bible describes events which are believed to have occurred in a manner responsive to God's will. This assertion does not contradict science's claim that repeatable events have a certain probability of occurring. Any such event occurs according to a certain probability as well as according to God's will. A world functioning this way can be studied by science and described by it (Pollard, 1959).

A common mistake is to think of providence as an extra-natural "spiritual" force acting on reality by changing the probability rate of events to make some more probable than others. This influence is akin to a natural force exerting causal physical pressure upon reality. Pollard claims that such a notion of divine intervention would be unbiblical (Pollard, 1959). He suggests that it is God who actualizes one among a set of alternative potentialities (Barbour, 1972), thus determining for a given event what its following event will be. Through this mechanism, God manifests His providence in the world in a manner which is not visible to scientific measurement and does not violate any natural laws. Scientists who study this phenomenon cannot find an explanation of why any specific outcome among the natural possibilities is actualized. They call it "chance." (Barbour, 1972) By actualizing numerous outcomes, God can influence the unfolding of events on the macroscopic scale as well. According to Pollard, we know those events as miracles of God's doing, for example creation, incarnation, and resurrection (Pollard, 1959).

### **The God-of-the-Gaps Argument**

Scientists sometimes refer to this description of God's intervention in quantum potentialities as a God-of-the-Gaps explanation. Such explanations are said to invoke God as a cause of phenomena we do not yet understand. We assume these phenomena will, in time, be explainable as our scientific understanding improves (Russel, 2009). The underlying claim is that by explaining unexplained processes in the world as God's work, we rid ourselves of the responsibility of finding a scientific, causal explanation of a given phenomenon and are mistakenly content with filling gaps in the theory by the belief that God wills events into being as observed.

I will claim that it is not the causal relation we need to explain by bringing God into the figurative equation. What we should do is explain God's maintaining work in the world using the observed phenomena; we should incorporate reality as we find it into God's work as we believe He exercises it. In effect, it is not theology which we should use in order to fill gaps in scientific understanding, but science should be used to fill gaps in theological understanding. I will elaborate upon this principle using Luther's cross theology and its unique outlook, as well as the "God-of-the-Gaps" argument which has been used to refer to the unsolved question of why any specific quantum potentiality is actualized.

## **5. CONCLUSION - A CRUCICENTRIC APPROACH TO SCIENCE AND RELIGION**

Having described the matters at hand, namely Luther's theology of the cross and the theological explanation of observed quantum indeterminacy, I now turn to an analysis of the relation between science and religion as deemed proper by Luther's crucicentric theology. I will do this by implementing the boundaries of human thought, as described by Luther in points 1 and 2, upon assertions made by contemporary science. I will also describe the place science should take within crucicentric thought according to points 3, 4 and 5 in order for it to be a meaningful contributor to an encompassing theological worldview. Crucicentric theology, as an overarching system, will be demonstrated using a refutation of the God-of-the-Gaps argument described in the last section. I will show that the God-of-the-Gaps argument is void, for its emphasis upon God filling gaps in scientific knowledge is a misunderstanding of the proper relationship between religion and science.

As mentioned earlier, Ian Barbour's four views relating science to religion are conflict, independence, dialog, and integration. These views assume no system is more central than the other and offers several ways of relating the claims made by one system with those made by the other. No hierarchical epistemic authority is suggested, meaning no system is considered to be "more true" than the other. Whenever we encounter claims about creation or reality, we are to turn to one of the suggested ways offered by Barbour in order to reconcile different claims about the world.

Such a reconciliatory method would be foolish when viewed through a worldview based upon the theology of the cross, for it assumes man to be a worthy arbitrator able to distinguish between truthfulness of systems at least one of which does not speak of the cross of Christ. Barbour's supposed epistemic equivalency constitutes an anthropocentric viewpoint which claims a revelatory mechanism to be found in a human-made system, negating the crucicentric principle stating no such system is appropriable by man (crucicentric points 3 and 5).

The crucicentric worldview suggests that religion is an encompassing system whereby it becomes the prime system revealing God and His creation through faith in Christ. Science should be secondary to it and, while having much merit, only used to point to God and not to unravel knowledge of The Divine or His handiwork. Luther claims philosophy (science) seeks God from around the cross, meaning science does not heed the revelatory power of the crucified Christ and instead relies on human-centered methods of gaining supposed knowledge. Science thus imprisoning man's thought within the confines of his limited reasoning capacity (crucicentric point 1).

Human reason cannot comprehend that which only God can (crucicentric point 2). Science is based on human reasoning and is therefore ill-equipped to fathom the mysteries of creation. Its

explanatory power is limited to the confines of human perception. Can one perceive that which is beyond perception? All one can have is an awareness of the fact that some matters lie beyond one's perceptive abilities. Relying on human perception for the understanding of the world around us is deemed foolish by Luther for precisely this reason.

Despite science being anthropocentric, it can still point to the glory of God. In order for science to look at God through the cross, it needs to be an integral part of a religious mode of thought. It should be a part of a more extensive, encompassing system predicated upon faith. According to Luther's crucicentric theology, God induces faith; Faith is not inherent to the believer and is, therefore, a reliable foundation for thought. Such science would still be a tool for gaining knowledge of creation, but now it would hold its findings in the perspective of the cross of Christ. It would frame its findings by an overarching fideist system. Such a frame of thought would allow it to refer to reality as God's creation, to look at God "through the cross" and not "from around the cross." Science would then constitute a wise system, rather than a foolish one as described by Luther (crucicentric point 3). I shall call such science by the name "Crucicentric Science."

By holding both science and religion to be epistemologically equivalent, Barbour negates the centrality of the cross for human knowledge of the Divine and His creation. This equivalency lies in contradiction to Luther's views about the centrality of the cross as an instrument of God's revealedness (crucicentric point 4). Science, as Barbour describes it, does not acknowledge the limits of anthropocentric understanding and ignores the fact that solely God can disclose knowledge of God and His Creation. Crucicentric science, on the other hand, heeds the message from the cross and redirects its efforts without changing its methodology. It acknowledges the primacy of the cross and sees all of its findings, achieved using the scientific method, as provisional results to be incorporated into God's revelation at the cross.

I now turn to the claim that God intervening with quantum potentialities is a God-of-the-Gaps argument. This argument claims that bringing God into quantum physics fills an area where knowledge is still missing - a gap. It subordinates God to a scientific explanation and raises the latter to the position of the primary encompassing system of thought where God needs to fit in. This claim ignores the centrality of the cross as dictated by Luther (crucicentric point 5).

According to crucicentric science, the God-of-the-Gaps argument used in this case is a foolish claim. A wiser claim would be that scientists discovered a natural mechanism of uncertainty and need to incorporate it into religious dogma with the cross at its center. God's control of quantum potentialities is therefore no longer an attempt at delegating unexplained phenomena to an unknown source, but assigning scientific findings to what we believe to be God's work.

The findings of crucicentric science fill a gap in our understanding of the work of God. Such an understanding can never be completed by science alone because, according to the theology of the cross, only faith can bring us closer to knowledge of God and faith's prime locus of revelation can only be the cross of Christ.

Such a view constitutes a type of religious counter-apologetics. It denies the need for Christian self-justification in the face of science by claiming science to be a subordinate of religion. Science needs to be incorporated into religion and not vice versa, thus nullifying the need for an apologetic religion striving to "elevate" itself to scientific epistemological acceptance. Its usefulness lies in drawing a guiding line for those scientists who struggle with their religious beliefs by presenting their scientific work as highly supportive of their religious views. We cannot even pose the problem of contradiction between scientific and religious worldviews since no such contradiction is possible: everything found by science is a part of God's created universe, and any apparent contradiction has to originate in the most fallible elements in the system, namely human logic and anthropocentric misunderstanding.

Applying the notion of crucicentric science to Pollard's ideas about God intervening in quantum potentialities leads to a reassessment of the findings of quantum physics. Given the indeterminacy physicists have found in nature, we can conclude that God has created the world we see around us, along with its indeterminacy. The question we need to ask is, why did He create those indeterminacies in the

first place? The soteriological implications of such a question are beyond the scope of this paper. We can only assume that God created quantum indeterminacy as a mechanism facilitating God's intervention in historical events. By favoring specific quantum potentialities, which lead to certain macroscopic outcomes, God could have brought into being events described by the bible. Such is Pollard's position when he speaks of biblical time (Pollard, 1959).

I present this view as an example of utilizing scientific findings for a better understanding of God's work in the world. Of course, we can extrapolate different views for any given scientific detail, and this can prove a ripe breeding ground for further discussion about God's providence. As science advances, it can analyze newly found phenomena in such a way as to try and build a coherent worldview describing God's revelation per crucicentric theology.

To conclude, what we should do is to offer a possible answer based upon scientific understanding to the question of how God intervened in reality throughout human history. We do this instead of offering an answer based upon Christian understanding to the question of how individual potentialities are actualized. The difference between these two approaches is that the first incorporates scientific knowledge into a religious worldview, while the latter incorporates a religious worldview into the answer to a scientific question. Opponents accuse adherents of the second approach of using the God-of-the-Gaps argument. Those opponents cannot similarly accuse adherents of the first question which spawns from the emphases put forward by Luther in his theology of the cross.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- [1] Barbour, I. G. (1972). *Issues in science and religion*. London, 299-429.
- [2] Barbour, I. G. (2007). *When science meets religion*. New York: Harper San Francisco, chapters 1-3.
- [3] Bradbury, R., & Rae, M. (2011). *Cross theology: the classical theologia crucis and Karl Barth's modern theology of the cross*. Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 36-63.
- [4] Dalferth, I. (1982). The Visible and the Invisible: Luther's Legacy of a Theological Theology. *England and Germany: Studies in Theological Diplomacy*, S. W. Sykes. Frankfurt: Lang, 24.
- [5] Loewenich, W. von. (1982). *Luther's theology of the cross*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 27.
- [6] Luther. (1518). Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences. Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/274>, Thesis 20.
- [7] Luther, M. (1883). *D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar: Böhlau, 56.48.18–24 and 5.84.40.
- [8] Luther, M., Pelikan, J. (1955). *Luther's Works*. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 31:225f.
- [9] McGrath, A. E. (1987). *The enigma of the cross*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 107.
- [10] McGrath, A. E. (2011). *Luther's theology of the cross: Martin Luther's theological breakthrough*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 174-214.
- [11] Pollard, W. G. (1959). *Chance and providence: God's action in a world governed by scientific law*. London: Faber and Faber, 94-117.
- [12] Russell, R. J. (2009). Chapter Ten. Divine Action And Quantum Mechanics: A Fresh Assessment. *Philosophy, Science and Divine Action*. doi: 10.1163/ej.9789004177871.i-446.70, 354.



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### SPECIFIC TOOLS OF ACTING: THE CONCEPT – A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACHING CHARACTERS

Florin Toma (a)\*

(a) Senior Lecturer, Ph.D., Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: tomanflorin@yahoo.com,

#### *Abstract*

Actors are creators. They live on the stage and bring their own world with them. Sometimes, actors can live under the impression that the inner world of a part is so far away from their personal experience that there is no other access path towards the core of the character than creating a substitute, a model that would be convincing enough, so that, through imitation, reproduction and simulation of reality, they might go through with the scene. Some others might think that the simplest way to approach a part is to only focus on the lines, enveloping themselves in the melody, in an incantation of sorts, thus making the text, who had in the meanwhile become unclear, to surround them with a kind of fog that gives them the feeling they experience something real, an actual state. Some other times it happens that actors find physical actions to fill their own voids. It is a way to hide, and the actions are actually useless, and non-artistic. To find the way to a character one needs, first of all, to discover and understand the logical mechanism it is built upon, that makes a character what it is.

**Keywords:** actor; character; concept; otherness; vulnerability potential; process;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Theatre, as a social and cultural phenomenon of great aesthetic scope, focuses on human nature, on man “re-found in its superior humanity” (Cojar Ion, 1998, 5), including on the complexity of the creative personality which gives people the “capacity to imagine answers to problems, to find novel and original solutions, to see the same things as everybody, but, nevertheless, to think of something different” (Limbos Edouard, 1990, 10).

In his book, *A Poetics of the Actor’s Art*, professor Ion Cojar considers acting as a specific way of thinking, first of all, and, secondly, as a modality of “doing” (Cojar Ion, 1998, 39), executing something. At the basis of the actor’s typical creation process there is a specific logical mechanism. Starting from the definition of the actor’s art given by the great theatre pedagogist, it can be concluded that creating a character implies building a complex structure, in order to reach a character psychology that would trigger the transformation of each actor into a character.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the process of creation, the actor is both an instrument and a instrumentalist, and his/her main task is to update, to bring to life what is only a possibility, or, better said, the dormant virtual potential from the sphere of his/her own creative personality. Michael Cehov, another great theatre practitioner, has the same vision on the creative role of artists: “the true task of a creative actor is not to simply create the outer appearance of life, but to interpret life in all its aspects and with all its depth, to show what is underneath life phenomena, to let spectators see beyond life angles and meanings.” (Cehov Michael, 2013, 4).

Throughout their relation with dramatic texts and under the circumstances imposed by the author, creative actors can actually “live” on stage only by establishing a direct and extremely personal connection with it. The situation on stage must be embraced by actors at a human level first, this personal approach facilitating the transition from the conventional level to the psychological one. Characters imagined by playwrights are purely fictional, a shapeless material, “a potential model communicated through literal signs, so they are but a semiotic system. For them to become a material, living systems, these systems have to be created, imagined, and brought into existence.” (Cojar Ion, 1998, 45). Consequently, actors are the living elements that animate fiction and transform it into processual-objective reality, which leads to the idea that acting is also “in a direct and strict relation with coming into being, as well as with transformation” (Darie Bogdana, 2015, 149).

A genuine creating process can only take place when actors use “their own tools for thinking and feeling, their entire sensory system, through a transfer of concepts from them to the character, by means of substitution imagination” (Cojar Ion, 1998, 32). It is only possible to find an alter ego hidden in the core fibre of the actor’s personality once the actor assumes the life concept of the character, thus making the character come to life in front of the audience, who witnesses a psychological reality that can carry deep meanings. Professor Ion Cojar believes that all characters are within each of us, and that actors become characters by substitution, following the process of assuming the concept, or, to put it otherwise, the logical mechanism specific to the character, which also establishes the character’s action coordinates.

## 3. STAGE PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS – ACTING CONTEXT

The path taken by actors during the creation process might lead to two different, but perfectly valid directions: from the conscious to the unconscious and the other way around. The actor’s artistic undertaking of discovering or configuring the character involves a set of “rational elements, direct observations of reality, logical thinking, but also instinct, native empathic inclination, and strong intuition typical for the organic creative nature” (Niculescu Radu, 2004, 213). The conscious approach of drama is guided by the stage performance parameters of the situation proposed by the author: where? when? what? why? which together form the context of the who and the how of on-stage actions. Viola Spolin, creator of theatre games, proposes in her book, *Improvisation for Theatre*, various exercises (Spolin, Viola, 2008, pp.173-213) through which actors train their abilities and their imagination in connection to these theatre parameters. “On stage, one has to act. Action, and activity stand at the basis of drama, of acting... Therefore, drama performed on stage is action taking place in front of our eyes, and actors on stage become characters” (Stanislavski K. S, 2013, 94) explains great Stanislavski, who warns that the actions initiated by actors, who think and feel at the same time (reason and feeling / conscious and subconscious), must also happen on the inside, not only on the outside. Who and how are the parameters that make the difference between a genuine actor and an actor who imitates, mimes the action on stage. Who shows the identity of the character, while how refers to its way of acting. On-stage imitation always appears following the limitation of the acting creation process to the how, which makes the actor pay attention to himself / herself, to the way he/she is perceived by the audience, thus cancelling the status of genuine creator which was meant to become somebody else starting from who he/she is.

The founding principle of acting is given by the complex nature of the actor, which, during on-stage creation, can access multiple identities. If the actor’s focus is on himself / herself, his/her presence on stage will not draw the spectator’s attention, because the latter is only interested in the actor while acting, facing a real problem and investing his/her own physical, psychic and emotional resources to solve it. Starting from the idea that the purpose of creative acting is to be and to do (the actor undertakes an identity on behalf of which he/she acts), not to show (the actor composes himself / herself in front of the



audience in order to please the audience at any cost, and the problem to be solved on stage becomes a secondary purpose), it is important to tackle what could support actors in their creative process, attempting not to become a form without substance.

Given the above, we could say that theatrical performance and characters that lack “human touch” are dead ends. Games are ways through which actors can release their dormant virtual potential, materialize the vital principles of life, the multiple possibilities that lie inside and, at the same time, trigger authentic experiences; however, games cannot exist without rules, creation cannot appear when things are left at random. In order to achieve a genuine creation process, such process must take place within certain well-established parameters that would offer actors clarity in understanding the situation and psychology of the characters. Actors gain freedom to improvise, search and discover when they precisely and clearly understand the situation, and the acting options are in accordance with the situation and character psychology. “Nothing cannot be experienced, only a situation can be experienced. But what we don’t know and we don’t have to ask is how to do what is to be done. If we knew how, the situation would no longer be a problem, would no longer be drama, and the reason for the exercise would be gone. The answer to how is actually the result of the experiment... improvisation would have to consider the more complex parameters, starting with the answer to who – referring to the character” (Gâlea Marius, 2002, 14). An authentic creation process cannot take place without the man behind the actor; otherwise, without this organic component, imposture follows.

#### **4. THE CONCEPT – TRIGGER OF OTHERNESS**

In front of such challenges, actors need specific tools in order to authentically act on stage. During the process of understanding and assuming the character, the concept is a key element, which can solve many of the problems encountered by actors during the character creation process. As a work instrument for the art of acting, the concept functions as a compass in the attempt to understand and approach a dramatic character, starting from the information provided by the author, corroborated with the life experience and cultural background of the character, thus facilitating the transition from the private person to somebody else / the other, which is hidden and must be revealed.

All thoughts, actions, intentions and decisions of a character throughout the life imagined by the playwright can be related to a certain view on the world. The basic source lies in the inner value scale of the actor, which changes depending on the circumstances imposed by the dramatic text: if for the actor per se the governing principle is correctness and honesty, for the character (somebody else / the other) the value scale may be governed by falsehood and dishonesty. This example shows how a person might appear different through a simple reversal of the defining elements which are part of the perception filter for the environment. The actions and behaviours of an individual are, most of the times, keys to his/her nature, indirectly showing who he/she is, the evaluation of the others being first based on facts and behaviour and only then on words. Knowing a person on the outside, through his/her interactions with other people, precedes deeper inner knowledge. The conclusions drawn following such an evaluation are meant to define a person. For the analysis to go beyond the shallow level, actors have the task to place themselves at the core of the studied system, which is the role, the character.

The concept is the working tool that helps actors to explore the depths of a character’s inner life, in order to discover his / her primary purpose, the engine that drives him / her and significantly defines him / her in contrast to other characters. Why does he/she think, act and speak the way he / she does? is a question aiming to find an answer to the ultimate question: who is the character.

The concept is underlain by social and personal behaviour, life options, belief system, contradictions, but also by fears which might lead to paradoxes. The character’s energy also resides in the concept, which includes the character’s supreme goal. The value of a concept is, at the same time, given by how much is actor creativity stimulated, by its quality to set things in motion in order to achieve the end goal. The more energy an actor invests for his / her defining aspirations and desires in order to reach the ultimate goal, the higher the level of character assumption, and the vulnerability potential, the capacity to change at psychosomatic level will be activated. The personal involvement of the actor in the situation proposed, according to the Stanislavskian principle regarding the organic unity between the actor’s psychic and the physical life, brings into focus the human factor. Only by using the full “vulnerability potential” as a biopsychosocial unity shall the actor be able to perform within the

boundaries of his/her own humanity; only by approaching the “human side” shall the proper grounds for otherness be laid, and the personal subject as a source of originality and depth made concrete. Professor Ion Cojar highlights that actors function on a different type of logic, different from the classic, binary one, and he believes that acting creative phenomena cannot be reduced to “either reason, or feeling” (Diderot Denis, 1957, 15), as stated by Diderot, but involve both to equal extent and at the same time. This specific logical mechanism (which allows reason and feeling to co-exist in artistic creations), namely character mentality, is actually a concept, a founding principle that drives thinking and, consequently, a person’s behaviour, the assumed character’s way of thinking, a dynamic element capable of inciting substitutive imagination, meaning the actor’s specific way of being creative.

In the attempt to discover and synthesize the Concept in a single phrase that would capture the character’s essence, actors encounter another type of obstacle. The road to the character will not be always easy, because it will hide behind appearances and paradoxes, as it is the case with every human being permanently marked by contradictions: characters will say one thing and mean another. Most of the times, the intimate creed of a person is not directly displayed for the world to see, but can be guessed. Therefore, characters must not be taken at their word, and, following a vertical analysis, it results that they do not reveal their innermost desires to the other characters casually. When characters borrow the actors’ mentality, governed by various defence mechanisms meant to hide their own sensibilities and vulnerabilities, attempting to hide their ultimate goal, they will function according to the same type of human process. The concept must be hidden by the actor, who becomes the character’s lawyer, thus assuming all motivations standing at the basis of his / her behaviour. Actors become characters because they support the characters’ actions and ideas in the confrontation with other dramatic partners. Throughout the creation process, the actor substitutes the character, lending his / her body and thinking (uses his/her spirit in the interest of character’s conceptions), so that, finally, theatre conventions are transformed into a processual-objective reality.

The concept is the catalyst standing at the basis of a new reality. The strategies and solutions to satisfy the character’s desires and needs originate in the actor, who uses its inner resources to this purpose. Without the actual involvement of the actor, of the living element, giving it the human touch (including adding mystery), the concept, like the character (lifeless literary fiction), remains an abstract and sterile notion incapable of generating genuine life on stage.

## **5. GENUINE ART AND THE PROCESSUALITY OF THINKING**

Dramatic text, made of various stimuli, becomes a living system only when the relation between the actor and the text is established at all levels of personality and it becomes a real, objective action. The importance of the plot fades in front of the events through which the actor goes through. Actors test by live experimenting the way to the truth. Genuine art means that the actor gives himself / herself to the characters, living his / her own feeling which correspond to the character’s; otherwise, “no real creation can exist where there is no sensation of one’s live feelings, analogous to the character’s” (Stanislavski K.S, 2013, 215) as Stanislavski said.

Consequently, actors are encouraged to search within themselves the feelings befitting the part, instead of changing it, falsifying it by creating the character after their own image. The same indication is given by Lucia Sturza Bulandra: “the more we are able to strip of our own personality in front of a study, the more clearly it will succeed for our mind” (Sturza Bulandra Lucia, 1962, 261). Basically, the great actress does not say that actors should lose their personality, but advises an approach lacking prejudice, fixed formulas, and recipes. The character revelation by the discovery of the whole through a defining feature must start from a “naivety” state, which could be called intuition of the character, referring to a view inside the studied system that implies deductive knowledge and analysis.

At this point, we come back to what the great theatre teachers say about the actor’s ability to understand. According to Stanislavski’s perspective, actors must, before all, observe, and afterwards filter through their own mind the meaning of the phenomena they observe, they must process it in order to use it. Consequently, on-stage performance is structured, in his opinion, as follows: observation → understanding → processing. Starting from these three stages of the process, Viola Spolia and Ion Cojar bring clarification aiming to result in a better understanding of the thinking process: taking over / coping ; processing; option and action.

Actors receive information, the stimulus from the environment or the partner, process the meaning of such information, which might generate several responses; actors may choose among these responses the one they consider necessary, and, in the end, they act. Without this psychological process, there can be no authentic creation and life in theatre, because “no on-stage creation is possible by simply uttering the words” (I.A.T.C.-Arta actorului, 1972, 126). Theatre is grounded on conflict, tensed clashes of will between partners with opposing goals and ideas, and thinking is exposed through dialogue, it is interrelational. For the psychological process (psychic events, either rational, or irrational, metabolic exchanges taking place in the depths of human beings) resulting from stage interactions to be spontaneous and continuous, the dialogue between actors must be coherent, logic, that is it must comply with “all the rules of a real dialogue: X says (verbal action), Y listens, processes the information received, chooses depending on the concept and his / her interests and acts accordingly, both verbally and physically” (Bețiu Mihaela, 2017, 84). The concept acts in the process area where the Option is - the step when actors choose to respond to a stimulus received according to the mental grid given by the concept. This is where the character comes in, through the assumption of a different perspective over the world, in accordance with the character’s mentality, which may be similar or, paradoxically, completely different from the actor’s.

An interesting circumstance might arise when the actor, as a private person, is proud, choleric, aggressive, but has to play a character with an impeccable calm, forgiving and tolerant in relation to other people. The main danger in such cases is the fact that the actor will be tempted to fake the behaviour, to use a known pattern or to use behavioural clichés related to “nice people”. However, the result will be an empty carrier, a general approach of a character type, an “artistic intention” that lacks authenticity and plausibility, because imitation does not mean character assumption, or organic behaviour determined by due process. In the example presented above, the concept (which works according to the principle explained by professor Ion Cojar “only by being myself can other people become possible inside me”) helps actors throughout the entire process of creation to distinguish between the attempt of substitution through assumption and the temptation to use imitation.

By means of this important tool, actors start developing the character from known information toward the information to be discovered. Only by using the assumption first on oneself can one assume the dimensions of the other, who one aims to become, explains professor Ion Cojar. It is obvious that the actor cannot radically and irrevocably change his / her behaviour, personality, and world view during the process of developing a character. What can be changed then? The way that one chooses to act. Sanford Meisner believes that a character is defined by “how he/she does what he / she does”. Therefore, the moment when the actors chooses another line of action in reaction to a stimulus, adequate for another mental grid, different from the actor as a private person, marks the switch to another point of view, the assumption of another mentality which will define the actor’s actions and will determine their specific parameters. The main goal of the character will not be changed, but only the way it proceeds to attain that goal. In the actor’s art, the goal is a work tool that determines the character’s action set, while the concept defines how the characters choose to act to reach that goal. Moreover, the concept has one most relevant quality, that of stimulating the affective side of the actor by developing the emotional dimension of the character.

There are situations when the actor understands and “solves” the artistic tasks related to a dramatic part only at a rational level, being blocked from an emotional point of view, and thus using emotion impression or its representation in order to “cover” the feelings of the character. Nevertheless, the character component of utmost importance is the inner one, the emotional side, and this side results from the manner the actor understands the text given circumstances. Characters are born by emotion, by the actors’ capacity to change at a deep level (psychically, physically, physiologically, emotionally), by using one’s potential of vulnerability. The concept has the ability to stimulate this potential which is essential in order to render with authenticity the character’s inner workings throughout his / her life on stage. From this point of view, the concept could also be used as an emotional unblocker in the acting process.

This is why we strongly believe that the concept must not refer to general beliefs on life – the world is cruel, life is hard, etc. – but statements containing verbs with an obvious emotional impact: I only feel happy when I give, I love to be the centre of attention, I hate liars, etc. By using such statements, actors will no longer be tempted to have a general approach or to process information at an exterior level, and his / her actions on stage will become personal and specific, befitting the character profile.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the concept has a key role in the attempt to approach and understand the inner workings of the character. It synthesizes the core of a character, the intimate mechanisms of his / her personality, thus proposing a highly subjective perspective. The concept strives to schematically define what makes a character who he/she is, what determines his / her actions, what triggers his / her feelings, being the essence of a new identity and, consequently, of a new reality.

While the concept is the heart of the character's personality, a formula to reach the proper outcome, the actual factors of this equation are the solutions to accomplish the characters' desires and needs found by the actor during his / her work on the part. Without the support of the actor's spirit, personality, and creativity, the concept is just an empty vessel, a cold and unrealistic rendition of a human being. This is why character assumption is of utmost importance in order to achieve outstanding acting performance.

Therefore, when actors do not fill in the blanks with plausible and creative approaches, the concept results in clichés and stereotypic actions. In such cases, characters cannot be brought to life, they remain shallow and unconvincing abstract notions that comply with a recipe, and cannot resonate within the audience.

Given the complex interactions between concept and character assumption, we might say that the concept is a guide that must be used creatively to define precise, specific actions, it is an inspiration that helps actors to choose a path that gathers many possible approaches, thus supporting the actor in character assessment. Character assumption is the ingredient that adds depth, liveliness, and meaning, helping to recreate a slice of reality on stage, and it focuses on the emotional connection between actor and character, activating the vulnerability potential of the former by proper assessment of the latter. By using these tools, it becomes possible for on-stage performance to reach the hearts of the public, because the characters become relatable and recognizable, touching the emotional strings of the audience.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Bețiu, Mihaela, *Ghidul candidatului la actorie [A Guide for Theatre Candidates]*, Unatc Press, Bucharest, 2017.
- [2] Cehov, Michael, *Curs de arta actorului [A Course on Acting]*, Biblioteca Facultății de Arte Galați.
- [3] Cojar, Ion, *O poetică a artei actorului [A Poetics of the Actor's Art]*, Paideia, Bucharest, 1998.
- [4] Darie, Bogdana, *Curs de arta actorului [A Course on Acting]*, Unatc Press, Bucharest, 2015.
- [5] Diderot, Denis, *Paradox despre actor [An Actor's Paradoxes]*, Opere Alese, ESPLA, Bucharest, 1957.
- [6] Gâlea, Marius, *Improvizația ca metodă de lucru [Improvisation as a Work Method]*, Revista Concept nr. 1(3)/2002, Bucharest, Unatc.
- [7] "I.L.Caragiale" Institute of Theatre and Film, Actor's Art Department –Actor's Art, Ed. Didactică și pedagogică, Bucharest, 1972.
- [8] Limbos, Edouard, *Les barrages personnels dans les rapports humains [Personal Barriers in Human Relations]*, ESF, Paris, 1990.
- [9] Niculescu, Radu, *Despre ce i se cere actorului non-stanislavskian [On What is Required of the Non-Stanislavskian Actor]*, Revista Atelier nr.1-2/2004, Editura Unatc Press, Bucharest.
- [10] Spolin, Viola, *Improvizație pentru teatru [Improvisation for theatre]*, Editura Unatc Press, Bucharest, 2008.
- [11] Stanislavski, K. S., *Munca actorului cu sine însuși [An Actor's Work on Himself]*, Nemira, Bucharest, 2013.
- [12] Sturza Bulandra, Lucia, *Amintiri [Memories]*, Meridiane, Bucharest, 1962.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.167-173>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## POLITICAL TOLERANCE VERSUS MORAL TOLERANCE

Rarița Mihail (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Associate Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University, Galati, Romania, E-mail: [raritya.mihail@ugal.ro](mailto:raritya.mihail@ugal.ro)

### *Abstract*

In this article, we would like to show that tolerance as a political ideal tends to disappear, disappearance which is undeniably linked to a crisis of politics both in terms of nature and its importance. First of all, it is about a crisis of its nature, since politics, often conceived as being related to moral concerns, seems increasingly guided by logic of war, which makes use of force to become more and more banal, legitimizing it by a reasonably rational speech, which is not without problems. Secondly, we are talking about a crisis of the importance of politics, since its legitimacy is increasingly provoked by the market due to economic globalization, which weakens the politics, by replacing the concern for the public wealth or good with the rush of private goods. Starting from this discussion of the nature and importance of politics, we advocate in this article both for rehabilitation of politics as well as for an ethical accountability of political action, so that politics prevails over the economy and upon the violence that often accompanies it.

**Keywords:** Intolerance; violence; economical globalization; political rationality; ethical accountability;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Although there are many definitions of politics, all the authors seem to agree with the idea according to which the political community is possible if and only if it is based on a minimum of tolerance. These being said, it should be noted the fact that after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, intolerance has become more and more the dominating style of government. The natural question that results is whether we are not witnessing the disappearance of politics, being replaced from now on by a simple, illegitimate violence. To this, it is added the fact that globalization causes various effects upon politics, some of which can be harmful, even incompatible with the political city. Among these effects, the globalization of war as the ultimate form of violence and intolerance seems to be the most dangerous thing for politics.

Starting from this discussion of the nature and importance of politics, we advocate in this article both for rehabilitation of politics as well as for an ethical accountability of political action, so that politics prevails over the economy and upon the violence that often accompanies it.

## 2. THE MORAL FUNDAMENTALS OF POLITICS

For at least five centuries, it has been discussed within the political reflection about a certain dualism related to the fact that the politician does not act in his own name, but faces the need to take into account the dividing line between the role of political actor and the role of the individual.

Politics is considered by a stream of political philosophy as an immoral activity, or rather, politics is not conceived as a moral action. This is a major idea that we find in the works of many thinkers, starting from Niccolò Machiavelli to Gilles Lipovetsky, without even not forgetting to mention Nietzsche. Thus, Machiavelli (1960) shows that the wise prince does not have to honor his promises when this does not serve his own interests. For Nietzsche (1992), the modern age is marked by a new glow, the death of God, which also opens the time of man, but it is about an age without any considerations and moral limitations. In *Le Crépuscule du devoir*, Gilles Lipovetsky (1992) evokes the arrival of the post-deontological era /epoch, in which ethics loses its previous universality and importance, by turning into a mixture of contradictory and equally legitimate norms. In foreign politics, the school of realism shares the same conception of the political phenomena, which can be noticed at Hans Morgenthau or Kenneth Waltz. Although Morgenthau (1948) does not deny the moral dimension of the political action, however he insists on the necessity to separate the political reason from moral reasoning: a good politics is above all a reasonable politics (and not a moral one).

At the same time, thinkers who advocate for the compliance of the moral commitments in politics are no less numerous, and they can bring into discussion Kant, who insists on the fact that the moral imperative must prevail in politics as well. According to Kant, this articulation of morality and politics has retained its full influence, even though this influence is not particularly seen inside the political class. For Immanuel Kant (2007), no true politics can be put into motion without first paying tribute to morality. When Max Weber (2003) reflects on Protestant ethics, we find an identical idea, which is translated by the famous formula, "sincerity is the best policy", idea which makes it possible to believe in the possibility of a honest and moral politics.

The conflict between morality and politics is not necessarily shared by all thinkers, although they all agree with recognizing the existence of a border separating the two spheres of human action. From Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill to John Rawls, it was considered that politics should take into account the fair equality of chances and opportunity (Rawls, 2012), with the aim of taking into account the tolerance towards the differences, and especially the inherent differences between the individuals. In this respect, Mill (1994) reminds in *Utilitarianism* that, as far as the political action is concerned, utility is an acceptable criterion for judging a good action, of which may benefit most of the involved persons.

More recent reflections insist on the need to understand that any political action must be subject to an aporetic moral criterion, which should be valid for any human action. This thing can be explained by the fact that, as Zygmunt Bauman (2000) has shown, any human action has both positive and negative consequences, which could be summed up in the idea that good and evil always go together or cannot be separated.

Politics is a conflictual field where the interests are in a permanent collision, but also a field of conflict resolution, of permanent search for compromise, of common solutions and acceptable by protagonists, because the essential function of politics is to maintain the social integrity, to protect the social cohesion, to defense of the fortress. From this perspective, violence seems to be closely related to the way in which politics is conceived, as it is the *sine qua non* manner of preserving the interests of the Citadel. Since the establishment of the first political fortresses, organized violence, which is manifested in the form of war, is one of the key political activities.

At the same time, political fortresses/cities distinguish, fundamentally, between internal order and external order. Respect and maintenance of internal order are entrusted to the police, and the maintenance of the external order is entrusted to the army. This distinction between the police and the army is particularly important in the democratic countries: any confusion between the two is supposed to be dangerous for the democratic order and any police substitution by the army is seen as a serious assault upon democracy. It can be said that the distinction between the police and the army, between police action and war is part of the ethical system of democracies, and not only their institutional order.

### 3. THE NEW FUNCTION OF THE WAR

In history, the war has always been part of human existence, accepted as natural facts, an inseparable fact of life. Nowadays, war is conceived and accepted as the denial of politics, especially by those contemporaries with us who have experienced the various experiences of devastating wars on the European continent, but also in other parts. The figure of war, especially under the shape of extreme intolerance, was made known in *Intolerance* (1916), the famous film of the American director David Griffith. In another register, Arnold Toynbee's (1997) work regarding the close link between war and civilization has clearly shown this evolution in the perception of the war and this great change in the twentieth century.

Carl von Clausewitz had already insisted on the need to bring military action to the objectives of politics. According to his approach, which will be described as "realistic," war only makes sense if it is subject to politics, if in practice it can serve as a means to achieve the political goals. Otherwise, war remains only an act of mass violence. Thus, for Clausewitz, war is the continuation of politics with other means (Chaliand, 1990). Before him, in the time of the Terror, Maximilian de Robespierre presented the violence of the state as an instrument of reason. In a speech made at the Convention of February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1794, a few months before being guillotined, he declared himself ready to govern the people by reason and the enemies of the people "by terror," considering these the new principles of political morality.

In the contemporary world, which is morally denying war, but at the same time transforms it into an almost daily activity, the relationship between politics and violence has not changed fundamentally. As Michel Foucault (1997) draws our attention, "politics is the continuation of war with other means" (p. 16). As such, Foucault reverses, overturns Clausewitz's formula, not referring to subjecting the war to politics, but about subjecting politics to war. This thing has unexpected effects upon the politics itself.

Indeed, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which symbolizes the end of the Cold War, instead of witnessing the emergence of a world impregnated by the trade and peace values - what Francis Fukuyama (1992) predicted with the title of "the end of history" - ,we could notice throughout the whole world an unbroken series of wars, the majority of which civilian ones, including in Europe, that, however, had the chance to live in peace for 50 years after the end of the Second World War. These wars have largely affected a part of the civilian population, keeping the military effectives in a miraculous way. Of course, we are far from a miracle and close enough to a vision in which it appears a new type of war that does not imply the responsibility of the public authorities and which mainly involves a fundamental principle of the modern state, namely *the monopoly of legitimate violence* (Weber, 1992).

As the monopoly is questioned by many armed nongovernmental actors or governments that use the army in domestic politics, the traditional role of the state represents a problem. More and more criticized for its omnipresence, especially as regards the market regulation, the state is weakening dramatically. It no longer represents the organizational pillar of contemporary societies. The current world is populated by weak states, unable to assume a true responsibility on their own, although from a historical point of view the only source of human submission to public power resulted from its ability to protect life and property. The protective-state is endangered or on the verge of extinction, which calls into question its legitimacy, as it was described by Weber. And this thing is also an effect of globalization, a phenomenon upon which I will come back to later on.

On the other hand, alongside with this weakening of the state, there is another phenomenon, at least equally worrying: the availability of some governments to resort more and more frequently to the use of force, as it happens especially with a great power, such as the United States of America. In this framework of analysis, it appears the fear that there is a reversal, a reversal of Clausewitz's thinking, with the consequence that, in the future, politics is subject to the logics of war (Bertho, 2003).

After 1989, there was indeed a significant change in the rules governing the military activity. The paradox is that, despite expectations, states have been more inclined after this date/time interval to engage in wars than in the great confrontation era of the Cold War, when they were discouraged by the danger of a generalized nuclear confrontation. Today's war seems to be presented much less in the form of an inter-state conflict between nation-states or between military alliances; it does not recognize the banned areas, it no longer distinguishes warriors of non-combatants, civilians of soldiers. The war is losing its characteristic of an extraordinary event, a feature that has been preserved for Europeans for at

least a century. In regions such as the Near East, war has become a daily situation; it is part of the usual situation of things.

In addition, it should be noticed the fact that the states no longer declare war even when their military forces are confronted. The United States did not declare war on Serbia in 1999, to Afghanistan in 2002, or to Iraq in 2003. Sometimes, the diplomatic relations are not officially broken during the war. Thus, the armed conflict becomes an internal business, and not an external one. The speeches about war also build a new reality: instead of talking about war, it is preferable to evoke a humanitarian intervention. The military operations are designed to be limited in time and space, such as "surgical interventions" type, which mobilize professional soldiers on a voluntary basis and strive not to irritate an ever-sensitive public opinion about the war. Actually, the war is slowly starting to become a political means in the hands of states, losing its former status as the *ultima ratio*. Not only that war trivializes, but this trivialization appears to become morally accepted as well.

In *La politique en temps de guerre*, Alain Bertho refers to a very interesting letter from February 2002, signed by several American intellectuals, including Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington and Michael Waltzer. In this letter, published in the press, one can read: "Bringing the war within an objective moral reasoning represents the attempt to establish a civil society and the international community on justice" (Bertho, 2003, p. 24). The idea seems to be old - Kant has already advocated for extending the social contract from the interior (the peace kept in the city/fortress through the monopoly of legitimate violence) in the sphere of external relations (the international community). Although the context is different, we are talking today about a government's claim to represent the entire community and to impose its own options on his behalf upon other nations through the use of war and the operation of a subtle replacement, that of the police by the army. What represents already the substitution of politics through war, thus returning to what Foucault mentioned.

The effects of this substitution, Bertho shows, are major. On the one hand, we are witnessing the appropriation of a legitimate violence by a single government, the proof being the United States' claim to relieve American soldiers of any responsibility before the International Criminal Court (Bertho, 2003, p. 34). On the other hand, this substitution puts into question the foundations of public power in the international sphere. In fact, the problem is to know which is the political court which legitimizes the use of force and considering this force as legitimate violence, if we fail to identify behind it the presence of a politically accepted body on a large scale by the international political community.

In a book that made a lot of noise, called *Empire*, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (2000) emphasized the fact that the powers of the Empire are forced to believe that war is a constitutive, institutional form of the new order. Since then, the organized day-to-day violence has been an increasingly trivial /commonplace phenomenon.

#### **4. IN DEFENCE OF THE POLITICS**

The political tolerance has two dimensions that are not necessarily contradictory: a moral dimension and a rational dimension. The political rationality derives its legitimacy from the fundamental function of politics: maintaining the social cohesion and integrity of the social body. A minimum tolerance is needed between individuals and the social groups, which allows them to live together in a political community. We can state, along with John Stuart Mill, that tolerance is the necessary derivation of liberty or with John Rawls, that it is the logical correlation of equality.

We deduce from this that tolerance is a fundamental political principle in the liberal thinking of John Stuart Mill, even if in his era it is rather understood in the form of religious tolerance. The political community ensures this tolerance through legitimate coercion (which may even be violent), exercised by the state as the supreme legitimate political court. And this is the paradox of the rational politics: tolerance has as instrument the violence. This paradox is inevitable, yet rational. In other words, this coercion being legitimate, it results that the respective paradox is in accordance with the principle of political tolerance.

But political tolerance has also a moral dimension that highlights the need to adequately measure the legitimate violence, to include it in contexts that should make it acceptable, not to allow it to overcome the limits of ethical norms established by a higher Court of the national state. It is about



subjecting the political action and the legitimate coercion associated with it to the exigencies of humanist ethics. Again, we can distinguish two dimensions of the problem.

On the one hand, the ethical responsibility of politics, which seems to me to be an eternal requirement, should not be confused with the moralizing approach in politics, which is merely the universal claim of a state in favour of the superiority of its own system of moral and political values, and which, therefore, denies any diversity of perceptions and therefore any tolerance to ideas that do not coincide with its own. The ethical responsibility of the political action implies a return to humanism, a reactivation of the idea that, despite the wealth of differences that make up the present world, the common foundations of humanity should be more important than what differentiates the individuals.

On the other hand, this demand for ethical responsibility of politics has the meaning of a demand for politics reconstruction, affected by certain effects of globalization. This exigency is opposed to the fact that today war is producing politics, not the other way round. Eventually, it is an appeal to tolerance, because replacing the war with police action transforms the opponent into a simple criminal, it removes any political legitimacy, and therefore approves any manifestation of intolerance towards him.

The exigency for the ethical responsibility of political action thus opposes to a morality that sets an absolute limit between "the good boys" and "the bad boys." In fact, it is an appeal to restitution of the political tolerance. The letter of the American intellectuals, quoted above, also underlines the fact that "under certain circumstances and in a certain context, can be morally upheld military activities that risk producing unintended, but foreseeable death of non-combatants" (Bertho, 2003, p. 35). This is a new vision of politics, entirely subject to military reason, taking into consideration that military action now treats non-combatants (civilians, citizens) as an inevitable legitimate target. For Alain Bertho, in this logic, war becomes another way or manner of governing.

Restoring the ethical responsibility of politics lies at the heart of the position adopted by those who oppose to wars, especially the preventive ones. In this sense, there is the possibility of making an analogy regarding the debate on the death penalty. In Europe, the death penalty imposed by the state is considered incompatible with the foundations of democracy and individual rights. The preventive war is the one that admits as morally acceptable the unintentional death of civilians, the sentence of capital punishment imposed on the individuals whose innocence is previously accepted. Therefore, we can speak of a serious violation of a widely accepted legislation in the democratic world. If we are aware of the fact that war is today a condemnation to capital punishment, we cannot refuse to resort to an international legitimate Court that legitimizes violence, namely the United Nations or the International Criminal Court.

## **5. GLOBALIZATION AS DISSOLUTION OF POLITICS**

Globalization, instead, questions the fundamentals of politics for reasons that are not alien to the logic that is currently changing the nature of the wars. Politics is an area of action geared towards the general interest, whose guarantees are the institutions (a system of organized, general and mandatory rules). The politics defined by Claus Offe as a collective and cohesive choice is already put under discussion. To some extent, this thing is due to modernization, which considerably widens the possibilities for choice, though, at the same time, due to over-saturation with these possible choices, globalization is actually emptying of sense the idea of choice (Offe, 1996, pp. 35-38).

Globalization as a phenomenon does not aim the social integrity, it only supposes it. It is only possible when such integrity is achieved at a supranational level. The purpose of globalization is not the general interest, but the preservation of the alienated local interests and the valorisation of the private interests of the globalizing elite as general (global) interests. This global elite is very disparate, it includes the global mass-media, the world of global affairs and the intellectuals from all over the world. Globalization avoids the principle of a general, politics-specific obligation. For that part of humanity that is being globalized, the mandatory is perceived as an obstacle, as if, on the contrary, being globalized means to be completely freed from any limitations, including restrictions on general political interest within national states. Globalization is based on a single and unique obligation, that of which the localized interests to respect the conditions set by elites, limits and global hierarchies.

Viewed from this perspective, globalization seems to be a kind of politics or rather a strategy to transform the principle of cohesion politics in a local principle. This is the reason for which globalization presents itself as a deinstitutionalized policy or politics. Ulrich Beck (2000) uses another term, the one of

"sub-political" (p. 17), by which he designates the complementary chances of action and exercise of power outside the political system. According to Beck, due to the fact that governments and parliaments, the public sphere and the courts are being circumvented/ bypassed, it results that the social contract is rewritten under the dictatorship of the economic actions.

Globalization is a policy transformation in the sense that it transfers the collective from a sphere of general interests to a sphere of private social spaces, thus signing the death of politics. Globalization is also the end of mass politics, because in the globalized world, the public opinion, represented by a mass-media corporation and intellectuals around the world, acquires only the role of the public, that of a crowd of spectators who participates in events, but who only has the right to acclaim or criticize.

The public opinion can only approve or condemn, but does not participate in making the important decisions or modifying them. It is really broken the connection between opinion and the political elections: the electoral failure of a prime minister or another does not change the overall decision-making structure. Zygmunt Bauman does not believe in the interactivity so praised by the new mass media means, for the access to the global internet network is not universal, being even limited. And if we are referring to those who do not have access to the Internet - and these represent the majority - we find out that they are actually required to be just the viewers of some satellite programs, "their destiny being just simply to watch" (Bauman, 1998, p. 75).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The main problem of globalization is the decline of politics and the end of the civil society. The low interest in politics and the low rate at voting are the symptoms of a worsening problem: can we design a democratic politics without the citizen's participation? Can globalization be part of a democratic project or deny it completely? Replacing the interest of the masses for politics with the one for sports is also very significant. Do we not witness a replacement of traditional political interactions that seem to be blocked?

The new world order - often dubiously considered as a new world chaos - needs weak states in order to maintain and reproduce. It needs neither institutions nor common rules that are accepted and mandatory. But the new world order is far from being chaos. Instead, it is a kind of "globalism politics" which, in the terms used by Beck, refers to the ideology of dominance in the global market that represses and replaces the political action.

The requirement to return to the traditional politics is often seen as an activity that opposes the effects of globalization, opposition which is actually superficial. Instead, we are discussing an ethical requirement according to which the political action should no longer be subject to the logic of the global market and, at the same time, the logic of the strongest one, and hence of the violence of the war. The aim is to render politics its essential mission, to be the guarantor of social integration, but this time not only at national level, but also globally or worldwide.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Bauman Z. *Globalization. The Human Consequences (Themes for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century)*. Cambridge: Polity Press; 1998.
- [2] Bauman Z. *Etica postmodernă* [Postmodern Ethics]. Timișoara: Editura Amarcord; 2000.
- [3] Beck U. *What is Globalization?* Cambridge: Polity Press; 2000.
- [4] Bertho A. *La politique en temps de guerre*. Paris : La Découverte; 2003.
- [5] Chaliand G. *Anthologie mondiale de la stratégie*. Paris: Robert Laffont; 1990.
- [6] Foucault M. *Il faut défendre la société*. Paris : Gallimard/Seuil; 1997.
- [7] Fukuyama F. *Sfârșitul istoriei și ultimul om* [The End of History and the Last Man]. București: Editura Paideia; 1992.
- [8] Kant I. *Întemeierea metafizicii moravurilor* [The Metaphysics of Morals]. București: Humanitas; 2007.
- [9] Lipovetsky G. *Le crépuscule du devoir*. Paris: Gallimard; 1992.
- [10] Machiavelli N. *Principele* [The Prince]. București: Editura Științifică; 1960.

- [11] Mill J. S. *Utilitarismul* [Utilitarianism]. București: Editura Alternative; 1994.
- [12] Morgenthau H. J. *Politics among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1948.
- [13] Negri A. & Hardt M. *Empire*. Paris : Exils; 2000.
- [14] Nietzsche F. *Dincolo de bine și de rău* [Beyond Good and Evil]. București: Humanitas; 1992.
- [15] Offe C. *Modernity and the State: East, West*. Cambridge: Polity Press; 1996.
- [16] Rawls J. *O teorie a dreptății* [A Theory of Justice]. Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași; 2012.
- [17] Toynbee A. *Studiu asupra istoriei* [A Study of History] (vol. 1). București: Humanitas; 1997.
- [18] Weber M. *Politica, o vocație și o profesie* [Politics, a Vocation and a Profession]. București: Editura Anima; 1992.
- [19] Weber M. *Etica protestantă și spiritul capitalismului* [The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism]. București: Humanitas; 2003.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.174-178>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF THE DANUBE AND ITS EARLY PUBLIC HEALTH POLICIES, 1856–1860s

Constantin ARDELEANU (a)\*

Ionuț–Alexandru DRĂGHICI (a)\*\*

(a) \*Professor, PhD, The Faculty of History, Philosophy and Theology, “The Lower Danube” University of Galați, Romania, [constantin.ardeleanu@ugal.ro](mailto:constantin.ardeleanu@ugal.ro)

(b) \*\*PhD Candidate, The Faculty of History, Philosophy and Theology, “The Lower Danube” University of Galați, Romania, [ionut.alexandru72@yahoo.com](mailto:ionut.alexandru72@yahoo.com)

#### *Abstract*

This paper analyses the context in which the European Commission of the Danube (ECD), an international organisation created in 1856 to improve navigation along the Maritime Danube, started to impose its own public health policies in the Danube Delta region. It established two hospitals and drafted detailed quarantine regulations meant to balance free navigation and sanitary precautions. The authors refer to the organisation of ECD’s hospitals, how commissioners dealt with their funding, selection mechanisms for medical staff and the need to build proper medical facilities. The paper also touches on the moment when in 1865 Sulina was ravaged by a cholera epidemic and the local hospital was put to good use. Eventually, through a Public Act signed by the seven commissioners in 1865, the ECD was consolidated as an international organisation and the hospital became a reputed medical centre for hundreds of international seafarers, ECD employees and inhabitants of Sulina, who used the services of the first hospital created by an early supranational institution.

**Keywords:** European Commission of the Danube; history of medicine; international organisation; seamen hospital; cholera;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

On 30 July 1865, an Ottoman transport steamer arrived from Istanbul in the roadstead of Sulina, at the junction of the Danube and the Black Sea. Two men onboard the steamer had died from cholera during the voyage. The crew was disembarked at once, and, as several people suffered from choleric symptoms, the entire crew was isolated. 12 new cases were recorded, and five people died during the next two days. On 2 August, Dr Jellinek of the local hospital noticed a person sick of cholera in a group of labourers employed in local hydraulic works. Another case, an employee in the service of the Ottoman deputy governor, was discovered the same day. The epidemic would last for most of August 1865 and it

purged the entire settlement. Among its 3,000 inhabitants, half fled, but 300 of the 350 people who contracted the disease allegedly died (Girette, 1867: 277-278; Reports, 1875: 53; Hartley, 1989: 207-208). The town was devastated, and some further actions needed to be taken to combat the mobility of disease.

But cholera did move freely along the Maritime Danube in 1865, as it had done before. According to the reports of France's delegate to the European Commission of the Danube, Édouard-Philippe Engelhardt, it also ravaged Galați, the commercial capital of the Lower Danube, where, between 12 and 27 August, 156 people died amongst the 316 persons who contracted the disease (CADN, 10: 417-418). Later in 1865 and in 1866, fresh victims were recorded at Sulina, where Dr Jellinek was doing its best to contain its spread.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

When cholera struck in 1865, health policies along the Maritime Danube were applied by a Sanitary Service of the Mouths of the Danube, subordinated to the Istanbul-based Superior Board of Health. This institution had been established in 1839 and aimed to coordinate quarantine policies, trade and shipping in Ottoman ports (Ersoy et al, 2011; Bulmuş, 2012). Throughout the Levant, including at the Maritime Danube it advised for the imposition of rigorous sanitary measures, especially when plague and cholera outbursts were active in the region, according to international agreements for epidemic control.

The European Commission of the Danube (ECD), the international organisation tasked since 1856 to regulate navigation along the Maritime Danube, was trying to impose its own public health policies throughout its liquid jurisdiction, given the mission granted to the seven commissioners by Europe's Concert of Powers. A discrete battle for pre-eminence was fought on several layers between interested parties. Thus, the ECD attempted to have its autonomy recognised by the Ottoman government, which rejected what it thought to be a sheer violation of its sovereign rights; the dispute was also linked to finding the proper balance between free navigation and sanitary security along a strategic European transportation highway. Not least of all, it was fuelled by mistrust in the usefulness of quarantines by miasmatics, numerous among medical practitioners who believed that there were better ways of preventing the spread of disease than the quarantine system.

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The ECD aimed to apply its own health policies along the Maritime Danube, and this quest for autonomy was visible both in pushing towards drafting modern quarantine regulations and in the establishment of its hospitals. In the first issue, economic liberalism with its drive to open new markets faced a strong concern of public authorities who aimed to control the mobility of disease.

The ECD was self-interested in both issues – the quarantine policies and the creation of a hospital service – as its budget and institutional survival depended on free circulation of ships, which paid a toll when they called at Danubian ports. It is this confrontation between commercial liberalism (or, to quote a famous article in economic history, the 'imperialism of free trade') (Gallagher and Robinson, 1953) and the public resistance for imposing barriers controlling the spread of epidemic diseases that is interesting to look at in relation to the making of an early international organisation. By managing to impose its own sanitary policies, the ECD aimed to further consolidate its authority and prestige in the Danube Delta region, both important steps for its institutional survival.

## **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This paper aims to look at how the ECD worked to impose its own health policies in the Maritime Danube and how it established the Sulina hospital, an interesting experiment by an early international organisation, considered as a means of fulfilling its broader mission to regulate river navigation.

The ECD was tasked to conduct hydraulic works in the Danube Delta region (Ardeleanu, 2008), but commissioners found there a state of sheer anarchy and felt the need to take part in 'civilising' the area. This happened in the aftermath of the Crimean War, when the Ottoman authorities were trying to impose their sovereignty over an unruly set of transnational entrepreneurs, so the ECD, which had two years to complete its hydraulic works, gradually extended its mission and came with a more comprehensive security oriented program. This program aimed to regulate international shipping, but at the same time assist the various employees who worked on behalf of a European organisation at the very

end of empires, in an unhealthy and ‘uncivilised’ area. The article will focus on the early phases in the establishment of the Sulina hospital and will show how this in turn solidified the ECD as a functional international organisation. It will also touch upon the ECD’s quarantine policies and the organisation’s dealings with the Ottoman authorities in coming with a proper balance between free navigation and controlling the spread of infectious disease.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODS

This text is a historical narrative in which institutional history meets the history of medicine. It employs some of the ‘classical’ methods from a historian’s toolbox: archival work, quantitative and qualitative methods and comparative analysis.

## 6. FINDINGS

As a communication hub along major commercial route-ways, Sulina was often confronted with such terrible epidemics as that of 1865. Sulina’s location was in many ways similar to that of Suez and Port Said along the Suez Canal, and its function was equally crucial in channelling mobilities of people, goods and disease (Huber, 2013: 241-271) along one of Europe’s major international waterways. Before the Crimean War, when the Danube Delta region belonged to the Russian Empire, Sulina accommodated a quarantine station, but Russian sanitary regulations were considered ‘burdensome in the extreme’ to international trade and shipping (Ardeleanu, 2014).

The 1856 Paris Treaty returned the region under Ottoman sovereignty and stated that more balance quarantine regulations had to be drafted, which should favour, as much as possible, ‘the circulation of ships.’ (Congrès, 1856: 11-12).

The idea of establishing a hospital in the Danube Delta region came after the ECD started its hydraulic works in the Maritime Danube and employed hundreds of international bureaucrats and labourers. Working in an unhealthy region, a far distant inter-imperial periphery lacking modern medical establishments, the organisation felt it had to provide its employees with some form of basic medical assistance (Agrigoroaiei, 2010: 22).

During its sitting of 27 March 1857, the ECD decided to establish two hospitals with 15–20 beds, one in Tulcea and the other in Sulina. They were to be run by a chief physician, supported by two assistant surgeons and two pharmacists (NAR, Protocol 20/27 March 1857); the organisation started by employing its chief medical officer, a certain Dr M. Emile Engelhardt, a graduate of the Medical School in Strasbourg and most probably a relative of the French commissioner.

The amount of 2,000 ducats was allotted for the organisation of the two hospitals and of their pharmacies. In the coming months, the ECD rented houses in Tulcea and Sulina, where its medical facilities were set up (La Commission, 1931: 334). Given the status of the organisation, a temporary commission that was to be dissolved when its hydraulic works were completed, these hospitals are to be regarded as some sort of provisional emergency facilities meant to save lives in an area missing modern medical services.

Initially, the two hospitals treated the ECD’s employees exclusively. However, as the number of patients remained rather low, in October 1860 commissioners established the Sulina facility as a hospice for sick or shipwrecked seafarers and for employees in the Ottoman administration of the port of Sulina (NAR, Protocol 121/27 October 1860). At the same time the hospital in Tulcea was closed, as the ECD focussed all its resources to complete the hydraulic works underway at Sulina.

In March 1861, a new regulation established that half of available beds were for the treatment of international seafarers, and the other half for ECD’s own employees. All patients admitted into the hospital paid a small daily fee (12 piasters), and five beds in the facility were also available for the inhabitants of Sulina (NAR, Protocol 124/13 April 1861). Since 1863, the ECD increased by a small fraction (five cents per ton) the toll paid by all commercial ships calling at the Danube and used these revenues to cover the expenses with its hospital. This made the hospital freely available to seafarers of all nations (NAR, Protocol 153/7 March 1863; La Commission, 1931: 334-337).

The ECD also worked hard to impose its views on local quarantine policies. The Ottoman Sanitary Service of Sulina, subordinated to the Superior Board of Health in Istanbul, was hardly functional, and Dr Engelhardt drew up extremely liberal quarantine regulations. There was no quarantine control when no

epidemic was raging in the East, a provision that limited possible obstructions from Ottoman authorities, as it had happened in Russian times. The ECD pushed towards further simplification and standardisation of procedures, so that navigation and trade would not be subject to too bureaucratic and costly formalities. (NAR, Protocol, 78/29 April 1858). An agreement between the ECD and the Ottoman government detailed sanitary procedures. The Sanitary Service examined the sanitary status of ships entering the Danube and provided them with proper medical papers upon leaving the river. The expenses for this service were covered by a toll payable proportionally to the ship's tonnage.

The Public Act, the ECD's 'constitutional' charter voted in 1865 by the seven commissioners, after four years in which the Ottoman government accused the other Great Powers of violating its sovereignty, reached a compromise in relation to the Danubian quarantine. Sanitary measures applicable to the mouths of the Danube were regulated by the Superior Board of Health in Istanbul, in which various foreign missions accredited to the Sublime Porte were represented by delegates.

These measures were to be framed so as to conciliate in a just degree security for the public health with the requirements of free maritime trade. The Public Act also detailed health procedures and the possibility of instituting additional quarantine establishments in case of new epidemics. All in all, the ECD managed to save large prerogatives for its own employees, who could move freely along the river even when mobility was limited or completely blocked due to sanitary concerns (NAR, Protocols 176/27 October 1865, 188/13 October 1866, 307/15 April 1868, 217/24 October 1868, 238/2 November 1869).

The gradual extension of the ECD came with renewed efforts to consolidate its medical facility from Sulina. Commissioners discussed building a proper hospital as early as 1861, but a modern unit was completed only in 1869, and it included an isolated pavilion for choleric patients (NAR, Protocols 172/25 April 1865, 193/25 April 1867). It was placed under a neutral status, according to the provisions of the 1864 Geneva Convention (NAR, Protocol 200/5 November 1867). The hospital would function in this form until 1893, when a separate hospital for epidemic diseases was built, in line with developments in the medical science (La Commission, 1931, 334-337).

The ECD's chief physician played a major role in the success of establishing this international hospital. After Emile Engelhardt left the Danube, he was followed by Dr Jellinek, a graduate of the Viennese medical school. Jellinek was a reputed physician and he used his competence in a busy periphery, where health problems were aggravated by the marshy location of the Sulina. Jellinek published several articles in medical journals in which he dealt with some interesting medical cases, mainly with sexually transmitted diseases which were extremely common among seafarers of all ages.

There were plenty of cases he could choose from for his medical research. Sulina was exposed to many other sanitary hazards. Placed in a marshland with poor drinkable water supplies, infected by miasmas, and tormented by mosquitoes, the town was often the victim of malaria and typhoid fever. Quantitative data on the movement of patients for this early phase in the history of the Sulina hospital is scarce, but some details allow us to have a general idea. 28 patients were admitted in the Sulina hospital in 1861, 42 in 1862, 59 in 1863, 114 in 1864 and 111 in 1865.

In 1864, for example, among the 114 patients there were 101 international seafarers (62 Brits, 16 Austrians, 11 Italians, eight Greeks, two Turks, one Russian and one subject of Mecklenburg), 10 ECD employees and three pilots. Five patients died in hospital in 1864 and 13 died in 1865. In the latter year, seven of them died of cholera, and one patient of each of the following diseases: pneumonia, tuberculosis, dysentery, meningitis, epilepsy, and marasmus senilis. In 1868, 306 patients were accepted in the hospital and 11 of them died (NAR, Statistics, 1861-1868).

Jellinek was a very able doctor but he himself fell ill due to the unhealthy location in which the town of Sulina was placed. 19 candidates applied for his position when he left the job, and they were selected based on their 'technical aptitudes', 'moral qualities and character', and 'knowledge of foreign languages in use at the Lower Danube.' Five applicants were preselected, and the winner was Frenchman Valentin Vignard, a physician formerly in the service of the 'Messageries Impériales' shipping company. Vignard would live in Sulina for the next 17 years. Medical journals of the time published several of his scientific contributions, but also a piece such as 'De la nécessité dans l'état moderne de la création d'un Ministère de médecine publique' (1880) (CADN, 19: 304-312).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

From its foundation in 1856, the ECD followed clear public health policies in its attempt to compensate for the absence of functional sanitary services in an early phase of the Ottomans' taking possession of the Danube Delta region. On the one hand quarantine matters had been a bone of contention in Russian times, and the ECD managed to negotiate an agreement with the Superior Board of Health in Istanbul, which recognised the special status of Danube navigation and the right of ECD's agents to move freely along the river and thus have a voice in balancing free navigation and sanitary precautions during epidemic outbursts. As for its hospitals, the ECD's drive towards autonomy came from its role as a large employer with hundreds of people in its pay, all working in an inter-imperial periphery where medical facilities were almost completely absent. The organisation gradually opened its Sulina hospital to local inhabitants and to international seafarers, adding medical services to the benefits that the ECD provided to the mercantile and seafaring community interested in Danubian navigation. Through both these services, a flexible quarantine system and a modern hospital – the ECD proved its efficiency. Its term was prolonged several times and it remained the organisation that regulated river navigation in the Maritime Danube until the middle of the 20th century.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Agrigoroaiei, Ion (ed.). *Comisia Europeană a Dunării. Selecție de texte și studiu introductiv*. Iași: Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2010.
- [2] Ardeleanu, Constantin. *Evoluția intereselor economice și politice britanice la gurile Dunării (1829–1914)*. Brăila: Editura Istros, 2008.
- [3] Ardeleanu, Constantin. *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube. The Sulina Question and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1829–1853)*. Brăila: Editura Istros, 2014.
- [4] Birsan, Bulmus. *Plague, Quarantines and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.
- [5] CADN = Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes. *Représentant de la France auprès de la Commission Européenne du Danube, Série B, Files 10 and 19*.
- [6] *Congrès de Paris 1856*. Paris: Impr. Impériale, 1856.
- [7] Ersoy, Nermin, Yuksel Gungor, and Aslihan Akpınar. 'International Sanitary Conferences from the Ottoman Perspective (1851–1938), *Hygiea Internationalis* 10.1 (2011): 53–79.
- [8] Gallagher, John and Ronald Robinson. 'The Imperialism of Free Trade,' *Economic History Review* 6.1 (1953): 1–15.
- [9] Girette, Jules. *La civilisation et le cholera*. Paris: Hachette, 1867.
- [10] Hartley, C. W. S. *A Biography of Sir Charles Hartley, Civil Engineer (1825–1915): The Father of the Danube*, vol. 1–2. Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1989.
- [11] Huber, Valeska. *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- [12] *La Commission Européenne du Danube et son œuvre de 1856 à 1931*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1931.
- [13] NAR = The National Archives of Romania, Galați Branch, The European Commission of the Danube Fund, Protocols of the ECD and Statistics of Navigation for various years.
- [14] *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors, and Others*, vol. 40. London: H.M.S.O., 1875.





<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.179-185>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION AND TEACHER'S INFORMATION SOURCES. CASE STUDY: ROMANIAN SCHOOLS

Mariana Dogaru (a) \*, Cristina Mirela Negreanu (b),

\*Corresponding author

(a) Lecturer University Polytechnic from Bucharest, Splaiul Independenței 313, Bucharest, Romania

E-mail: dogarumar@yahoo.com, (b) Lecturer University Polytechnic from Bucharest, Splaiul

Independenței 313, Bucharest, Romania, E-mail: negreanu\_mirela@yahoo.com,

#### *Abstract*

The research was carried out using qualitative and quantitative methods (the opinion poll, respectively the interview). The survey had as part of the characteristics of the school manager as a leader (internal and external communication, goal orientation, valorization of the subordinate staff, attitude towards work in the learning ability, the ability to innovate, the ethos imprinted to the school, the decision-making transparency). It is much more important for school principal to communicate within the school, setting and targeting clear goals than the printed ethos and the transparency of the means used. We could say that there is a paradox of opinion because, in our view, the transparency of the means used by the school principal is directly related to internal communication. As far as managerial communication is concerned, it correlates only with the level of staff motivation and authoritarian style. In the case of less successful schools, the authoritarian style, as well as the participative style, correlates strongly and very strongly with the variables, the percentage of determination being higher. Thus, in schools with very good results, teamwork explains valorization and satisfaction, valuing correlated strongly with participatory style. What is very important, authoritarian style in schools in good schools explains 85% of the manager's communication. So, in successful schools, communication is determined by authoritarian style, which is also reflected in the analysis of case studies. Covariance is higher for schools with poor results, which means that the variables correlate more, unlike those in successful schools. The sources of information for the teaching staff are diverse, but we can say that, in terms of the organization, "tradition" is to propagate from top to bottom. As such, the informational flow can comprise several internal elements of the school, but we considered that the role of the school principal in this plan is telling from the perspective of internal managerial communication, being a proof of its functioning, without claiming that we are exhausting this variable, managerial communication no can be achieved about "novelties".

**Keywords:** communication; leadership; management; school education;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication management is an important function of management, a process that occurs intentionally and exchange of information from the transmitter (E/T) to receiver (R). Of course, managerial communication, transmitter / receiver is the school principal and actors with which it communicates. Moreover, the model Andresch, Staats and Bostrom and David K. Berlo (apud Pânișoară, O, 2008, 19) classical communication is no longer identifies and R, suggesting that the roles are dynamically retrieved by each of the communication partner. Thus, from the classical model, ER, proceed to Reply-Message and Content-ID. (apud Pânișoară, A, 2008, 20). Certainly, in the model management communication store essential elements of communication and idea of dynamic change of roles in communication may allow the adoption models in which the transmitter and receiver are dynamic and unrepresented focusing on the process, not the process components. The relationship between the pattern of communication and leadership style defined preponderant by way of communication. Samuel S. Certo, Trevis Certo (2012, 344) provide communication management as a condition of influence of employee in achieving organizational objectives envisaged.

Thus, says Lițoiu N. Oproiu (2013) the team can complete if communication is central to team size. These tests reiterated by Cristina Tripon (2017). Therefore, it can move to a model more appropriate for the new school context, even from a managerial perspective, according to lead. According to lead style, we can apply the general model to one applied shown in Figure No.1

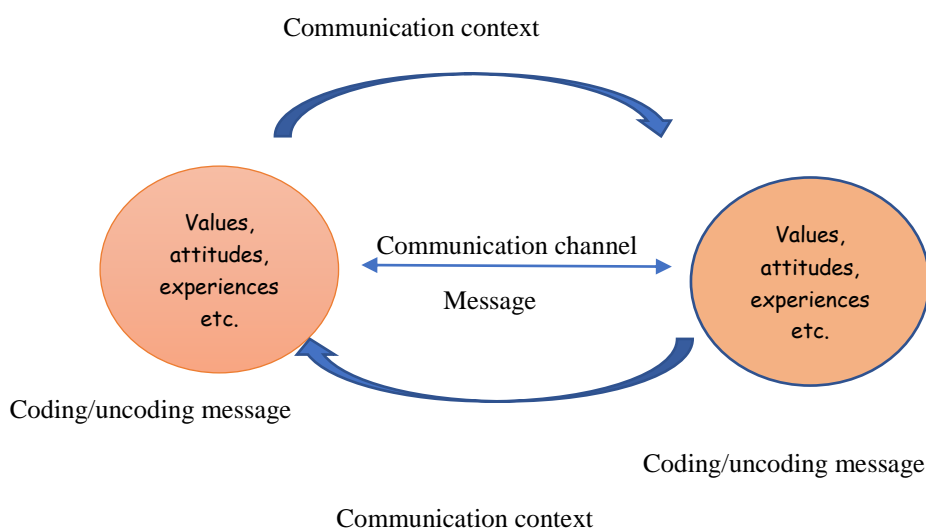


Figure no 1. Communication model without existence the roles of transmitter and receiver

Communication context may include barrier / disturbing factors of communication factors (noise, too cold, too hot, etc.). Thus, the manager must ensure that these factors are minimized and / or eliminated.

In contrast, the authoritarian style uses classical model of communication, creating numerous barriers response.

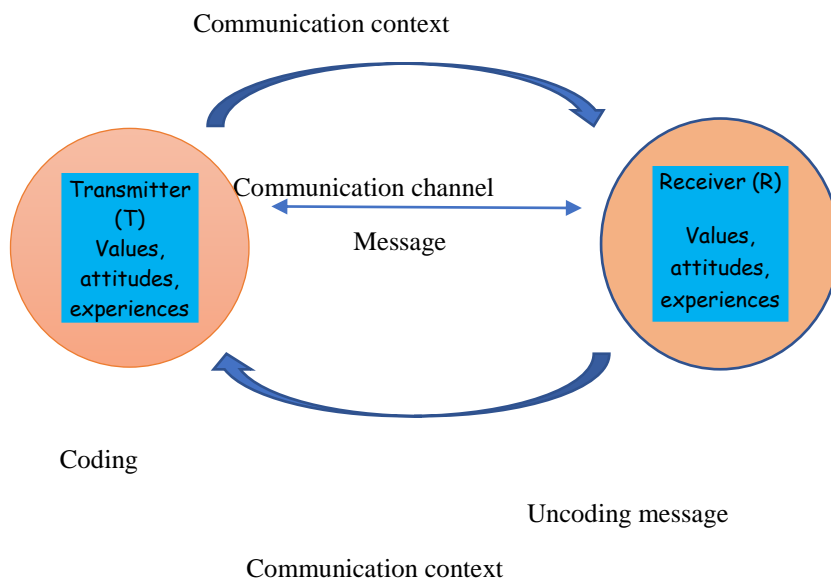


Figure no 2. Communication model with the roles of transmitter and receiver

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

What is the purpose of management communication? In a first step, ensuring decisional transparency (employees are informed about what is happening in the organization), the manifestation of leadership (leader presents and explains the expectations and objectives at the organizational level, possible solutions it can create) the negotiation of certain issues, decisions, the agreement; Changing behaviours, attitudes, information, feedback. Communication is essential in teamwork, communication becomes vital organization. The concept is highly structured, becoming emblematic any domain. So, school principal, to implement new teaching methods in schools must communicate their vision to influence its application to measure its impact on beneficiaries and optimize the benefit of the students. As Chicioareanu Theodora Daniela and Lițoiu Nicoleta (2011) said that the modern methods used to bring more school organization and its beneficiaries regarding the purpose of its existence, learning.

Managerial communication directions identified are

-vertical (top down) - manager communicates to employees who are in hierarchically in a lower position with beneficiaries;

-vertical (bottom-up) – school principal communicates with colleagues hierarchical superior (school inspectorate, ministry etc.);

-horizontally – school principal communicates with other schools in the system. Compared to leading style and organizational ethos school principal builds his own network of communication. General models can be found in managerial communication. Laura Șerbănescu (2011) says that communication is a very important dimension in teacher's training.

-the wheel. The school principal is in the centre, can communicate with any employee of the school, he is the only reliable source. This communication network suggests that the school principal thinks a centralized system which he leads and manages it. School organization members can communicate with each other, but it is not credible and acceptable source; inside the organization the school principal who wants to be the centre of communication is usually predominantly authoritarian

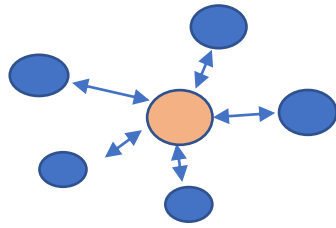


Figure no 3. The communication model as a wheel with school principal in the middle of the process of the communication

-the Y model. It is a half centralized model, the school principal communicates with three other closest of teachers. These are the teachers that transmit the information to the other teachers within the organization.

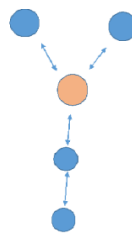


Figure no 4. The communication model as a Y with school principal that communicates with three teachers within the organization

-the chain model. Information is transmitted sequentially from one person to another in a predetermined direction; outside the organization, the method used to transmit addresses, each school / school principal knew exactly who submit; its success depends on each link to operate at maximum potential; It is a form of centralized communication can be carried out both horizontally and vertically; if used bottom-up and a link is missed, resorting to the following link, called "escalation". The main approaches sheep is using the technology to transmit information.

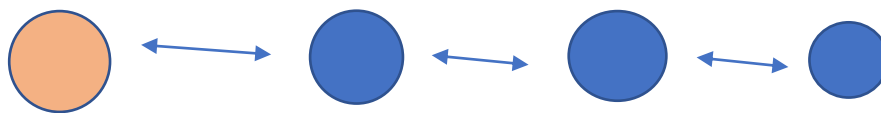


Figure no 5. The communication model as a chain with school principal that communicates with teachers within the organization

-circle model. The information is transmitted in a clockwise or anticlockwise, it is chain-like network, but increases participative communication in the sense that a school principal can communicate with two others persons within the organization

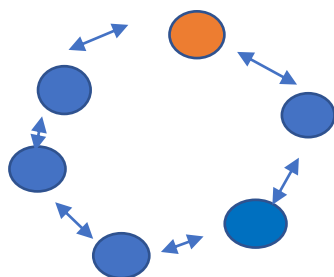


Figure no 6. The communication model as a circle with school principal that communicates with teachers within the organization

-Star model. It is a network where communication can take place in any sense, each participant, manager or subordinate being active participants in it; It is used in highly decentralized organization

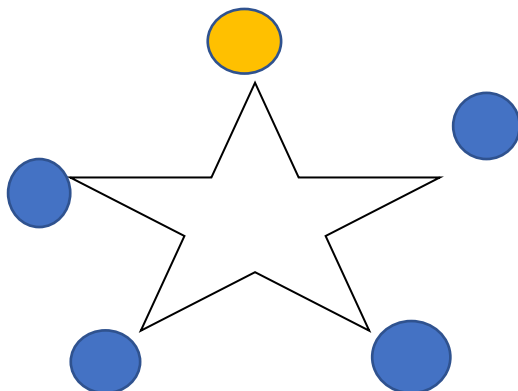


Figure no 7. The communication model as a star with school principal that communicates with teachers within the organization

Communication management includes the feedback adapted the model and the structure's feedback (according to Pânișoară, O, 2008, 54) is evaluative and nonevaluative. Evaluative feedback is:

-positive (Yes!)

-negative (No!)

Nonevaluative feedback is:

- Sounding ( "How did you find the discussion?")
- Supporting ( "Come on, you can!")
- Comprehension ( " Let me understand that you are dissatisfied with the performance of Romanian language teacher, don't you? ")
- message me ( "I think we should be more careful when talking with students" he said manager teachers present at the meeting)

It is preferred a nonevaluative feedback because the transmitter give the message, but in a diplomatic way.

### **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions are structured as follows: in what extent communication management ensures communication process in a school; which the sources of information of a school are; how to structure the communication system in a school

### **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim is to identify whether there is any correlation between the results of a school and the communication of school and communication management working.

Hypotheses from which we started is based on:

- If communication management works very well in school when teachers feel like being part of organization management communication
- If the communication management is very well, which are the sources of teachers

## 5. RESEARCH METHODS

First point, a research was conducted that used qualitative and quantitative methods in schools appreciate the good or less good to identify relationships between variables and if they correlate with management communication.

Second point, 1,230 questionnaires were applied to teachers in schools in the first quartile (Q1) are considered the best schools and quartile 4 (Q4) for the less good schools. There have been correlations between variables and leadership style of school principal

## 6. FINDINGS

In conclusion, the current managerial communication style does not correlate with participatory, but only with the motivation and authoritarian style schools in Q1 and only authoritarian style schools in Q4. So what we try to emphasize is that the hypothesis are not confirmed. Also, schools in Q1 authoritarian style correlates scale Cohen's medium and strong with all of the other variables, focus on end, teamwork, valuing staff satisfaction, even if the coefficient of determination R2 establishes that 21% of the authoritarian style explains finalities orientation, and 86% of the outcomes is explained by the focus on teamwork, explained schools in Q4 to 94%. It is observed that if schools Q4 authoritarian style, as well as participatory style are strongly correlated and very strong variables, the greater the percentage of determination. Thus, schools in Q1 explains valuing teamwork and satisfaction, value correlating all too strong participatory style. What is very important, authoritative style schools in Q1 explains 85% of the communication manager. Therefore, schools in Q1 communication is determined by the authoritarian style, which emerged from the analysis of case studies. Covariance is higher in schools in Q4, which means that the variables correlate more, unlike the schools in Q1.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The research questions confirmed that communication process is very important within a school. The staff would feel more safer inside the school, would feel more valued if the communication takes part of their day to day professional life. The teachers that answered to survey described the communication system as a natural one, with a special place where the important announcements were listed and all the communications were done within meetings. Because the lack of any procedure for communication process, there are many conflicts among the school caused by the misunderstanding of messages or because of lack of communication. Which is the most effective communication system? According to teachers, an effective communication system has a few characteristics: is designed, decided and implemented by the staff with the school principal, is improved all the times, it is a common teamwork, it is simple and with fewer barriers and intermediaries, is transparent. Also, there is a correlation between the good system of communication with an effective managerial communication and the student's outcomes. This could be explained by the leadership of school principal and by the teachers that feel more valued according with their work. In these schools, the source of information is always the school principal. He/she is among the staff, among the students, he/she has many discussions with all them.

### Acknowledgments

Managerial communication is very important within a school because of its implication effectiveness. Being more connected to school, teachers can work more effectively and students' outcomes can increase. That's why, the main aim of a manager is to create with the staff the best communication system, functional and adopted by all staff.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Anghel G.A., Voicu C. (2015). Coaching and Mentoring in Bachelor s Degree Programs for Social Workers and Teachers. *Procedia -Social and Behavioral Sciences* 92 ( 2013 ) ISSN:1877-0428, 36 – 40
- [2] Chicioreanu, Teodora Daniela; Litoiu, Nicoleta. (2012). The Integration of Concept Maps in the Teaching Activity. *Swot Analysis of the Applications Existing Online Dedicated to the Elaboration of Concept Maps*. Book Series: eLearning and Software for Education Pages: 96-103

- 
- [3] Epurescu, E.O. (2015). Ghid minimal de bune practici. Ghidul carierei mele [Minimal guide for good practices. The guide for my career]. București: Politehnica Press.
- [4] Gonța Iulia, Bulgac Aurelia. (2015). Exploring the psychological resources through dialogism in psychotherapy and pedagogy, in *Rethinking Social Action*
- [5] Leithwood, Kenneth, Mascall, Blair, Strauss, Tiiu, Sacks, Robin, Memon, Nadeem and Yashkina, Anna(2007). *Distributing Leadership to Make Schools Smarter: Taking the Ego Out of the System*. Leadership and Policy in Schools, 6: 1, 37 — 67
- [6] Lițoiu N., Oproiu G.C.(2013). *Management de proiect – suport de curs* [Project management-course notes]. București: Printech
- [7] Nedelcu, Anca, Ciolan, Lucian et al. (2010).Școala așa cum este. București : Centru Educația 2000 +-UNICEF România
- [8] OECD (1989). *Schools and Quality: An International Report*. Paris.
- [9] Pânișoară, O.(2008). Comunicarea eficientă.[Efficient communication]. București: Polirom
- [10] Sadler-Smith, Eugene and. Burke, Lisa A.(2009). *Fostering Intuition in Management Education: Activities and Resources* . Journal of Management Education.33
- [11] Samuel S. Certo, Trevis Certo (2012).Modern management: concept and skills. London: Pearson
- [12] Șerbănescu, Laura. (2011).Formarea profesională a cadrelor didactice – repere pentru managementul carierei [Teachers' training -milestones for career management]. București: Printech
- [13] Tripon, C. (2017). *Four Key Skills - Reference Framework for Integrated Curriculum*, The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS, Volume XXIII, pg. 521- 531
- [14] Walker, Allan and Riordan, Geoff.(2010).Leading collective capacity in culturally diverse schools. *School Leadership & Management*. 30 (1). 51 — 63.
- [15] Zlate, M. (2004). *Leadership și management*. Iași: Editura Polirom.



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## LEARNING BY STORIES

Monica Valentina Șerbănescu (a) \*, Mariana Dogaru (b),

\*Corresponding author

(a) Phd candidate, University Babeș Bolyai, Doctoral School from Faculty of Theology, Romania,  
E-mail: mona\_serbanescu@yahoo.com (b) Lecturer University Polytechnic from Bucharest, Splaiul  
Independenței 313, Bucharest, Romania, E-mail: dogarumar@yahoo.com,

### Abstract

„In the beginning It was The Word and The Word was at God and the Word was.” (Gospel of John)  
Knowledge, tips, lessons - all were transmitted over time through stories from one generation to another,  
from one nation to another. Currently, the word that makes the story seem threatened picture and certainly  
no stories, kids today would not be intelligent adults that we want to grow for tomorrow. Learning  
through story comes not only in the field of non-formal, as often believed today, but can become - and  
become - adequate support, motivating and creator of "wellbeing" for children who have benefited from  
this type formal learning disciplines in the field of sciences, arts, foreign languages. The research aims to  
highlight the possibility of treatment with stories of various situations of learning disorders and anxiety  
occurring in some children and are discovered in the early years of schooling, or sometimes later, and  
manifests itself in contexts various school and family life. Learning by discovering, teamwork, practice  
and evaluation methods were stimulating methodological research resources. Our conclusion is that  
"Learning story" proves most effective in most learning situations, even for older students.

**Keywords:** learning by story; creativity; freedom of expression; learning difficulties;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The written word was born of a deeply felt longing of man to transmit horizontal and vertical time,  
experiences, discoveries and dreams that our neighbours - not so different from us as he believed - lived  
several thousand years before Christ, they wanted to cross the bridge of time. He came to us, their  
thoughts were preserved carved in stone or on tablets, papyrus scrolls gathered - Volume and then, down  
on parchment codices.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Reinforcing the idea that the work of "Pedagogy of the story - was once, when stories had no TV  
..." suggests that man cannot be expelled from "Kingdom Tales" because through them "unfolds God as  
Father of the story, who prepared the world, all of them, to happy, as only He knows it makes his  
children. "(Necula, V. C 2016, p.5).



From "the stories - stories" of Romanians, but not only theirs, but also gathering in different cultures gold human wisdom stored texts spread over all the earth and dating back thousands of years, the modern world has exploited both as literary texts themselves as well as possible models to decipher the truths that need to be revealed and can enrich each re-listening or re-reading.

More, stories have become often models or even vehicle transmission of teachings and knowledge in areas seemingly unrelated idea of literature, and titles such as history, "the most beautiful story" - as he sees Adrian Cioroianu (2014), „Telling a Story About Math. Math Stories explained to Primary School”, Florina Belint (2014), “Storytelling Physics” by Cristian Presură (2014), or „Diandra’s Stories” by Ion Ovidiu Pănişoară (2016) shows concern authors to soften somewhat a content that, at first approach might not be "connected" to a readership insufficiently prepared for the "scientific" or this history, mathematics, physics or psychology.

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our investigation research analysed the story telling method used by teachers in teaching process.

The research questions are:

Is the story telling an effective method for teaching students?

Which of the domains are more proper to storytelling?

### 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

We propose to analyse the using of storytelling method in literature specialised and which are the benefits for students in learning some difficult domains. Our hypotheses are that

-storytelling used in teaching process facilitate the learning process, even in domains considered more difficult;

-using storytelling, the domain becomes easier to understand.

### 5. RESEARCH METHODS

First point, we analysed the literature which transformed the areas in stories and its impact in teaching class. We analysed the story telling teaching method from Romanian literature characters. A memorable example for any future teacher remains us the portrait of Mr. Trandafir (Rose) from the writer Mihail Sadoveanu( edition from 2016) in his short story of the same name about the teacher in primary school.

What makes archetypal remains the model of man and teacher love story of Ion Creangă, which was transmitting "boys" love of nation, of Romanian language, but many good things for life, they sit alongside occupations practice, so training children plenary was: academic, moral and practical. The story gets here sizes supreme method, because it is accompanied by the love that binds the teacher to his students.

Second, we analysed the method in our contemporary days because this formula remained forgotten for a while in school memories, but increasingly more in recent years, pedagogy returned to a pattern of transmitting and acquiring knowledge revalued and enriched, now regarded as a "method non-formal", which is found in increasingly diverse areas. As shown, presenting tales of mathematics, „The book was born out of passion for mathematics author. Ability to explain in words algebra and geometry problems beautiful and willingness to help children to unravel the mysteries of mathematics discipline have transformed this topic in play and delight to learn. He was successful because students love stories, characters associated results and thereby retain and understand much easier operations and mathematical theories. (<http://povestindmatematica.ro/>)

Contemporary mathematician Ivar Ekeland approach has the same direction. He presents the latest volume: „This is a story about infinity”. In this sense, the beginning of Chapter 1 transposes the redeal to the realm tale: „Far, far away, on another planet, in a place called Numberland, all the Numbers live together in a big hotel.”. Once created the atmosphere of the story, the child will come into play and easily assimilate notions taught without narration fabulous clothes, it remains no so difficult to understand. During the project Erasmus +, our students, which is developing the project STEM en action dramatized stories of Ivar Ekeland and presented with humor, involvement and understanding of mathematics while both Romanian colleagues and school children Spanish partner problem "Infinite

Hotel". The last chapter of the book, explains his readers that his approach is based on two other mathematicians, „Georg Cantor (1845-1918) and David Hilbert (1862-1943)”. The first was „the first person ever to understand infinity”, but „his papers are difficult to read, so Hilbert come up with the wonderful idea of having a hotel with infinitely many rooms, where Cantor’s ideas could be staged” (Ekeland, I, 2016, 5-60).

Here’s how a kernel of the story came in the last century, it stimulates young minds who want to understand the beauty of mathematics. Re-telling, and explained some, others seemingly difficult concepts apparently airtight.

Regarding physics story, here's a confession related to its reception: "The first contact with this book I felt that listening to music that delights me whenever I hear. In interpreting Cristian Presură, this grand composition which is to raise ears Physics reach the less educated scientific. Covering Cristian Presură's book will come to understand concepts such as standard model, unifying interactions of nature, matter and dark energy, black holes etc. Most physicists who dare to write such a work hardly resist the temptation to use a comprehensive mathematical language with many formulas, sometimes hard to digest for a layman. Cristian Presură's book is especially valuable as it addresses an equally unsuspecting reader and one expert in the mathematical formalism that does not readily accept statements without proof. Paraphrasing Richard Feynman, I can say that to study physics there are two possibilities: either follow for five years the Faculty of Physical or read this book (PhD. Mircea PENȚIA, National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest-Măgurele, associated researcher CERN, Geneva) (<http://www.humanitas.ro/humanitas/fizica-povestit%C4%83>).

In the same register, the volume "Storm in a Teacup" by Helen Czerski, lecturer at the Department of Mechanical Engineering of University College London. It demonstrates how utterly mundane things such as spilled coffee or even ketchup bottles, can help us understand Antarctic storms, medical tests and our future energy needs. An anecdote, story of his life come so to create the right framework for a layman to amaze, to question, understand and even begin to deepen the study of physics itself. "This book is about how the little things that we see every day are related to the huge world we live in" (Helen Czerski, 2018, p.27).

As for the temptation to put the story emotions of children, Professor Ion Ovidiu Pânișoară (2016) confesses that, at the request of his daughter, "... I started the story. I thought the situations that you children might encounter at school, in life when you are going all sorts of things. "([http://www.elefant.ro/carti/carte/carti-pentru-copii/povesti-si-povestiri/povestile-diandrei-vol-i-330778.html#\\_sbW9uYV9zZXJiYW5lc2N1QHlhaG9vLmNvbQ](http://www.elefant.ro/carti/carte/carti-pentru-copii/povesti-si-povestiri/povestile-diandrei-vol-i-330778.html#_sbW9uYV9zZXJiYW5lc2N1QHlhaG9vLmNvbQ))

It could be counted as part of the same series of attempts to give abstract "meat" volumes "Stories about Human Being" by Constantin Noica (2009), [https://kupdf.net/download/constantin-noica-povestiri-despre-om\\_59f3edd8e2b6f57608c4baaf\\_pdf](https://kupdf.net/download/constantin-noica-povestiri-despre-om_59f3edd8e2b6f57608c4baaf_pdf) or "Jesus's Parables-The Truth as a Story" by Andrei Pleșu (2012). In the preface of "Stories about Human Being", Sorin Lavric says that is about "a Hegel understood by men", adding the observation that "a magic formula, applied a strictly monotonous world, can make a discipline philosophy of magic and a thinker apprentice sorcerer ". (Noica, C, 2009, p. 5-10). The explanation enlightens all attempts mentioned above, meaning that every time, appeal to the "story" is explained "teaching function" of the story that speaks Pleșu, A (2012, 18), meaning that "the only way, faced with an appealing story, readers would have understood why Tom leak pages of Hegel's life and conscience of every man " Extrapolating, "virtue [...] narrative" an idea makes it breathable and gives it a chance to be included in a language different from the original, whether it's about art, about mathematics, physics, history or psychology ( Noica, C, 2009, 11).

Maria Dorina Pașc (2004) demonstrated the value of storytelling for healing . In the same key can be read news Constantin Necula to Ion Creangă's well known stories "Goat with Three Kids" , "Harap Alb" and "Girl old woman and the girl old man" where analysis reveals true archetypes of pedagogy, which can be summarized simply: "to be good not just stay locked in the house, but knowing where to open the door. "in this respect, considering Necula father" Goe "as" Codex teaching after Ion Creangă " (Necula, V. C, 2016, p.20). Based on these valences on the story it holds - the transmission of teachings valuable whose beginnings are lost in time ( "Once upon a time"), translated into plain language of information / knowledge / formulas to listeners - readers could not access due to high levels of enciphers the message source, it appears to be putting the child or adult in front of a mirror "that are projected emotional necessities" of each. (Filipoi, S, 1998)

## 6. FINDINGS

Teaching "a story" or "through the story" is not a discovery of art pedagogy. As a teaching strategy, who is certainly based learning in ancient times, but for a while, it seemed to have been forgotten in the attic of memories. When, the kindergarden "Arc-en-Ciel" in 1994, then School and High School "Anastasia Popescu" teachers rediscovered possibilities combinatorial of "learning through story" first enjoyed were themselves because they could create the best learning environment for children. The working groups, from kindergarden to high school classes, practiced this mode of communication, networking, according to children's age, the unit of study, the learning objectives and, especially, the "profile" group / class, realizing over time, the benefits of "teaching through story", meaning that the results consistently good and very good children were every year quantified and, in a recent analysis done within hours "social education" children have created a questionnaire following the interpretation which school is seen by more than 80% of the 100 children interviewed as "very good" and preferred method occurs as "story / play". (78%).

Among the first innovative approaches a count that of Professor of Fine Arts, herself an artist, eager to bring children closer to the realm of drawing and painting, which is why most of the workshops / classes do not start no story, no magic wand that borrows pencils wonderful and brushes. To create an environment best suited hall Arts Workshop was "decorated" children, even the chairs were painted. From this point of view, we can highlight the difference in status of students when time takes place in regular class, to the working hours of story workshop. In particular, work on icons, requires knowledge saint or holy story on which little leans iconographer, and this highlights the beauty we find in approaching the subject without the usual patterns, but respecting Orthodox Erminia. In this regard, a special approach in recent years is organizing the contest "Holy, friends of children" where a team of two students to treat the story and icon of the saint, of course, within a previously known theme. That proximity faith, face the icon, is through a story, that the life of to be painted by child requires adherence actions and faith its transposition at a single time off or near the empathy of understanding abstract notions of "love" and "sacrifice" that accompany usually saints. From the same perspective, the study of music, not just in small classes benefit both space decorated children's room, for "entry in the story" and to urge the teacher to children to "tell" themselves happenings musical notes, or how that excites you listen to some music or sing. Thus were born the albums "Musical Tales" and "musical games" where children expressed their love for music free, but due to which they have closer study or composition.

As we all know, the figures have fascinated mankind in the sense that they were assigned (or they were found) special powers, magic, which made them appear in the stories of all peoples. So, teaching mathematics through the story can be done in two ways: either by finding numbers of stories "classic" and giving children the joy of their recognition or making the numbers and geometrical figures, characters stories. In this regard, an example of the creative imagination is a doll from plastic taken from 70s, made of geometric shapes and named "The little Square", thanks to which children discover through stories, figures and geometric bodies, which then they themselves create and animate, retelling in turn Random them, that "fear" of geometry can be "exorcised". Mathematics can also make good house with a foreign language, if students are staging a story math fun, learning, with mathematical notions that comprise the story dramatized their translation into foreign language, which strengthens retention and facilitates the transfer of knowledge in the playful manner possible.

As for grammar, science presenting tightly enough when addressing grammatical categories, it can "tame" if, for example, morphology and syntax are imagined as two different worlds with characters who have different roles. In the United Morphology, for example, we meet Noun - Prince with his suite, consisting of Knights article, adjectives, pronouns and numbers. And Voivode's joins Verb with a smaller suite but powerful Henchmen composed of adverbs: place, time and manner. Other parts of speech are also included in the story that develops then the emergence of the United Syntax. Presented under the title "A grammar of story," dramatized narrative was meant to befriend students with concepts that otherwise would have remained obscure. Thus, they were acquired by playing in a good state (well-being) - concept and at the same time, the overall objective, taken from the Danish School, which Professor Lucian Ciolan knuckle it argues clear: "to learn and success in learning, strengthen your learning, you need above all to have a good feeling." (<https://leaders.ro/newsfeed/lucian-ciolan-decanul-facultatii-de-psihiologie-invatarea-nu-e-ceva-care-astepti-intr-o-stare-zen-sa-vina-lucrurile-la-tine/>)

Finally, the benefit of "teaching through story" pursued assiduously every teacher Secondary School Teachers "Anastasia Popescu", from kindergarten to high school classes, it seems to be most valuable if we think of children diagnosed with "learning difficulties" alleged difficulties whose range is very wide. Type of storytelling that invites her school psychologist are called "different stories". Each child creates, this time, his story, by day, status, type of emotion that animates him and also strives to illustrate the one or more images. Sometimes, children are happy to meet and read their stories to each other. Sometimes, they prefer to remain secret.

The ability to manage uncertainty and preparing to not become anxious and to have no fear in the face of something that eventually is natural in our society are essential components of education." - says rightly, Professor Lucian Ciolan knuckle, the question is when and how the school can predict the future, giving children the proper start. (<https://leaders.ro/newsfeed/lucian-ciolan-decanul-facultatii-depsihologie-invatarea-nu-e-ceva-care-astepti-intr-o-stare-zen-sa-vina-lucrurile-la-tine/>).

The story, the child can know and re-known his fears, hesitations, pains, which gives them a name that "tame" and so do their "owner". It is a mechanism driven by narrative, involving characters, events, their location in space and time, a climax and a denouement, all are intended to create a framework sometimes familiar, sometimes, fantastic situations that the child assumed that the experience because the story is, in fact, experimentation imaginary (virtual) certain facts of life. To paraphrase, "tell me what story they give children to tell you what kind of teacher you are" mastery teaching - that initial training in pedagogical high school, followed by specialized studies and training, involving collection experiences - crystallized in these exercises pedagogical virtuosity and can make the difference between a child who understands and wants to find and one that closes itself denied information that you do not understand and even drop out.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In conclusions, "teaching through story" is a way, at any age, any discipline can become not only attractive but also more easily digestible for children big and small, and trust the teacher in this method ensures transfer contextualised knowledge thanks to which memory and emotional involvement are both, in the service of long-term learning. A story does not look one, two, and call for collateral knowledge has the gift of light meaning us. Thus, classes usual in time with "school differently" and "summer schools" whenever fantasy is missing, appetite for the game and dynamism stories will bring more good in the lives of learners whether "They are teaching or they are learning".

## Acknowledgments

Our paper analyses the most effective strategies for learning in schools, according with neuroscientist and with the implication of teachers.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Belint, F.(2014). Povestind matematica. Povești matematice explicate pentru clasele I-IV [Telling a Story About Math. Math Stories Explained to Primary School]. Suceava: Accent Print
- [2] Cioroianu, A.(2014). Cea mai frumoasă poveste. Câteva adevăruri simple despre istoria românilor [The Most Beautiful Story. Some Simple Truth about Romanian History].București: Curtea Veche
- [3] Czarski,H.(2018). Furtuna din ceasca de ceai. Fizica vieții de zi cu zi.[ Storm in a Teacup. The Physics of Everyday Life]. București: Trei
- [4] Ekeland, I. (2016). „The Cat in Numberland”. Chicago : Cricket Books
- [5] Filipoi, S.(1998). Basme terapeutice pentru copii și părinți. [Therapeutic Stories for Children and Their Parents] .Cluj Napoca: Fundația Culturală Forum
- [6] Necula,Valer, Constantin, preot C. V.(2016). „Pedagogia poveștii – A fost odată, pe când poveștile nu aveau televizor...” [Story’s pedagogy when the stories didn’t have TV set..]. Sibiu: Editura Agnos
- [7] Noica, C.(2009). Povestiri despre om. [Stories about Human Being]. București: Humanitas
- [8] Pânișoară, O.(2016). Poveștile Diandrei. [Diandra’s Stories] by Ion Ovidiu Pânișoară. București: DPH

- [9] Pașc, M, D.(2004). Povestea terapeutică [Storytelling]. Tg Mureș: Ardealul
- [10] Pleșu, A. (2012). Parabolele lui Iisus. Adevărul ca poveste.[Jesus's Parables-The Truth as a Story]. București: Humanitas
- [11] Presură, C (2014). Fizica povestită[Storytelling Physics]. București: Humanitas
- [12] Sadoveanu, M.(2016) . Domnu' Trandafir și alte povestiri [Mr Trandafir and another stories]. București: Mihail Sadoveanu



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.192-200>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS

Vlaicu Claudia (a) \*, Haidu Felicia Aurica (b),

\*Corresponding author

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Valahia University, Targoviste, Romania, [vlaicu.claudia@gmail.com](mailto:vlaicu.claudia@gmail.com)

(b) Ion Creanga University, candidate for a doctor's degree in Psychology, Chisinau, Republic of  
Moldavia

#### *Abstract*

The present paper is meant to emphasize on the one hand the connection between how the mind works and the specific diseases a person might suffer from and on the other hand the relation between psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy. Both of them are wide interdisciplinary fields of knowledge. Whereas the psychosomatic medicine is concerned with the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors in regulating the balance between health and disease, psychotherapy in general and cognitive-behavioural therapy in particular helps patients learn new ways to cope with and solve their problems as they gain a deeper understanding of their condition or circumstances. Patients also learn to set realistic life goals and identify and change patterns of behaviours or thoughts that have negative effects on their health and lives. The common elements of both fields should be the personalized and holistic approach to the patient, adding psychosocial assessment to the standard medical examination and the integration of psychological and psychiatric therapies in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of medical disease. Different psychotherapeutic techniques from cognitive-behavioural therapy have been brought forth in this paper. They have been applied to medical patients in controlled investigations (areas that have been extensively explored are cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, pulmonary, neurological disorders, chronic pain, diabetes, and cancer). The conclusion of this study is that these interventions may improve lifestyle and self-management, treatment adherence, coping, quality of life, distress (especially depression and anxiety), course of physical illness, and reduction in utilization of medical services.

**Keywords:** psychosomatic medicine; psychotherapy; illness; patterns of behaviour; disorder;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Psychosomatic research as well as its application have generated a number of subdisciplines (psychooncology, psychonephrology, psychoneuroendocrinology, psychoneurogastroenterology, behavioral cardiology, psychoimmunology, psychodermatology, and others) that urged the need for a holistic approach of diseases in general and psychosomatic disorders in particular. Moreover, it has urged to a multidisciplinary approach of any disease that requires investigations on the role of psychosocial

factors affecting individual vulnerability, its course and its outcome. More than forty years ago, it has been proven that daily stressful experiences and living in big cities and industrial societies may affect the immune system and increase the vulnerability of an organism to disease. Chronic stress has emerged as a crucial factor, along with psychosocial variables, for psychosomatic diseases. Furthermore, there is this dominant view today that almost all physical diseases are potentially related to psychological factors.

According to DSM-V-TR (2017), in the case of psychological disorders, as well as psychosomatic disorders, identification of stressors and other psychological factors that maximize the symptoms is essential for the right diagnosis.

Today, treatment of psychosomatic disorders has increasingly been focused on the interaction of organic and psychological factors (Lacy BE, Mearin F, Chang L, et al, 2016). The aim of cognitive-behavioural therapy is not only to relieve the symptoms but also to prevent from their relapse. In treating the primary psychological factors which have a role in determining the somatic symptoms, psychotherapy can help beyond the efficacy of pharmacological treatments.

The results showed that cognitive-behavioural therapy can also be effective in treating children with psychosomatic disorders (Leibman et al, 1974). In this context, the Diagnostic Criteria for Psychosomatic Research (DCPR) have helped to translate psychosocial variables that derived from psychosomatic research into operational tools.

The aim of this review is to outline current and potential clinical applications of cognitive-behavioural therapy in the treatment of psychosomatic disorders, particularly in gastrointestinal dysfunctions. Related to the letter, we shall specifically investigate: what determine individual vulnerability to such specific disease, health attitudes of the respective subjects, psychological well-being, social support, personality factors, quality of life, illness behaviour, as well as how the cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has been integrated into the course of medical treatment. Moreover, specific CBT techniques shall be presented both theoretically and in the description of each case study.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Before we further discuss the role of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) on psychosomatic disorders, we define both variables. CBT refers to a class of interventions that share the basic premise that mental disorders and psychological distress are maintained by cognitive factors. This type of treatment has been pioneered by Beck (1970) and Ellis (1962). The core premise holds that maladaptive cognitions contribute to the maintenance of emotional distress and behavioural problems. According to Beck's model, these maladaptive cognitions include general beliefs, or schemas, about the world, the self, and the future, giving rise to specific and automatic thoughts in particular situations. The basic model posits that therapeutic strategies to change these maladaptive cognitions lead to changes in emotional distress and problematic behaviours. However, according to recent research (Lackner JM, Gudleski GD, Keefer L, Krasner SS, Powell C, Katz LA. 2010; Kinsinger SW, Ballou S, Keefer L, 2015), psychological therapies in general and CBT in particular has been efficient in treating psychosomatic disorders as well.

*Psychosomatic* is a medical concept that is based on diagnosis and therapy of those who are in distress and who include the data provided by the objective medical examination, biological constants, body examination data, functional explorations, corroborated with the psychological perspective and considering psychosocial factors in determinism of the disease. The term psychosomatic was created in 1830 by Heinroth but it was introduced only in the 50s in the medical discourse by Alexander and the Chicago School of Medicine. In fact, the psychosomatic orientation is Hippocratic and opposed to the vision of Galen's who treat sick and diseased organs, not sick people. Some authors consider psychosomatic a true mental approach to the patient (I.B. Iamandescu, 1999).

The simplest definition of psychosomatic disease would state that these are the physical diseases in which the psychosocial has a decisive weight. The contemporary psychosomatic investigated and accepted various mechanisms with psychoanalytic, cognitive, or adaptive roots as generators of psychosomatic sufferings. A wide variety of somatic accusations that lead to patient conviction that they are body sufferers, despite some emotional or psychosocial problems that could be proved, still remains out of a clear definition.

Somatic discomfort has no explanation or has a partial one, despite the quasi-unanimous conviction of the patient that his sufferings originated in a definite illness that has him seek medical help and causes his disability and incapacity (Lipowski, 1986; Kleinman, 1988; Katon, 1982; Kirmayer, 1984; Kellner, 1990).

Psychosomatic disorders are local reflections of anxiety, tension and other emotions in an individual as a muscular tonus (Kazdin and Weisz, 1998). Their studies have shown the impact of CBT in the reduction of psychosomatic disorders. Clinicians have been interested in applying different methods of psychotherapy including behaviour therapy and family therapy in treating psychosomatic disorders.

Consistent with the medical model of psychiatry, the overall goal of CBT is symptom reduction, improvement in functioning, and remission of the disorder. In order to achieve this goal, the patient becomes an active participant in a collaborative problem-solving process to test and challenge the validity of maladaptive cognitions and to modify maladaptive behavioural patterns. Thus, modern CBT refers to a family of interventions that combine a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and emotion-focused techniques (e.g., Hofmann, 2011; Hofmann, Asmundson, & Beck, in press). The essential features of CBT are listed in the following table:

Symptom	Cognition	Emotion	Physical	Behaviour
Fatigue	Effort will make fatigue worse	Depression	Physically unfit	Avoids activity Focus attention
Headache	Tumor Stroke I won't cope	Anxiety	Muscular tension	Avoidance Focus attention Analgesics
Insomnia	Worries about consequence of insomnia	Anxiety	Arousal	Focus attention on not sleeping Hypnotics
Breathlessness	Suffocate Asthma attack	Anxiety	Hyperventilation	Avoidance Focus attention
Chronic pain	Damage	Depression	Physical basis of of varying significance	Avoidance Focus attention Seeks reassurance
Atypical chest pain	Heart attack	Helplessness	Hyperventilation Musculoskeletal	Avoids exertion Attention reassurance

Table I. Symptom-cognition-emotion-behaviour links for common presentations

However, since the present study is particularly focused on the irritable bowel syndrome, we shall further refer to how CBT may influence the evolution of such a disease and what are the main stressors that trigger it. The irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a chronic and often disabling functional bowel disorder. Psychological treatments, in particular cognitive and behavioural interventions, have been shown to be effective for this disorder. The aim of this study was to test the efficacy of a cognitive-behaviour program. Latest research indicates that the brain-gut axis plays a key role in the disorder, and the presence of psychological factors and central processing deficits contribute to symptom severity and disability. Psychological therapies as a whole have demonstrated good efficacy in reducing the severity of IBS symptoms. With regard to IBS treatment, studies show that a combination of medical treatment and psychotherapy, especially cognitive behavioural therapy, has a significant response in decreasing the symptoms. As a matter of fact, the cognitive behavioural therapy-based treatments have accompanied new challenges in the field of IBS treatment. Furthermore, a quick review of the literature reveals the necessity of defining the psychological aspect of this syndrome. Some studies show that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) along with medical treatment leads to different results when compared with medical treatment alone (Brandt LJ, Chey , Lea R, Whorwell PJ., Gwee K, Leong YL, Graham C, et al. ).



One study shows that IBS needs a multi-component approach including medical treatment, diet and psychotherapy (Sarah W Kinsinger, 2017). Another study reveals that psychotherapy, especially cognitive behavioural therapy, hypnotherapy and psychoanalysis, is effective in treating IBS patients (Gwee K, Leong YL, Graham C, et al. , 1999). In the course of a similar study in Australia, 7 IBS patients received 8 sessions of cognitive behavioural therapy. Before initiating the treatment, all these patients were assessed for psychological performance and severity of gastrointestinal signs. After the treatment, it was observed that five of them did not have any IBS signs. Although the frequency of expression of symptoms by patients did not decrease, the frequency of depression and anxiety decreased, significantly. As a whole, the results indicated that cognitive behavioural therapy reduces the disability caused by IBS; however, it did not affect the expression of the symptoms by patients [9].

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has been tested most rigorously in multiple randomized controlled trials and consistently demonstrates significant and durable effects on IBS symptoms and quality of life. Various protocols for treating IBS have been developed, and most recent advances in the field include exposure-based treatments to target symptom-specific anxiety as well as modified delivery methods, including internet-based treatment models.

Our review of meta-analytic studies examining the efficacy of CBT demonstrated that this treatment has been used for a wide range of psychological problems. In general, the evidence-base of CBT is very strong, and especially for treating anxiety disorders. However, despite the enormous literature base, there is still a clear need for high-quality studies examining the efficacy of CBT. (Stefan G. Hofmann, Anu Asnaani, Imke J.J. Vonk., Alice T. Sawyer, and Angela Fang, 2012)

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Since IBS involves dysregulation of the brain–gut axis and this is a chronic, difficult-to-treat condition, patients often feel dismissed and frustrated because of the lack of effective medical interventions. Despite the clear benefits of CBT for IBS, very few patients have access to this specialized approach. Future efforts should focus on training mental health providers on behavioral interventions for IBS and further developing telemedicine models to improve access to care.

Another research issue related to this topic arise from Ruediger Dahlk's book, *Healing Power of Illness: Understanding What Your Symptoms Are Telling You*. His approach to illness is by suggesting that diseases are not an enemy to be fought. When we see your symptoms as bodily expressions of psychological or spiritual conflicts, we can use them as guides to inner work. The mental causes are related to a pattern of thinking, to the presence of fixed ideas, obsessions which determine us to think negatively. It is useless to treat the illness solely with medicine as long as we do not understand the mechanisms that lead us into becoming ill. So, another research question is the view according to which the power of healing starts with understanding that cause of it.

Mental positive programming would be therefore another research question although it is not necessarily related to the topic of this paper. However, another research question is regarded as being the following: does man himself possesses the key to his own healing. Could he be endowed with the power of self healing once he understands what determines it? Removing the cause and getting a better mood and a total change of attitude towards the respective illness generate the progressive healing? There are many studies which reveal the principle according to which an illness is nothing but a message for the body and the brain. Working on our view of the illness and of the world may be the first step in altering our condition.

Although we refer in this paper to psychosomatic disorders and IBS, following this perspective, we could conclude that a broad range of physical diseases and conditions may be especially prone to being made worse by mental factors. These include skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis; high blood pressure; heart problems and more. Psychosomatic disorders frequently affect the respiratory and gastrointestinal systems as well as the cardiovascular system.

Psychosomatic disorders can have mild to severe effects on one's quality of life, from interfering with the normal ability to function to causing physical or mental disability. But it is the patient's duty to start the journey inside the clusters lingering his illness. From an enemy, illness may become an ally revealing the inner strengths of the patient. This research question triggers further analysis not only into the mental insights connected to the illness but also into the spiritual and religious meanings.

## 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general aim of the present thesis was to develop and evaluate an effective psychological treatment for IBS that can be made accessible to a large number of IBS patients. We suggested an exposure to CBT treatment based on acceptance, stress relief and cognitive restructuring along with other techniques from CBT in response to IBS related experiences. Our main focus with this study is to draw further attention upon CBT as a therapy for psychosomatic disorders and its impact on clinical practice in the foreseeable future. Currently clinicians have few options to offer people with refractory IBS, particularly in primary care. This study shows that CBT has the potential to provide significant improvement in IBS symptoms, both within a National Health Service (NHS) setting and private practice from clinicians or therapists certified on CBT interventions.

All therapies could be made nationally available from specialist therapy centres. In addition, therapists who currently work in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services shall be supported by the Romanian Ministry of Health to have more sessions paid by the National health Insurance Services. A second purpose of this study is to plead for an integrative approach of psychosomatic disorders, IBS in particular in order to establish:

- the weight of the psychic factor, the impact of psychosomatic disease on the patient's psyche (impairment of quality of life indices and socio-professional insertion; Anxiety waiting for disease relapses)
- personality of the patient
- the strategy to prevent or mitigate mental stress (SP)
- training methods for confronting SP and effectively influencing the symptoms of psychosomatic disease
- priority for relaxation and group participation
- means of assuring good therapeutic compliance

## 5. CBT METHODS OF TREATMENT

### 5.1. Short presentation of two patients with IBS

5.1.1. There were only two patients (one female, one male), with a diagnosis of IBS according to the Rome criteria. They didn't come to therapy to treat mainly the symptoms of IBS. They both agree to settle this as a second objective.

5.1.2. The female is a free-lancer, married, 1 child of 8 years. Her main objective in therapy is handling the anxiety attacks. Her primary complaints are related to stressful work and an inability to manage daily activities. She feels overwhelmed and cannot find the strength she needs to successfully finalize them. Unlike the second patient, she seems not to want to establish a number of sessions, but she wanted the therapist to estimate the number of sessions needed.

The second patient is a doctor. He was administered pre-treatment on measures of psychological function and bowel symptom severity. Following a 2-week baseline period, he began a structured psychological treatment comprising eight sessions of cognitive-behaviour therapy.

Throughout treatment, participants maintained daily records of symptom severity and completed homework assignments to ensure treatment compliance. Since the patients approach to therapy was completely different, the first being committed and engaged and the second quite reluctant, different strategies were used. For the reluctant patient, the main techniques were directed to: empathise with the distress, show concern for patient's discomfort, enquire about physical symptoms only if allowed, acknowledge the patient's views to the disease and agreeing upon trying CBT as an experiment, encouraging him ultimately to look also for alternative approaches while in therapy, keeping a keen eye on consolidating the therapeutic relationship, working with cognitive restructuring and imagery only after asking permission and informing the patient about the objectives of each session.

Therefore, I allowed both patients to tackle CBT in the manner each of them chose and also respected each rhythm of engagement in the therapeutic process. As known, CBT involves collaborative effort to find explanations of what their symptoms are. So I allowed patients to remain sceptical of alternative explanations until they have sound evidence to support them.

### 5.2. CBT techniques applied to IBS patients

CBT is mainly a skills-based therapy approach that focuses on modifying behaviours and altering dysfunctional thinking patterns to influence mood and physiological symptoms. The actual

techniques and focus of this approach can vary greatly within a CBT framework; however, most CBT treatments for IBS include some combination of the techniques listed below.

#### *Psychoeducation*

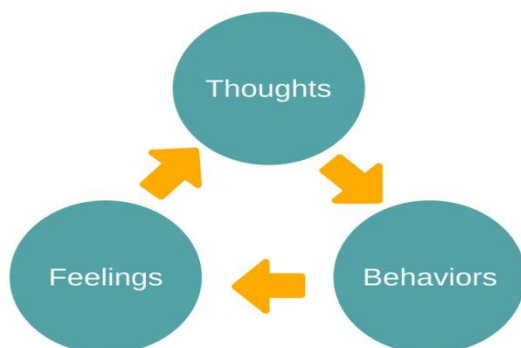
Psychoeducation is a key component of treatment and involves educating the patient on IBS, dispelling myths about IBS, explaining the brain–gut axis, the physiological stress response, and rationale for behavioural treatment. This education increases the patient’s likelihood of “buying in” to CBT treatment and can increase the patient’s insight into the possible role of stress or lifestyle factors on symptoms. Patients typically appreciate the education and find it helpful for understanding why standard medical treatments have been ineffective at adequately treating symptoms and why a behavioural treatment approach is warranted. For the two cases discussed here, whereas for the first patient (a freelancer) it seemed to be a key element for the success of the therapy, for the second patient, who was a doctor, it seemed to be less effective since he already knew everything about his illness. However, this part of his treatment focussed only on revealing to the patient the importance of following stress relief procedure and relaxation exercises.

#### *Relaxation strategies*

Relaxation strategies are typically introduced in one of the first few sessions and are aimed at teaching the patient skills to regulate autonomic arousal. The most common relaxation technique used is diaphragmatic breathing. Sufficient education is needed to explain the rationale for this technique (eg, diaphragmatic breathing engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which can downregulate pain thresholds and normalize gut motility), otherwise patients may be dismissive of breathing exercises being too simplistic. Relaxation training can also be used to increase patients’ awareness of physical tension that may be contributing to symptoms. The two patients were encouraged to practice these skills twice a week. Additional techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation were used for the first patient while for the second who seemed to be reluctant to this techniques guided imagery and hypnosis techniques were included.

#### *Cognitive restructuring*

Cognitive restructuring skills are necessary for addressing symptom-related anxiety and hypervigilance. Education is provided to increase patients’ awareness of the connection between distorted thinking patterns, stress, and digestive symptoms.



#### **The relationship between cognitions (thoughts), feelings, and behaviours.**

Starting from the relationship above, more specifically, the two patients understood how unhelpful thoughts negatively impact how we feel and these negative feelings can impact how we behave. By engaging in unhelpful or maladaptive behaviours, we reinforce our unhelpful thoughts. The therapist provides examples of symptom catastrophizing and explains how these cognitive appraisals contribute to stress and symptom exacerbation (e.g., fear of passing gas at a party can increase anxiety, which results in hyperarousal of the gut and increased likelihood of GI symptoms). Patients use worksheets to track automatic thoughts associated with symptoms and stressful events and the therapist highlights patterns of catastrophizing and probability overestimation. Cognitive restructuring techniques are then used to assist patients in generating more accurate and balanced perspectives regarding stress and symptoms. Patients

continue to practice these skills using a thought log until eventually the new cognitive styles become automatic and integrated into daily life.

Considering the fact that both patients were emotionally abused as children, the therapist focused on restructuring common thinking errors like “I have to work hard in order to allow myself to be happy or to relax” that led the two patients overwork to exhaustion; 4 to 5 sessions were dedicated to identifying, analysing, and changing the negative and sometimes distorted thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that were caused by, and enabled the symptoms of IBS; the patients were taught to discover and put into practice more effective ways of coping with IBS, with the eventual goal of reducing symptoms and consequently improving their lives.

#### *Problem-solving skills*

Problem-solving techniques or coping skills training is included to encourage more flexible coping and use of emotion-focused coping strategies. The two patients with IBS tended to rely more heavily on problem-focused coping regardless of the controllability of the stressor. The first was too focused on assuring the comfort of his son at home (having a health meal ever day, practicing the helicopter type parenting, whereas the second patient, who was a doctor, practiced the authoritative type of parenting, not being able to listen to his children’s stories or emotions and frequently appealing to physical punishment). The patients were helped to identify uncontrollable stressors and to practice implementing emotion-focused coping strategies (eg, acceptance, diaphragmatic breathing, cognitive restructuring, exercise, social support). IBS itself was used as an example of an uncontrollable stressor (eg, no known cure, unpredictable symptoms) and the use of emotion-focused strategies such as acceptance encouraged patients to shift from a “solution-focused” approach to a self-management approach for coping with this chronic condition.

#### *Exposure techniques*

Avoidance and “safety” behaviours are common among patients with IBS and can maintain symptom-related anxiety and contribute to symptom severity. For example, many patients avoid situations where they do not have easy access to a restroom, restrict their eating in attempt to control symptoms, or rely unnecessarily on medications when traveling. These behaviours can be addressed through the use of exposure therapy techniques or behavioural experiments. Exposure involves facing situations the patient is avoiding because of fear of symptoms (e.g, long road trip, eating at restaurants). This is typically done in a graduated fashion, often using an exposure hierarchy. Some interventions also incorporate interoceptive exposure (IE) exercises to reduce fear of GI sensations.

IE involved incorporating behaviours likely to trigger GI symptoms (eg, tightening the stomach, eating feared foods). As patients practiced these exposure exercises, avoidance behaviours decrease and appraisals of symptoms as being harmful or threatening were reduced, thus leading to increased self-efficacy. Behavioural experiments were also used for relieving anxiety feelings. The first patient was encouraged to send his son on a training practice with his team and the second was asked to award his sons a prize even if their grades weren’t as high as expected. The father was thus confronted with the fear of his feeling a not enough person, not worthy of being loved.

## **6. FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

After treatment, the two patients still met the Rome diagnostic criteria for IBS. There was no significant reduction in bowel symptom frequency. There were, however, significant improvements in the distress and disability associated with bowel symptoms. Anxiety (first case) and aggressive behaviour (second case) were also significantly reduced. So the patients met their primary objectives but not necessarily the therapist’s, which was their second objective agreed as experimental with the therapist. They didn’t want to continue the therapy as they considered that the main reason they came to therapy has been fulfilled. The first patient was able to manage better her daily activities without feeling pressured to be successful in all of them, because she learned to delegate tasks when possible whereas the second was pleased that he managed to master anger at work and at home, to have a better relationship with his sons and find meaningful ways to deal with difficult emotions.

We all agreed that the second objective should be treated experimentally and should not be considered as a major purpose of the therapy. However, at the therapist's proposal, they agreed that they had nothing to lose if they continue to put into practice techniques which may relieve them from the pain caused by IBS.

Cognitive-behaviour therapy reduced the distress and disability associated with IBS, improved the quality of life but not the frequency of bowel symptoms. This supports the proposed cognitive model for IBS, and cognitive-behaviour therapy appears to have its effect by altering the cognitive response to visceral. This therapy helps patients learn new ways to cope with and solve their problems as they gain a deeper understanding of their condition or circumstances. Patients will also learn to set realistic life goals and identify and change behaviours or thoughts that have negative effects on their lives.

One of the limitations in the present study was its limited number of participants which made the results difficult for generalization. Thus, further similar studies with bigger sample sizes are required. Another suggestion can be to compare this therapeutic method with other therapeutic methods such as individual cognitive behavioural therapy or other modalities and approaches of psychotherapy. Another limitation in this study was concerned with the lack of a control group, which calls for further research on the effectiveness of this method in the treatment of psychosomatic disorders based on the result of this study.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is often the treatment of choice for a psychosomatic disorder. Physical symptoms are an intrinsic part of the model in a way that does not allow for a simplistic mind-body split. Health-related anxieties cause enormous distress and impairment — whether the anxieties are realistic, exaggerated, or totally unfounded. The cognitive behavioural style of collaborative empiricism fits with the medical/scientific model and implicitly encourages the patient to take responsibility for self-management. Patients with excessive anxiety show a typical pattern of dysfunctional thoughts. Patients who are excessively anxious about their health typically develop a range of dysfunctional coping behaviours, including avoidance, checking and reassurance seeking, which have the effect of maintaining their anxiety. Patients with functional somatic symptoms frequently resist psychological interventions. Considerable skill may be required to engage with such a client. CBT uses a wide range of techniques to address the 'dysfunctional thoughts' and 'safety behaviours' encountered in health-related anxiety.

Psychological interventions are well-established, effective treatments for IBS, and CBT in particular has been rigorously tested in clinical trials and consistently demonstrates significant and long-lasting symptom improvement.

Cognitive behavioural therapy showed generally consistent benefits in terms of anxiety and aggression symptoms of my patients, but inconsistent outcomes regarding IBD symptoms.

Despite the well-documented advantages of CBT for IBS, it has been poorly disseminated, at least in our country and few patients have access to this treatment. The primary barrier to dissemination is the limited number of therapists with adequate training in GI psychology to provide this evidence-based intervention. Future developments in the field need to focus on training opportunities to equip more therapists to competently provide CBT for this population. Further efforts to develop telemedicine platforms for delivering this intervention will also improve accessibility for patients.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] American Psychiatric Association (2017), Diagnostic and Statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.), Washington DC
- [2] Brandt LJ, Chey WD, Foxx-Orenstein AE, et al. (2009), American College of Gastroenterology Task Force on Irritable Bowel Syndrome. An evidence based systematic review on the management of irritable bowel syndrome;104 (Suppl 1):S1–S35. [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
- [3] Beck, A.T. (1967). The diagnosis and management of depression. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [4] Ellis A. Reason and emotion in psychotherapy. New York: Lyle Stuart; 1962. [Google Scholar]

- [5] Gwee K, Leong YL, Graham C, et al. The role of psychological and biological factors in postinfective gut dysfunction. *Gut*. 1999;44(3):400–406. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
- [6] Hofmann SG. An introduction to modern CBT: Psychological solutions to mental health problems. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell; 2011. [Google Scholar]
- [7] Hofmann SG, Asmundson GJ, Beck AT. The science of cognitive therapy. *Behavior Therapy*. (in press). [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
- [8] Lacy BE, Mearin F, Chang L, et al. (2016), Bowel disorders. *Gastroenterology*;150:1393–1407. [Google Scholar]
- [9] Iamandescu, I.B., (1999), Elemente de psihosomatica generală și aplicată (Elements of general and applied psychosomatics), Infomedica, Bucharest
- [10] Kazdin, A.E., Weisz, .K. (1998), Identifying and developing empirically supported child and adolescent treatments, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66, 19-36. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2850.1997.tb00096.x
- [11] Kleinman A., (1986): *Social Origins of Distress and Disease*. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press,
- [12] Kleinman A (1988), *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition*. New York, Harper & Row,
- [13] Kellner R (1986), *Somatization and Hypochondriasis*. New York, Praeger-Greenwood,
- [14] Kellner R (1987), Psychological measurements in somatization and abnormal illness behavior. *Adv Psychosom Med* 17:101-118,
- [15] Kenyon F: Hypochondriacal states. *Br J Psychiatry* 129:1-14, 1976 Kirmayer LJ: Culture, affect and somatization. *Transcultural Psychiatric Research Review* 21:159-188, 237-262, 1984 Kirmayer LJ: Somatization and the social construction of illness experience, in *Illness Behavior: A Multidisciplinary Model*. Edited by McHugh S, Vallis TM. New York, Plenum, 1986, pp 111-133
- [16] Kinsinger SW, Ballou S, Keefer L. Snapshot of an integrated psychosocial gastroenterology service. *World J Gastroenterol*. 2015;21(6):1893–1899. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
- [17] Liebman, D., Minuchin, S., & Baker, L., (1974). The use of structural family therapy in treatment of intractable asthma. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 131, 241-253
- [18] Lackner JM, Gudleski GD, Keefer L, Krasner SS, Powell C, Katz LA. Rapid response to cognitive behavior therapy predicts treatment outcome in patients with irritable bowel syndrome. *Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol*. 2010; 8(5):426–432. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]]
- [19] Lackner JM, Mesmer C, Morley S, Dowzer C, Hamilton S. Psychological treatments for irritable bowel syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Consult Clin Psychol*. 2004;72(6):1100. [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
- [20] Lackner JM, Jaccard J, Krasner SS, Katz LA, Gudleski GD, Blanchard EB. How does cognitive behavioral therapy for IBS work? A mediational analysis of a randomized controlled trial. *Gastroenterology*. 2007;133:433–444. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
- [21] Ruediger Dahlk (2002), *Healing Power of Illness: Understanding What Your Symptoms Are Telling You*, Vega Books,
- [22] Sarah W Kinsinger (2017), Cognitive-behavioral therapy for patients with irritable bowel syndrome: current insights, *Psychol Res Behav Manag*. 2017; 10: 231–237, published online 2017 Jul 19. doi: 10.2147/PRBM.S120817
- [23] Stefan G. Hofmann, Ph.D., Anu Asnaani, M.A., Imke J.J. Vonk, M.A., Alice T. Sawyer, M.A., and Angela Fang, M.A., The Efficacy of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: A Review of Meta-analyses, *PMC* 2013 Feb 28., published in final edited form as: *Cognit Ther Res*. 2012 Oct 1; 36(5): 427–440, published online 2012 Jul 31. doi: 10.1007/s10608-012-9476-1, url: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3584580/>



**MCDSARE: 2019**  
**International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the**  
**Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education**

**SPIRU HARET-REFORMER OF THE ROMANIAN**  
**SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**Cristina-Mirela Popescu Barabaş (a)\***

(a) Ph.D. Student, Doctoral School of Humanities Sciences 'Ovidius' University, 124 Mamaia Street,  
Constanta, Romania, E-mail: [cristina.barabas1@gmail.com](mailto:cristina.barabas1@gmail.com)

***Abstract***

This article presents the activity of Spiru Haret, mathematician, scientist and an emblematic personality of his time, as his reform of the Romanian education system as Minister of Education, a function he held for three terms during liberal governments at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Appreciated for the rigor, work and professionalism he demonstrated throughout his entire activity, and at the same time vehemently attacked by his political opponents, Spiru Haret understood that reforming the education system lies at the heart of reforming Romanian society. He saw education as a key factor of social progress, despite the fact that the Romanian school was facing major problems at that time: lack of qualified teaching staff, lack of infrastructure and poverty, but also the precariousness faced by pupils and their parents. After an in-depth analysis of the previous legislation, Spiru Haret capitalized what he believed will improve the Romanian education. Considered the founder of the modern Romanian education, Spiru Haret aims to meet the needs of a country that had just acquired its independence, and that was in the process of building an unitary national state.

**Keywords:** education reform; literacy; education law; Spiru Haret; Education Minister;

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this paper is to highlight Spiru Haret's contribution to the reform of Romanian education. The education system condition was not at all encouraging, even after thirty-five years have passed from the institution of the first law of education, the 'public education law', one of Alexandru Ioan Cuza's great reforms.

Although the law imposed compulsory primary education, it is obvious that this provision has not been implemented, and thus, the 1889 census showed a huge illiteracy rate: 78%, or as high as 84% for the rural population. It is therefore obvious that the law facilitated free and compulsory education was not only unattainable, but had also become inaccurate.

One of the causes of this disastrous state was, in fact, the lack of qualified human resources, as the same census showed that the number of teachers at that time was only half of the number needed, alongside a lack of educational infrastructure.

Some of the problems that prevented the progress of the school and, implicitly, of the Romanian society were, in Spiru Haret's view, the emphasis on instruction rather than education, the predominant focus on the theoretical side, the lack of legislative coherence, the lack of qualified staff (more than 23% of the departments in the secondary and high schools were filled by substitute teachers. An unusual problem, specific for the predominantly agrarian Romanian economy at that time, was the participation of children labour in agricultural work (Schifirneț, 2009).

Nevertheless, Spiru Haret had an optimistic view on education reform, being an advocate of the fact that coherent and unitary legislation, and consistency in its implementation could have led to a reformed system. Haret is among the few Romanian scientists, who, having a solid international reputation grace to the value of his scientific work, has advocated to reduce the great gaps that our country had towards Western Europe. Beneficiary of a scholarship in France, and awarded a PhD in Mathematics at Sorbonne with a thesis highly appreciated by great mathematicians of the time, Spiru Haret refuses a teaching position in a university in Paris, choosing to return to his country. Other great Romanian pedagogues that studied abroad, using the best practices learnt in France, Germany or Switzerland, take part alongside Spiru are in the implementation of reforms that would change and modernize the Romanian education.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

### SPIRU HARET-EMBLEMATIC PERSONALITY OF THE ERA

Spiru Haret was the first Romanian to be awarded a PhD in Mathematics in Paris. Parisian journals wrote great reviews against his thesis: 'The invariability of the great axes of planetary orbits (Schifirneț, 2009).

Although he was offered a position at the University of Grenoble, he preferred to return back to Romania and use his knowledge to change the status quo, being aware of the precariousness of the education system of the time. Haret has combined scientific research activity with the organization and management of the Romanian school, being an important advocate of the Romanian education reform of his time, not as a politician but rather from the position of specialist.

Having returned to the country, he became a professor (1878-1910), a member of the Romanian Academy, and served as Minister of Public Instruction and Cults for 3 mandates: 1897-1899, 1901-1904, and 1907-1910 (Visan-Miu, 2014). However, as a politician, he elaborated and submitted to Parliament's attention legislative acts that determined the establishment of the school as an essential institution of society: 'Law on Secondary and Higher Education', 1898, and the 'Law on Professional Education', 1899.

Both laws have been amended in 1901. The first organized secondary education on two cycles, with three majors (modern, real and classical) with a duration of eight years, and introduced a compulsory criteria for university teachers to 'have an original scientific contribution' (Schifirneț, 2009), turning universities into scientific research centers. The latter regulated the introduction of primary education in several schools across the country, especially in rural areas. In 1904, he drafted a bill for private pre-university education, a law that was harshly criticized by his political opponents and later withdrawn.

He was preoccupied with the status and dignity of teachers, and included in its reform program the decisions needed to achieve this goal. Spiru Haret saw the teacher as the main actor in the process of modernising the society. From this perspective, he regulated everything that was relevant to teachers' condition, ensuring both good financial and social status. He prioritised primary school, perceived as the basis of education and also as a positive factor that could help peasantry overcome their precarious social condition. Given his intention to reform the rural life, he has been considered by many of his contemporaries as the moral author of the Peasant revolt in 1907. Especially in rural areas, teaching staff had a great influence on the electorate, being able to influence its political views.

As teacher, Spiru Haret was recognized for the punctuality with which he attended his courses, his competence, the clarity, the precision and the rigor of his demonstrations. Throughout his life, he remained preoccupied with precision and accuracy. In 1883 he was appointed General school inspector. Grace to this position, he travels the country, inspects the schools and writes a report one year later, which he then publishes and presents at the Academy's awards in 1885.



### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS. THE LAW OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

In the Explanatory Memorandum for the draft law presented in Parliament, Spiru Haret points out that ‘the school legislation no longer meets the needs of the country in any of its main points’ and that it is a hindrance to the cultural development of the country, instead of supporting it. It also emphasizes on the recruitment process for teaching staff, which he calls ‘primitive and faulty’, and a major danger to education’s very own existence (Schifirneţ, 2009).

In conclusion, he presented this bill draft which aimed to regulate the activity of gymnasiums, high schools, girls’ secondary schools and universities. Through this law, the education remained free for the Romanian citizens, and foreigners were only admitted on the unoccupied places.

The organization of secondary education was to be different for boys and girls. Secondary education of boys was to take place in gymnasium and high schools. In fact, the eight years of high school were so divided that the first four years of the lower course, the gymnasium were the same for all pupils, and the higher course gave the student the choice between three majors: classical, which predominantly implied the study of the classical ancient languages; real, dealing mainly with the study of mathematics; and the physical-natural sciences, which involved both foreign languages the mathematics.

To support this structure, Spiru Haret exemplifies that this system has already been applied in other European countries, and argues that it is impossible for a pupil to obtain satisfactory knowledge of both classical and real subjects in such a short period of time, thus it is preferable that one majors in the best suitable subject area. He states that: ‘the in-depth study of classical languages is difficult and requires a long time. Those who to commit to it are no longer able to pay equal attention to the study of modern sciences and languages’. Thus, for the first time, there is a distinction between what nowadays we call today ‘common core’ and specific subjects.

Spiru Haret criticized the 1864 law for not providing real sciences education, focusing exclusively on the study of Latin and Greek; and at the same time he emphasized on the advantages of his newly proposed system: a more rational use of the time spent by young people in school, a self-contained existence of gymnasiums, so that students who did not want to follow the upcoming course receive recognition of the first four years of study, and the option of choosing one of the three majors at a slightly older age, when the possibility of having already discovered one’s inclinations was significantly higher.

As per girls’ secondary education, the bill maintains the previous organisation form, branding them as Secondary schools – Grade I, with a duration of five years. However, we also see the establishment of Secondary schools – Grade II, which recruited their students among the girls studying for Grade I, offering a program ‘adapted to girls’ skills and needs as future mothers of families’ (Schifirneţ, 2009). The establishment of these upper secondary schools represents a breakthrough to the previous law, which did not stipulate them.

By increasing secondary education length to 8 years, he gives girls the time to benefit of a solid and varied education. The girls could, therefore, either graduate Grade I Secondary School after 5 years, or to opt, during the Fourth year of study, for the upper Secondary Secondary School (Grade II) for four additional years.

We notice a difference in the organization of the education cycle for girls versus boys. While the boys studied only four years, the girls studied five to graduate from the Secondary School. Spiru Haret explains this organizational difference as follows: ‘We have allowed five years for these schools, so that they do not pile up the information and do not overwhelm the pupils, as they need greater care than the boys’ (Schifirneţ, 2009). He is aware, however, that there is a large number of girls trying to pass the baccalaureate or even obtain a degree, but he appreciates that it is only in the view of working in education. In the same time, he warns that this will no longer be possible as obtaining a position in education will no longer be possible without specialized pedagogical studies, and he appreciates that this will ‘reduce immediately, if not efface the current that urged so many girls to compromise their health in a profession beyond their power and without any practical use.’

Therefore, Spiru Haret is not an advocate of absolute equality in Secondary education between boys and girls, thinking that boys graduate high school aiming to be admitted to university, while girls’ education should be limited to graduating the secondary cycle.

As a result of the direct contact with the realities of the Romanian education system, we can state that Spiru Haret was a Minister who fully understood its real needs, and his activity is closely linked to the two laws mentioned above.

#### 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to treasure this period in the history of Romanian education to which one looks back with nostalgia, and to highlight the fact that the today's society needs to commemorate the great personality of Spiru Haret, the artisan of the reform that led to the progress of the Romanian education.

#### 5. RESEARCH METHODS

For this study, the researcher has chosen the method based on data collection, opting for indirect techniques, literature review, specific for socio-human sciences. The researcher has reviewed various scientific papers in both the field of history, but also related disciplines, as well as Internet sources. This information has highlighted the specific aspects of the general and particular contexts in which the investigated phenomenon integrates.

#### 6. FINDINGS

Perhaps the most important indicator of the success of Spiru Haret's reform is that, in 1912, two years after the end of his last term, the census shows that the literate population doubled its numbers.

Assuming a difficult mission, a raise in the intellectual and economic level of peasantry through education, Spiru Haret has led to real transformations of the Romanian society, especially for the rural society. After more than thirty years dedicated to the Romanian education, critically ill, he retires in 1911 (Adamescu, 1936). On this occasion, all of his collaborators, mainly teachers, celebrated his activity and achievements with a banquet, a grand manifestation of gratitude and love, a celebration that Spiru Haret considered to be the most beautiful day of his life.

#### 7. CONCLUSIONS

Although very little present in the collective memory and consciousness, and hardly used as a role model or inspiration, Spiru Haret's contribution to the Romanian education reform is incontestable. Although the three mandates as Minister of education only added up to 8 years, he made important changes for the Romanian school: he supported the reform of education in rural areas, setting up the educational infrastructure for over 1200 schools, developed the practical/applicative side of education, encouraged extra-curricular activities which cultivated a feeling of attachment and commitment to the country, physical education in schools, introduced transport facilities for students, set up canteens and boarding schools, supported publishers and publications, was concerned by the pedagogic training of teachers, introduced admission exams for secondary education and graduation exams for high school, reorganized university structure, increasing the number of faculties.

He was particularly concerned about the development of the practical aspect of education and avoiding excessive theoretical frameworks, ensuring equal opportunities between rural and urban students and pursuing the development of an education adapted to the economic, social and cultural requirements of the period in which he lived.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: a brief history* Gheorghe Adamescu, *The life and activity of Spiru C. Haret [Viața și activitatea lui Spiru C. Haret]*, Bucharest, Cartea Românească, 1936.
- [2] Marin Niculescu, *Spiru Haret – National pedagogue [Spiru Haret-pedagog național]*, Bucharest, 1932.
- [3] *Work of Spiru Haret [Operele lui Spiru Haret]*, vol. I, II edition, Bucharest, Editura Comunicare.ro, 2009, In: Constantin Schifirneț editor
- [4] *Work of Spiru Haret [Operele lui Spiru Haret]*, vol. IV, II edition, Bucharest, Editura Comunicare.ro, 2009, In: Constantin Schifirneț editor
- [5] <http://ceascadecultura.ro/ServeArticol.aspx?idart=3412>, (accessed March 18, 2009).

- [6] <https://tudorvisanmiu.wordpress.com/2014/09/11/spiru-haret-si-reforma-sistemului-educational-model-pentru-contemporani-2/> (accessed March 18, 2009).
- [7] <http://andreimarga.eu/despre-legislatia-lui-spiru-haret/> (accessed March 18, 2009).
- [8] [http://www.agir.ro/univers-ingineresc/numar-1-2013/spiru-haret-si-invatamanul-romanesc\\_3924.html](http://www.agir.ro/univers-ingineresc/numar-1-2013/spiru-haret-si-invatamanul-romanesc_3924.html) (accessed March 18, 2009).
- [9] <https://www.jurnalistii.ro/constantin-angelescu-medicul-care-a-reformat-sistemul-de-invataman-interbelic-scoala-cat-mai-multa-scoala-cat-mai-buna/> (accessed April 16, 2009).
- [10] <http://www.araratonline.com/un-om-de-munte-mihai-haret/> (accessed March 18, 2009).



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcfsare.2019.3.206-210>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### BEST PRACTICES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF THE FABLE USING THE WALDORF METHOD

Drăghici Maria-Gabriela (a) \*

\*Corresponding author

(a Ph.D. Student, Doctoral School of Facultatea de Psihologie și Științele Educației, University of Bucharest, Romania, E-mail: [m\\_gabriela.draghici@yahoo.com](mailto:m_gabriela.draghici@yahoo.com),

#### *Abstract*

Waldorf education is an alternative education system which brings out pupils' qualities, which are defined as cognitive-emotional skills and capacities, as well as artistic talents, in order to neutralise/combat negative states stemming from harmful emotional experiences. Teacher Janet Lansbury claims that there is no such thing as a bad child; there are just adults who are insufficiently informed, as well as mentally and emotionally unprepared to cope with the manifestations of the new generation of children. The Waldorf school attempts to solve these issues and provide the system with an alternative based on understanding divine creation by starting from the physical elements encountered in nature. The primordial existence of the child in the universe and his/her arrival into the world constitute the basis of the emotional manifestations he/she experiences throughout life. Moreover, subjectively judging a child by permanently harbouring negative thoughts leads to such thoughts being unconsciously conveyed to the child by the adult, as the human brain possesses the capacity to transfer impulses through the sphere of the universe. The traditional education system has registered minor changes by adopting alternative practices in order to encourage wellness among pupils. That is why, in the present article, we have set out to document the observations made following a German language lesson at a state school in Bucharest, a lesson focused on teaching and learning a fable based on the ideas of the Waldorf alternative education system.

**Keywords:** fable; waldorf school; alternative system; teaching; learning;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The literature regarding the Waldorf system encourages teaching the fable in second grade, when students are aged 7 to 9. In reality, the fable is studied in the pupils' mother tongue, but the foreign language teacher may introduce it a year later, in third grade, when pupils' capacity of understanding has increased.

This age is characterised by Bernard Lievegoed as being the onset of an awakening: a child's thinking is capable of developing personalised visions which move from perception to image-based thought. Pupils create a closed world for themselves with inaccurate, mobile, fluctuating, active inner images. This stage emphasises memory, representation, the pleasure of rhythmic repetition, imitation. In this stage, the foreign language teacher helps children develop their capacity to receive, convey, and understand oral messages through songs, poems, games, storytelling, short conversations. The principles of foreign language teaching and learning stated by the disciples of the Waldorf school entail the following: experiencing and imitating, practising and learning, seizing on connections (Richter, 1995, p. 121). Under such circumstances, the teacher must prove very skilful – he/she needs to be an artist, a poet, a creator, as pupils expect him/her to offer vivid, action-filled stories in a manner which should enable life truths to make their way into their inner world (Lievegoed, 2011).

According to the Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language for Educational Purposes (Dicționarului Explicativ Școlar al Limbii Române) (2003), a fable is defined as a short allegorical story in which the author uses personified animals and objects to portray moral truths by satirising vices and traits of the human character with the aim of correcting them.

Fables make use of allegory, narration, and dialogue, description being of secondary importance or even absent. The action in a fable is reduced in size and based on a strong conflict followed by an unmediated denouement. The ending is highlighted through a moral, which can be either explicit – stated by the author – or implicit – deduced by the reader after having read the story.

The relationship between children's developmental stages and the features of the fable play a significant role in the psycho-emotional training and development of pupils aged 7 to 9. Observing certain attitudes and behaviours, understanding and verbalising them, are abilities which will naturally make their way into a child's senses and experiences. Rudolf Steiner (1977, p. 90) affirms in a study that 'talking via sounds is a localisation of total human activity'.

Third-grade pupils find themselves on the threshold between second and fourth grade, between imitation and the development of ample thinking. With children this age, a teacher will be faced with restless, aggressive (especially during breaks) and curious pupils. This phenomenon is caused by the so-called Rubicon developmental stage, which pupils experience unconsciously at the age of 8-9.

The Rubicon stage becomes manifest once children have changed their teeth and physical appearance, which leads to states of unrest, frustrations, and unusual behaviours in pupils. In the 21st century, Rubicon sets in earlier, starting with the age of 7-8, and manifests itself more intensely compared to the age of 9 – which was established by Rudolf Steiner in the 20th century.

This has been mentioned in order to enable the teacher to understand the importance of the fable and to anticipate potential psycho-emotional manifestations in the pupils. Representation, interpretation, and the involvement of the pupils in the learning act offer new perspectives and vivid spiritual experiences to children.

Animals play an important part in the psychological and psychosomatic development of pupils. According to the aspects of nature, which were created by divinity, human character harmoniously intertwines with the characteristics of the animals, insects, and objects out in the world.

A pupil's desire to know himself/herself and to understand the world around is kindled by the teacher's positive and enthusiastic attitude, meant to stir his/her curiosity. As noted by Tobias Richter (2001), a 7-9 year-old pupil is subconsciously marked by the following questions: 'can you really see me?', 'can you help me meet the world?' and guides the teacher in the search for the right answer within the latter's practice with his/her pupils.

The experiences of adults are bland, unimaginative and lack the stylistic embellishments of storytelling. Through fables, pupils discover truths and features identical to those in the world around them, which makes it easier for them to find themselves and recognise their own actions.

Fables help pupils realise that the positive and negative situations occurring in other worlds are identical to those in their own world. The novelties which permeate a pupil's spirit give the teacher the chance to remind the pupil that the latter should not behave like 'the fox' or 'the lion' in the story. Pupils enjoy identifying with the outside world more than being compared to their classmates.

Highlighting characteristics borrowed from animals and objects offers pupils the possibility of correcting their negative attitude, as, to the difference of adults, most children are endowed with a love for animals.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

When it comes to discipline, primary, middle and high school teachers are faced with classrooms full of digital pupils, who often have inadequate interests for their age and are mentally tired, upset, irritated, spoiled, and disrespectful. To what extent are all these characteristics analysed in real time? How many of the traits mentioned above pertain to mental illness, age characteristics or negative emotional experiences? Ross W. Green (2014) finds that the emotional manifestations experienced by pupils are caused by certain undeveloped skills.

As far as studying foreign languages is concerned, the traditional education system directs modern-German teachers strictly towards the development of communication in the foreign language. According to the Communication in the Modern Language 1 ('Comunicare în limba modernă 1') curriculum, pupils must be able to react to the teacher's instructions, recognise the position in space and the name of objects, show curiosity regarding the topic of a film, song or image, give renditions of short messages, songs or poems, participate in group activities involving creativity – carrying out projects such as posters, advertisements, congratulation cards, collages, photo albums. For the third grade, the following requirements are added: answering the question regarding the topic of the text..., choosing the right answer, answering questions with 'true' or 'false', carrying out simple tasks on the computer, choosing a suitable image to illustrate the meaning of the text, deciphering simple messages from their classmates, friends, teachers, filling in the gaps in a text, writing short messages, SMS messages, wishes on congratulation cards, etc.

To the difference of the traditional education system, which promotes the development of cognition, the Waldorf school capitalises on openness towards the principles of nature, which involve physical growth in harmony with nature. Based on this idea, this alternative education system stresses the child's personal development and the development of what the child represents on a spiritual level.

The teacher has the obligation to combine teaching and learning with the spiritual education and development of pupils while avoiding technological means. Pupils' development must be based on their own images, without being subject to influences.

However, despite the fact that parents seek alternative ideas for the education of their children, external factors – such as activities involving technology or fast food – influence them and make them stray from that which they truly want for their child and from that which the Waldorf school teaches them. Based on discussions with the parents and observations gathered in a report, the teacher has the task and capacity to improve the behaviour of a difficult pupil, provided that the former also takes serious steps to that effect on a spiritual level.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTION

Our research has been carried out with the purpose of providing beginner teachers the chance to realise that German language classes can be held in a creative manner, based on the ages and temperaments of the pupils, while still observing the school curriculum.

The questions posed as part of our research were limited to determining to what extent the learning process can be combined with discipline. To what extent can we have a German language lesson during which a pupil can develop that which he/she already possesses, i.e. the capacity to learn foreign languages?

As a German proverb says, 'Aller Anfang ist schwer.' – all beginnings are hard, yet one might say that they are also the most important. The teacher, who masters the art of instruction, has the capacity to make a pupil love discipline.

## 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Involving third-grade classes in this research has constituted a step forward in the way of innovation in a Bucharest state school. The school curriculum was not completely abandoned, as the teacher did take into account the skills, applications, and proposals suggested in it.

The Waldorf school grants pupils the trust they deserve: repetition is carried out constantly through various activities and the general disposition of the class is permanently monitored. Information must be given time to 'rest' between lessons; thus, it will not be insisted on up to the point of exhausting the children.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODS

Throughout the German language classes, the observation method, activities, applications, and mobility and communication development exercises were employed. Pupils who were part of the traditional education system were involved in Waldorf-style activities, were monitored throughout the German lesson and asked to express their opinions at the end.

During the organisation part, the German language teacher introduced the rhythmic aspect which Rudolf Steiner claims in his studies kindles pupils' will and prepares them to receive the new knowledge that the day brings.

The German language lesson was carried out in a creative manner. Pupils worked together as part of the activities proposed by the teacher. The aim of the lesson was to move from one activity to the next in a natural way, so that pupils should feel the safety of knowing what they have to do and so that what they do should have an inner motivation, stemming from their own will.

The teacher advised the pupils to allow themselves to be led by their instincts, by what they feel.

Conveying, receiving and understanding a fable in German at this age is possible by following the stages below:

- processing the fable (which requires knowledge, creativity and skill on the part of the teacher). This implies modifying the original text, so that the teacher can present the pupils with a fable made up of accessible elements of vocabulary and items of grammar which are usable in conversation and can thus be perceived, pronounced, and memorised by pupils;
- the reading, reciting and dramatisation of the text by the teacher;
- creating images and turning them into representations starting from the text of the fable;
- performing a choral reading of the text, involving the students in the act of receiving and perceiving the topic, the action, and the behavioural traits featured;
- involving the students in the learning act by using role playing and creative exercises for the stimulation of language and the mobilisation of thinking.

The German language teacher focused on the fable *The Ant and the Grasshopper* during four German language classes, by employing the following activities:

- revising the previous lesson, 'Autumn' (pupils recalled the names of insects, animals, fruits, vegetables and other elements in nature);
- puppetry (creating a short play – the teacher silently handled a plush ant and grasshopper);
- encouraging the pupils to answer the question 'what have you noticed?';
- repeating the play (the teacher repeats the play using mimicking, gestures, and a short text drafted based on the pupils' ideas);
- encouraging pupils to repeat the text after the teacher and watch the play;
- encouraging the pupils to come up with a title for the story;
- portraying the characters by drawing them on a white sheet of paper;
- stimulating the pupils' sensitivity with the aid of the songs 'Herbststurm' and 'Max, der Igel, liebt den Winterschlaf', tapping the beat;
- reciting the fable with the adequate intonation in front of the class; doing a choral reading of the fable; reading the fable and dramatising it together with the pupils; doing choral readings of the fable to express different moods; the fable was sung in canon, the teacher being the one who proposed the tune;
- the didactic game 'the snake' (identifying sentences by delimiting words), the find-a-word puzzle (identifying words on the vertical and horizontal axes within a square grid containing letters), the Memory game, identifying images (which the teacher places on a desk) related to the text titled 'What is missing?' – identifying the images containing the scenes which are missing, dictation (one pupil reads while his/her desk mate draws);
- role playing – the children perform the play individually, as a group, or divided by rows.

## 6. FINDINGS

These German language classes, which spanned a short period of time, gave students the possibility to become acquainted with a different way of carrying out a lesson.

During the applied lessons, the following aspects were noted: cheerful, curious pupils, willing to learn and open to receive what the teacher had to offer. During the following German language classes, pupils felt compelled to ask: 'are we playing the game we played last time?'

Preparing the German language lesson gave the teacher the chance to carry out detailed research, find online pages with didactic materials, articles, and books on various topics characteristic of the Waldorf school. All this helped the teacher enhance his/her experience and didactic competence.

To the difference of the traditional education system, this alternative system kept the pupils in a constant state of physical and intellectual mobility. Based on the author's own experience, a teacher's lack of creativity bores pupils and makes them talk during classes.

## 7. CONCLUSION

According to Adrian Condrea, who teaches at the Waldorf School in Iași, the teacher has a moral duty, namely that of conveying more than just knowledge. Teaching a lesson using the Waldorf approach entails the use of diversified materials and activities, so that pupils should permanently have the feeling and impression that 'something new is going on at school'.

Being in constant motion can generate spiritual changes in pupils. Irrespective of the education system they are in – traditional or alternative, pupils love fairytales, stories, discoveries, and openness towards nature and all that is new.

All that a teacher needs to do is instil curiosity in pupils. With that in mind, pupils must be aware of one golden rule promoted by this alternative system: if the teacher offers something, then the pupil has the duty to offer something in return – in our case, the pleasure of participating in activities, of acquiring knowledge in a natural way, and of proving his/her knowledge and inner abilities by answering the teacher's questions.

Enriching the school curriculum with innovative teaching and learning suggestions and activities helps beginner teachers develop in a positive, free, and original way. Teachers are advised to emphasise the search for solutions and avoid labelling.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Bettlhem, B. (2017). *The uses of enchantment*. Bucharest: Univers Publishing House.
- [2] Kiersch, J. (1999). *Fremdsprachen in der Waldorfschule (trad. Limbile străine în Școala Waldorf)*. Cluj-Napoca: Triade Publishing House.
- [3] Green, W., R. (2014). *Lost at school – Why our Kids with Behavioral Challenges are falling through the cracks and how we can help them*. Bucharest: Orizonturi Publishing House.
- [4] Hâncu, I., D. (2003). *Dicționar Explicativ Școlar*. Bucharest: Science Publishing House.
- [5] Lansbury, J. (2014). *No bad Kids: Toddler discipline without shame*. Bucharest: Univers Publishing House.
- [6] Lievegoed, B. (2011). *Phases of Childhood*. Bucharest: Univers Publishing House.
- [7] Richter, T. (2001). *Pädagogischer auftrag und unterrichtsziele einer Freien Waldorfschule (trad. Sarcina Pedagogică și obiectivele de învățare ale unei școli Waldorf)*. Cluj-Napoca: Triade Publishing House.

## Webography

- [8] [https://media.hotnews.ro/media\\_server1/document-2014-10-14-18303589-0-programa-limba-moderna-clasele-iii.pdf](https://media.hotnews.ro/media_server1/document-2014-10-14-18303589-0-programa-limba-moderna-clasele-iii.pdf)
- [9] <https://www.didactic.ro/revista-electronica/revista-electronica-didactic-ro-issn-aa844-4679-septembrie-2-aaaa/predarea-scris-cititului-in-clasa-a-ii-a-in-alternativa-educationala-waldorf-inst-adrian-condrea-liceul-waldorf-iasi>
- [10] <https://compuneriromana.weebly.com/fabula.html>





**MCDSARE: 2019**  
**International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the**  
**Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education**

**MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE IN THE**  
**EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

**Luminița Preda (a)\***

(a) Professor, Dambovită, Romania,

E-mail: [luminitapreda31@yahoo.com](mailto:luminitapreda31@yahoo.com)

***Abstract***

This article focuses on the importance of motivation in the educational system. The aim is to achieve not only a theoretical analysis of the management of motivation and performance in the educational system, but rather to capture the roles that motivation have in the educational activity and through which it can contribute to the increase of pupils' school performances, to the success at school. The motivation in the educational system was analyzed not only in relation to the concrete context of measurement and appreciation of pupils' school performance, but also as an activity that reveals the internal efficiency of the didactic process and its variables, as well as the relations between the educational system and the socio-economic system.

**Keywords:** education reform; motivation; success education; work satisfaction;

**1. INTRODUCTION**

From a socio-economic perspective, motivation is justified by the fact that education is a vast social activity, to which the economic supersystem provides its operating conditions, formulating requirements for the results it needs to achieve. During this post-revolutionary period many social changes have taken place, which has led to demoralization and disorientation of the youth, who do not want to give up their free time.

Approaches to understanding motivation are different because many theorists have developed their own opinions and theories about motivation. They approached the motivation from different points of view, from ideas determined by the social and economic conditions of that time. None of the approaches can be considered the most correct. Each contributes to the understanding of human behavior and has its limitations.

The general policy of any institution has as a goal the achievement of performance as an expression of the effectiveness of the organization. As a mechanism specific to the open systems, with the central regulation-self-regulation function, the evaluation ensures the reporting of the results obtained in a certain activity, to a set of domain-specific criteria in order to make an optimal decision.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. MANAGER'S CONSIDERATIONS

According to the dictionary definition of "management" - in its most general sense - it refers to "the activity and the art of leadership". Not yet restricted to the economic area, the term extends its applicability to various areas. This is how his education in the educational field was called "educational management".

Management is a relatively recent science that has experienced a prominent development since the Second World War in the industrial field and has been expanding in all fields of activity.

In this vision of education as a kind of company or company run by one or more managers, the end product is not a concrete, palpable one. This gives it the specificity, but also a greater degree of difficulty in the educational leadership act. When you want to lead a profitable trading company, you realize viable products with an assured marketplace. And making the product almost entirely depends on you. But when you are involved in an educational "company", "products" are people that you have to turn to a social and personal profit. And here comes the difficulty element, because the final product results from an interaction between two human beings that you can not fully control (Alexandra Modrescu, 1994, 69). Educational management can be manifested at different levels: at the macro level, global leadership of a country's education, intermediary - leading a teaching institution - and micro - at a class level.

An efficient performance management system focuses on the success of each employee / employee. He gives him enough support so he / she knows what the organization expects from him / her in terms of performance. Provides sufficient flexibility so that the skills and potential of the employee are valued. At the same time, it provides sufficient control so that the employee understands the goals of the organization, what it is trying to accomplish, and how its work contributes to these goals. (Paraschiv Vagu, Ion Stegăroiu, 2006, 29).

Managers are increasingly concerned about motivation in their work, all the more so as employees want recognition and imitation in meeting their needs, without external authority and control taking effect in the past. In order to explain motivation in the first place, we try to understand the "why" behaviors: "Why does an individual act differently than another?", "Why does an individual cease to do a certain thing though he is necessary?" what the same reason can lead to different behaviors? (Stancioiu Ion, Militaru Gheorghe, 1998, 59).

## 3. SHORT RETROSPECTIVE ON MOTIVATIVE THEORIES

From a historical point of view, the theoretical motivation concerns have come in a similar way to scientific management.

The first concerns were reported at the end of the nineteenth century both among management practitioners and among psychologists (Coats Charles, 1997, 32).

T.W. Taylor, the founder of the administrative scientific management, formulates a series of principles of motivation in work:

- Selection of executors after the ability to execute the instructions correctly. Applying this principle has led to the rationalization of work through standardization, by eliminating unnecessary movements.

- choosing physically capable high performance, which is subsequently used in vocational selection, training and promotion;

- the corresponding salary that triggered the concerns about the complex process of motivation;

Taylor focuses on addressing efficiency **and** gains in two major directions: standardizing work through standardization and using money as an incentive. According to him, the desire to have money generates uniformity for people and represents almost the only explanation of the work.

Gradually, however, employers refuse to increase the amounts owed by overpayments, and rebuild them. This attitude creates disaffection among employees, stimulating the emergence and development of trade union movements.

Among these, he identified relational factors that satisfy an essential need of man, as a social being, respectively the need to be considered a significant, significant member of a group. Since motivation implies on the one hand necessities-tensions and on the other hand behaviors-behaviors, from the specialized research, two categories of motivational theories can be distinguished:

focused on the needs study;  
focused on behavioral studies.

Neo-hierarchy theory or need pyramid is one of the most well-known theories developed by the famous American psychologist Abraham Maslow. He develops the theory of needs generated by deficits (food, sex, protection), development (competence, social recognition, independence), and metaphors (truth, beauty, order, harmony, simplicity).

The theory of needs comprises two categories of elements: human needs classified into five categories in the first version of the 1943 theory and seven categories in the latest version of 1954 and their hierarchy principle:

physiological needs  
security needs  
social needs  
needs for appreciation and esteem  
the need for knowledge  
aesthetic needs  
self-assessment needs

The principle of need hierarchy is one of the strengths of A. Maslow's theory. It is expressed by the following assertions:

- a need is all the more unlikely, as it is continuously satisfied. Thus, the idea that the motivating needs are unsatisfied. In the organization, employees are more motivated and enthusiastic about what they are looking for than what they have already acquired.

- a need does not appear as a motivation if the lower one is satisfied. For example, in an organization dominated by the fear of dismissal, security motivation is strongly reactivated, with the rest of the needs losing its motivation. The need to join the group disappears in the face of unemployment.

- the emergence of a new need after the satisfaction of the previous one is not realized suddenly, but gradually. The motivational process, although graduated and timed, depending on the level of satisfaction, allows the simultaneous triggering of two or more needs. This phenomenon ensures a certain dynamic of human behavior, respecting the subjective plan and the occurrence of satisfaction.

- the order of necessities may vary over time for an individual or for individuals in different societies. Depending on national or regional culture, security needs may be prioritized in certain societies, while priority may be given to others:

- Different people with the same needs can opt for ways, different behaviors to meet them.

- some needs must be met permanently (sleep, food, shelter). Once their satisfaction is working continuously and correctly, people can direct their efforts to meeting higher order needs.

#### **4. SATISFACTION AT WORK IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

In strict sense, work satisfaction is a positive emotion, resulting from the evaluation of the work done. Satisfaction occurs when the individual's expectations about his work are deceived. For example, if the security conditions in which the work is done are other than what is desired, then misery and insecurity will cause dissatisfaction.

Work satisfaction is determined by the individual assessment of the work performed by an employee. The evaluation is personal and internal or partly external, influenced by manager and colleagues; however, ultimately determinant are the feelings about the results.

In the context of research on different types of motivations of organizational behavior, to establish incentives able to evoke them, it was performed a large number of researches on satisfaction or dissatisfaction of people in work. Satisfaction and especially the relationship between it and the performance of work have been researched both from the perspective of general social psychology and from the perspective of organizational psychology

Surveys on work satisfaction / dissatisfaction have been directed in two directions: on the establishment of factors capable of creating such subjective states; on their ordering and hierarchy, to determine their weight.

When we talk about the first category of research - so to determine the factors of satisfaction / dissatisfaction - we can not fail to refer to F.Herzberg's theory, B. Mausner, N. Snyderman (1959) with a

widespread dissemination in social psychology, which generated a multitude of experimental research oriented on its direction of verification.

They establish two categories of factors, some of which bring satisfaction and others dissatisfaction. Thus, the first category includes five factors (achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement) that produce satisfaction, involves changes in attitudes durable, long lasting and were called valuation factors or content; The second category includes all five factors (policy unit, technical competence, pay, relations between people, work conditions) that cause dissatisfaction involve changes attitudinal short and, given that refers to man's relationship with the environment perform their work, have been called ambient and context factors;

- the two categories of factors are independent of each other, in the sense that each of them produces specific effects (some satisfy, others do not). They therefore have a unipolar character;

- factors in the second category have no role in producing satisfaction, where authors conclude that their insurance suppress dissatisfaction, but not automatically provides a state of satisfaction, these factors can be used so rarely to motivate people . They can therefore prevent negative feelings, but also the states of satisfaction.

## 5. ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS OF SATISFACTION

Satisfaction is increased by work that is mentally stimulating and exciting, without being overwhelming (Curry, Wakefield, Price, Mueller, 1986, and Greenberg, 1993). A mental stimulus work is the one that demonstrates the skills and abilities of employees and allows them to set their own pace of work. Employees perceive such work as important and engaging personally. It also provides the employee with a clear feed-back on his work.

Wright's research (1990) shows that this factor generally refers to individuals who see a career in their work (those who want to be promoted and have a long-term orientation) and not to those who consider their position as temporary. Those who do not have a career orientation tend to be satisfied not by the issues of work themselves, but by the pleasant social conditions.

### The wage

Many research and studies have found a positive relationship between income and work satisfaction: the higher the pay, the greater the satisfaction. More important for an employee's satisfaction is not the actual amount of salary, but the perceived equity. A study of 248 employees concluded that the more they believed they were getting the wages they deserve, the more they were more satisfied with their income. The study also showed that the elderly were more satisfied with the salary than the youngest; those with higher education and level were less satisfied with their income than those with less education and a lower level post.

### Possibilities of promotion

The possibility of rapid promotion that management, in accordance with a fair system, also contributes to work satisfaction. Extensive promotional opportunities make an important contribution to work satisfaction because promotions contain a number of well-valued personal value signals. Some of these signals may be material (such as salary increases that accompany them), while others are of a social nature (recognition within the organization and increased prestige in the community). Of course, there are cultural and individual differences in what people see as a fair promotion system. Some employees would prefer a system based on seniority, while others might want a system based solely on work performance.

The importance of promotion opportunities in determining job satisfaction is not the same for all employees. For managers and professionals, promotion is part of the career and is therefore of great importance. For skilled and unskilled workers, promotion is less likely and less sought after.

### Colleagues

Many studies have shown that the work group is one of the most important components of satisfaction. The human relations movement has emphasized the importance of social factors at work, and even though it has underestimated the importance of other factors such as wages and the content of work, the claim is still valid. Friendly colleagues, caring and tolerant, but especially who help us achieve some results, contribute to work satisfaction.

### Pleasant working conditions

Research has shown that work satisfaction is reduced in crowded conditions, high noise, extreme temperatures and poor air quality (Sundstrom, 1986 by Greenberg, 1993). Although these factors are not directly related to work, but to the context in which they work, they have a negative impact on work satisfaction.

Participating in decision-making

When employees are able to make decisions, they increase their job satisfaction, especially if their decisions are important for their work and if employee participation is genuine (Miller & Monge, 1986 by Greenberg, 1993, Steers, 1988).

## **6. SUCCESS AND SCHOOL FAILURE BAROMETER OF EDUCATIONAL ACTION**

School intelligence is achieved and formed in the schooling process as a result of the brightening of the child's mental potential according to the nature and repertoire of the school activity, adding in its structure and the behavior of the pupil to the leading activity of the school age.

In the complex matrix of school success, the weight of intellectual factors is quite significant, with about 50% of the school result being attributed to intelligence. The remaining 50% is attributable to non-intellectual personality factors, as well as the conditions of organizing school activity, teaching methods. If activism is associated with developed school aptitudes, persevering nature will go up a path in school activity.

School failure represents a balance sheet of school work with relative stability for a certain period of time, the lag, behind learning, precedes the outcome of the "balance sheet" and it is constantly changing.

In this situation, different solutions are known:

- it recovers, and then does not lead to school failure;
- it worsens, most often leading to school failure (corrigence or repetition).

Excellence, success and failure are realities built by the school system, says Ph. Perrenoud. The same author identifies three complementary mechanisms, which he considers "a threefold fabrication of failure". They look:

- curriculum - the way students have to go through; given the fact that they do not leave the same point and do not have the same resources, inequality is constantly recreated along the school route;
- undifferentiated pedagogical treatment - the fact that students are treated the same way, a situation expressed in the phrase "indifference to difference";
- evaluation - which contributes to minimizing or, on the contrary, dramatizing real learning inequalities.

The analysis of the relationship between the evaluation processes on the one hand and the school performance, on the other, leads to the conclusion that evaluative acts can not by themselves, be considered decisive factors in ensuring school success as neither the main source of failures, but may favor the occurrence and maintenance of such phenomena.

Assessing school returns requires capitalization taking into account the following criteria:

- a) the school results (interpreted in quantitative and qualitative terms);
- b) student behavior (viewed in psychological and pedagogical terms);
- c) school success (analyzed in relation to general objectives and the process or regression achieved individually and collectively);
- d) the quality of the learning process, identified by the stock factors (expressing the quality of the educational process in a certain process of evolution) and the flow (expressing the quality of the teaching process, in a dynamic perspective, by means of some indicators mobile, regarding the behavior of teachers and pupils, the school success with its evolution in time and space).

School success is multilinear, multifunctional, multidisciplinary and strictly individualized.

School failure - refers to the students' failure to fulfill the mandatory requirements of the educational - educational process, being the effect of the discrepancy between the requirements, possibilities and results.

Another definition of success would be by presenting the factors that determine it:

- the first factor is: the teacher, along with his/her methods and means of work. The results of the teacher's work depend on his / her pedagogical training, which may be good or less good, his / her intellectual abilities, character traits, attitude towards life, his/her love or aversion to pedagogical activity.

In addition to these internal peculiarities, the outcomes of the educational activity have many external factors: - the social position of the teacher, the material conditions, the personal living conditions.

The second factor that links the results of the teaching activity is the student himself.

The pupil can not be treated as an object of education, and can also be treated as a subject of the education process.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Satisfaction with the work itself that refers to the interest in the work done, the challenge that this work should be for the individual, the professional training in which the employee is involved, job security does not correlate directly with the overall performance as we have assumed in the third hypothesis. The causes of lack of this correlation are other variables that arise between the satisfaction of the work itself and the performances of the individual: personality traits (the need to achieve, the level of challenge, the development of new capacities), but also the type of work done by the individual: monotonous, attractive, direct, routine, creative, intellectual.

We consider that there is a positive correlation between the working conditions (working environment) and the increase of the total performance of the employees, it is the fourth hypothesis that has been confirmed. From a psychological point of view, we can conclude that in achieving high-level performances it is very important to ensure professional working conditions, a relaxed working environment, not tense, to focus on team work.

Under these circumstances, the contradictions, that have arisen concerning the correlations between satisfaction, with its various facets, and the performance of employees, have to be eliminated by carrying out research on a larger group of subjects. Also, other variables should be considered: the personality traits of the investigated, their need for socio-professional development, the level of training, the importance of the job.

The lack of significant correlation between satisfaction and certain facets and performance does not mean that there is no link between these aspects of organizational behavior, but just that there are many other intermediate variables between them. The effect of these moderating variables is hard to detect because they act concurrently, the separation of the influence of each of them being difficult to do.

Managers are increasingly concerned about motivation in their work, all the more so as employees want recognition and involvement in meeting their needs without external authority and control having a negative effect. It can be concluded that the importance of satisfaction for achieving high-level performances should not be neglected. Satisfaction with work leads to increased performance, but also to a decrease in staff fluctuations, to a decrease in absenteeism. Under these conditions, it should be based on the field of work of each company: a salary system based on clearly defined criteria, the possibilities of promotion according to performances, a system of bonuses and rewards depending on the quality and quantity of the work done.

Satisfaction and performance lie in a controversial relationship that needs to be studied given the multitude of variables that can interfere with each other, and also on a representative set of subjects to allow generalization of results.

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Coats Charles, *Managerul total*, Editura Teora, Bucuresti, 1997
- [2] Jinga, I., Petrescu, A., *Evaluarea performanței școlare*, București, Edit Adelfin, Bucuresti 1987
- [3] Modrescu Alexandra, *Evaluarea eficienței programelor de pregătire profesională*, EDP, București 1994,
- [4] Nicolescu Ovidiu, Verboncu Ion, *Management*, Editura Economica, Bucuresti, 1995
- [5] Okon Vincenty, *Didactica Generala* Editura Didactică și Pedagogică București, 1974
- [6] Potorac Elena, *Satisfacții și insatisfacții*, Revista de Pedagogie, Nr. 2, 1980
- [7] Radu, Ion, T., *Teorie și practică în evaluarea eficienței învățământului*", EDP, București , 1981
- [8] Slavina I, *Tratarea individuala a elevilor rămași în urmă la învățatură*, Invatamint primar nr. 1/1996
- [9] Sorescu Sofia și Elena Marinescu, *Sucesul școlar*, Revista de pedagogie, nr. 10/1976.
- [10] Stancioiu Ion, Militaru Gheorghe, *Management. Elemente fundamentale*, Editura Tehnica, Bucuresti, 1998
- [11] Stegăroiu, Ion, *Metode și tehnici de management*, Edit. Mcarie, Târgoviște 1999
- [12] Vagu Paraschiv, Stegăroiu, Ion, *Lideriatul. De la teorie la practică*, Edit. Bibliotheca ,Târgoviște 2006
- [13] Vrabie Dumitru, *Atitudinea elevului față de aprecierea școlară*, E.D.P., București, 1975
- [14] Ward Michael, *50 de tehnici esentiale de management*, Editura Codecs, Editura Class, Bucuresti, 1997



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE – COMPONENT OF THE TEACHER` PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Luminița-Mihaela Drăghicescu (a) \*, Ioana Stăncescu (b),

\*Corresponding author

(a) Teachers Training Department, Valahia University, Targoviste, Romania,

lumidraghicescu@yahoo.com (b) Teachers Training Department, Valahia University, Targoviste,

Romania, stancescu\_ioana@yahoo.com

#### *Abstract*

Globalization, interculturality and the whole range of changes generated by them are powerful imprint on the educational phenomenon. In a plural world, under the sign of inter - and multi -, education can't remain locked in the pattern of a mono - type logic. By appropriately valuing cultural diversity and being aware of the impact of the cultural context on the development of the child's personality, any educator must approach an inter-type logic, promoting the principles of intercultural education and designing educational practices aimed at all students and each student, in the same time. In this context, due to the acute need to adequately address the diversity of school space, the intercultural teacher training is a necessary step. Thus, fundamental changes are needed at the level of initial and continuous teacher training programs, in order to empower teachers with the competences necessary for a proper management of differences between students. Intercultural competence becomes a compulsory component of the teacher` professional identity. Teacher training programs should be organized around some fundamental acquisitions from the point of view of interculturality. Such an approach is extremely difficult and complex, because it involves changing the mentality of educators and overcoming their own vulnerabilities. In our study, we will focus on analyzing teachers' perception on the importance of forming and developing their intercultural competences. This approach is motivated by the fact that the cultural, religious or linguistic differences identified at students` class level are often ignored by the teachers, sometimes even when they become sources of conflict.

**Keywords:** globalization; interculturality; intercultural education; intercultural competence; dimensions of intercultural competence.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The whole world is reshaping under the impact of a phenomenon that imprint everything: globalization. Whether we report to culture, economics, politics or education, the effects of globalization are visible and can't be ignored.

The sociologist A. Giddens said that "globalization affects today the lives of people in all countries, rich and poor, modifying not only global systems, but also daily life" (Giddens, 2000, 76), and



the world is "an unique social system" (2000, p. 75), which "hosts" human beings who share "a common fate" (2000, p. 75).

In consensus with Giddens, Tomlinson shows that understanding *globalization* means realizing that "the world becomes, for the first time in history, an unique social and cultural framework" (2002, p. 21); *globalization* "makes the world become "one place"" (Tomlinson, 2002, p. 21). One place, we say, but characterized by a multitude of "nuances" of various cultures that, more than ever, begin to fuse, outlining a "picture" in which each one must learn to find himself/herself, identify their own "nuance", but manifesting an attitude of respect, understanding, appreciation to each element which composes the "painting".

Multiculturalism, interculturality represents, for the global world, a reality that requires the formation / development of new types of competences, of life skills. Globalization implies, therefore, a number of changes in the educational plan. Through an effective intercultural education approach, teachers should create a learning environment in which the differences between students, regardless of their nature - ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic –have to be sources of personal and social development, each student reporting - to everyone else and to each other, with respect, consideration, understanding, accepting that values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, etc. different from his/her own are not reasons for rejection, conflict, but opportunities for growth, enrichment, evolution. In order to organize such a learning environment, the teachers themselves have to integrate, at the level of their professional identity, the intercultural competence that resides "in a series of values, attitudes and behaviors activated in intercultural contexts, which enable effective communication and interaction with otherness and proper management of cultural diversity "(Drăghicescu, Stăncescu, 2011, p. 375).

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The professional identity of the teacher is not a finite acquisition of the initial and continuous training programs for the didactic profession, but a "construction" that crystallizes, improves and perfects throughout the didactic career. Referring to the construction of the professional identity of the teachers, the pedagogue E. Păun showed that it "swings between assuming an external professional model, developed by researchers, a largely canonical, standardized model, and a professional identity built on a daily basis as an ensemble of personal experiences and individual options before, during and after training for the teaching career "(Păun, 2017, p. 163).

The challenges that global society launches in the educational environment obligate teachers, today more than ever, to a profound reflection on their own beliefs, competences, on their own pedagogical conception, respectively on their own professional identity. The educational approach is grafted on a social background characterized by a multitude of cultures, values, patterns, which in no way should be perceived as competing, but, looking through the "magnifier" of cultural relativism, we can consider them equal. Teachers are called to form such an attitude, demonstrating that they act from the perspective of an inter-type logic and promoting, in the educational act, cultural interaction and didactic behavior based on the valorization of differences, their acceptance and appreciation.

The intercultural competence "refers to those skills, behaviors and practices that allow individuals to interact effectively with others coming from different backgrounds. IC includes, inter alia, respect for people, self-respect for who they are and appreciation of cultural differences between them" (Niculescu, Bazgan, 2017, p. 26).

By coordinating classrooms characterized primarily by diversity, the teachers which possess this competence will effectively manage the emerging conflicts/problem-situations and will be, above all, an attitudinal and behavioral model to which their students can report, because they will show respect for each student, will value the differences, will apply educational therapies that are likely to ensure equality of chances in education for all students, will constantly develop an attitude of acceptance of otherness, regardless the ethnicity, religion, cultural model of belonging, etc.

To train such teachers, however, it is necessary that the initial and continuous training programs to subsume a component focused on preparing teachers on the intercultural dimension of education. Unfortunately, as Niculescu and Bazgan showed, "the institutions for teachers' training (insufficient well stated as well defined structures everywhere in world) seem to be dominated by a reluctant or even

conservative attitude toward the issue of training for interculturality as an attitude. Too often this aspect is superficially approached and involved only to respond to a formal requirement” (2017, p. 25).

An authentic training in this area ”involves at least two interconnected dimensions: a dimension of knowledge - objective and involving different perspectives, and a dimension of experience - subjective and relational” (Rey, 1999, p. 180). At first sight, the first dimension is easy to achieve, while the second can generate more difficulties in the effective implementation of a program/module/course for future teachers/current teachers. And yet, solutions can be easily identified: there are many initiatives/programs launched at European level (an example being the Erasmus + Program), to which teachers and future teachers can participate, which can provide relevant opportunities for connecting with otherness, for intercultural communication, for training and practice, in multi/intercultural contexts, of the intercultural competence.

Referring to the same process of intercultural formation, Anca Nedelcu (2008, p. 32) considers that formation for interculturalism involves three main dimensions: *cognitive, instrumental-methodological and expressive*.

*The cognitive dimension* aims at: knowing human rights and relating international instruments; knowing main issues of our times and the issues relating to violation of human rights; knowing institutions, local, national, regional and international governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in fields of activity pertaining to the education of human rights from an intercultural perspective, from the support and expertise of which both educators and educational instances may benefit; knowing social, professional and informational networks at regional level; knowing disadvantaged communities, by regions, and their status and needs.

*The instrumental-methodological dimension* refers to providing teachers with methods fostering equality, collaboration, individual valorization in schools and intercultural restructuring as well as methodology used.

*The expressive (relational-behavioral) dimension* represents a side of the formation which is fundamental to create a suitable environment for learning and to use diversity as didactic resource. Therefore, formation for interculturalism consists in crystallization of some democratic mentalities which should enable educators to experiment efficient forms of communication, expression, accountability and to develop their critical spirit.

So, we can conclude that an intercultural teacher should be: (1) well trained from the scientific point of view (owning both: a functional level of development of general culture and of a specialty culture; (2) high level trained as methodologist both for teaching and for the assessment process; (3) a model, a mentor and a facilitator of human and intercultural relations (Niculescu, Bazgan, 2017, p. 24).

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The question that guided our micro-research is: *How important is, in the perception of teachers, intercultural competence as an integral part of their professional identity?*

### 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of our research was to identify teachers' opinions on the importance of forming and developing their intercultural competence, considering the three dimensions they involve: the cognitive dimension, the instrumental-methodological one and the expressive (relational-behavioral) one.

In subsidiary, we intend to demonstrate the need to complete / improve the initial training for the teaching career by introducing modules / disciplines centered on the formation / development of intercultural competence of future teachers.

### 5. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used was the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was developed in relation to three dimensions specific to intercultural competence: *cognitive dimension, instrumental-methodological dimension and expressive (relational-behavioral) dimension*. Through the formulated items, teachers were asked to express their opinions on the importance of the various components of intercultural competence (knowledge, values, abilities, attitudes and behaviors).

The appreciation of these thematic areas was achieved on a five-step Likert scale, from 1 = *not important* to 5 = *extremely important*.

The research sample was made of 100 teachers in pre-university high school education, with years of experience in school from 2 to 30 years. 74% of them teach in high schools attended by Romanian and Romani students, whereas 26% work in high schools with Romanian, Romani and Bulgarian students. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and how the information obtained will be used / exploited.

## 6. FINDINGS

For the present study, we selected for analysis and interpretation four relevant items of the questionnaire: one subsumed to the cognitive dimension, one within the instrumental-methodological dimension and two subordinate to the expressive dimension.

The first item was *the identification and control of their own prejudices and of the various forms of discrimination generated by them*.

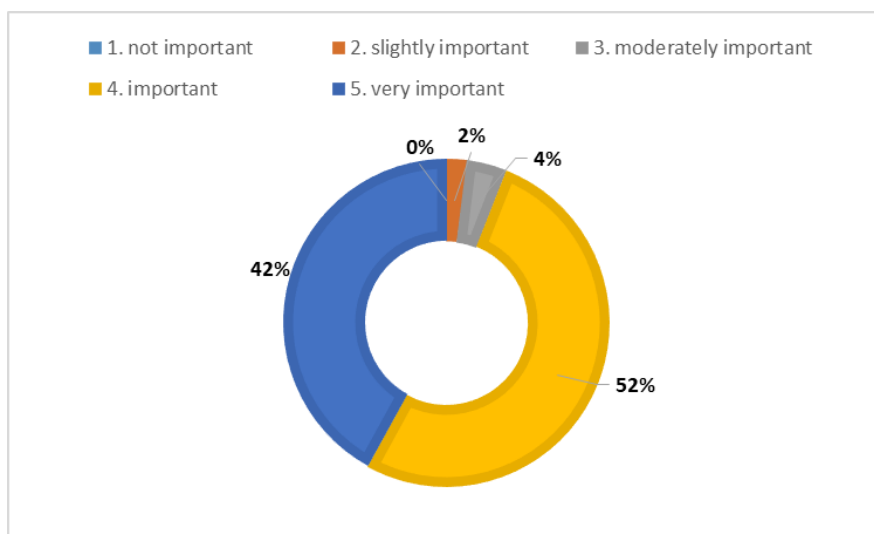


Figure 1. Teacher's opinion on the importance of identifying and controlling their own prejudices and the different forms of discrimination generated by them

In this item, which is focused on the cognitive dimension of intercultural competence, teachers have provided answers (graphically represented in the figure above) which demonstrate that identifying and controlling their own prejudices and different forms of discrimination are considered *very important* (42% of respondents) and *important* (52%) by them. Only a very small percentage of respondents consider these aspects to be *moderately important* (4%) or *slightly important* (2%).

Teaching in multicultural classrooms, where it can occur multiple situations that may need to be appropriate approached, before teachers can form intercultural competences to their students, teachers themselves need to make an exercise of awareness of their own prejudices. Only by awareness of our own prejudices, we can find appropriate ways of (self)control and eliminate some forms of discrimination that may manifest involuntarily.

The second selected item refers to an instrumental-methodological component of intercultural competence, namely *the valorization of methods that promote equality, collaboration, individual valorization in the school space, and restructuring, from the intercultural point of view, of the methodology used*.

According to the results registered on this item (Figure 2), all respondents consider this component of intercultural competence to be *very important* (60%) and *important* (40%). Teachers`

responses demonstrate that they understand how important it is that the didactic strategy used to be one that promotes relevant values for the intercultural formation of the student, such as equality, collaboration and respect for everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, language or the cultural model to which he/she belongs.

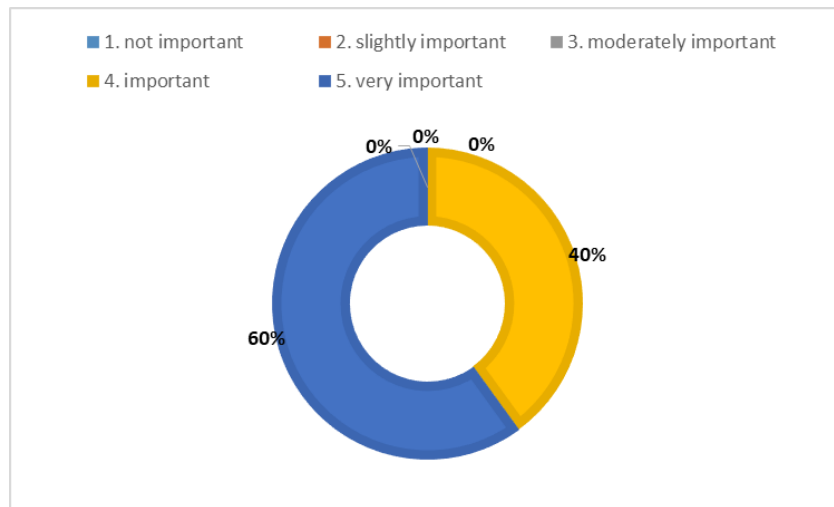


Figure 2. Teacher's opinion on the use of methods that promote equality, collaboration, individual valorization in school space, and restructuring, for the intercultural point of view, of the methodology used

The third item focused on teachers' opinion *on ensuring respecting the rights of all students and on equalizing opportunities in education*. This item is circumscribed to the expressive (relational-behavioral) dimension of intercultural competence and takes into account one of the fundamental principles of intercultural education.

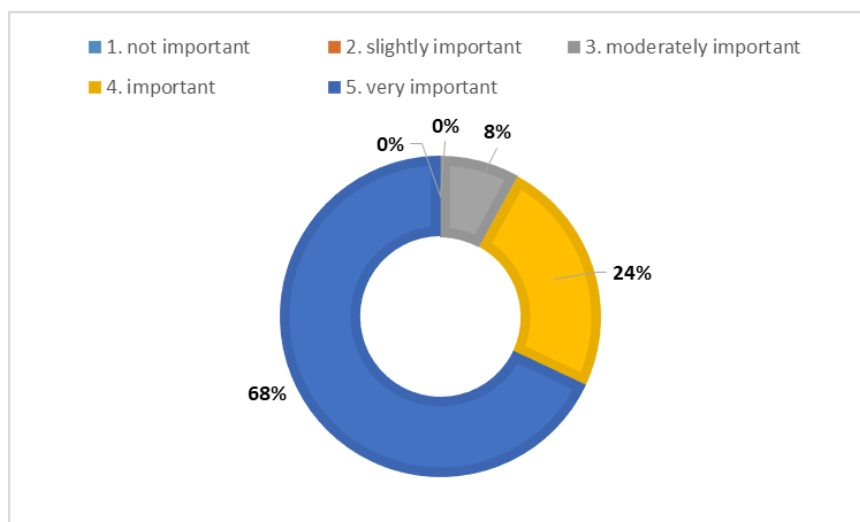


Figure 3. Teachers' opinion on ensuring respecting the rights of all students and the equalization of opportunities in education

The results registered in this case (Figure 3) are as follows: 68% of the questioned teachers consider this component of intercultural competence to be *very important* and 24% consider it *important*. This distribution of responses leads us to the conclusion that teachers are aware that it is extremely important, at the level of classroom, to respect the rights of all student, not just some, and to equalize the chances in education, valuing and creating optimum conditions for the development of the potential of each student.

The last of the examined items refers to a relevant attitude for the expressive dimension of intercultural competence, namely *the manifestation of adequate expectations for all students, accompanied by the belief that all can succeed*.

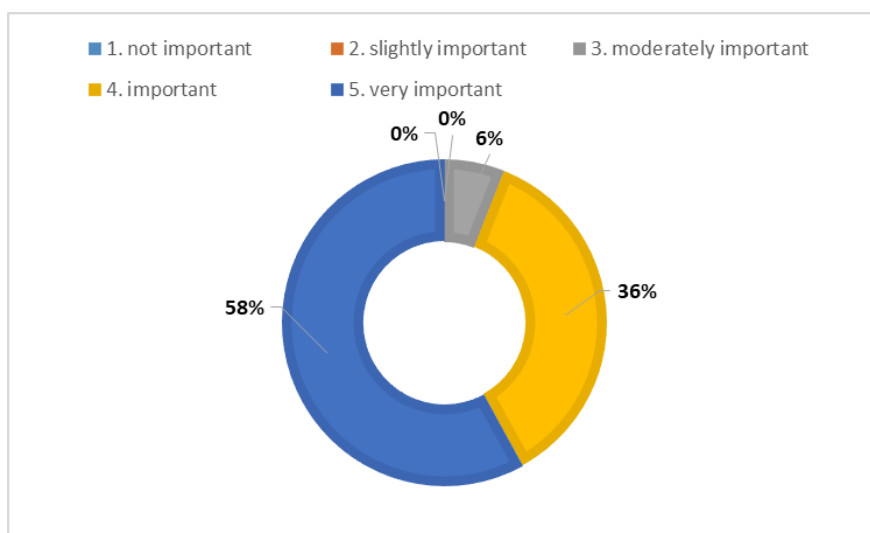


Figure 4. Teachers' opinion on the manifestation of adequate expectations for all students, accompanied by the belief that they can all succeed

In this situation, too, teachers' responses are placed on the upper levels of the Likert scale, as can be seen in Figure 4. Thus, 58% of respondents appreciate that this attitude is *very important*, 36% consider it *important*, and 6% perceived it having a *moderate importance*.

In order to develop harmonious educational relations between teachers and students and to stimulate the conscious and sustained involvement of all students in their own training process, it is very important for teachers to have adequate expectations for each student, which implies an authentic knowledge of personality of each student, his/her strong points, but also the most sensitive points. It is also very important for teachers to manifest confidence to all students, to the potential of each student, to encourage and support them so that they can achieve success and performance in line with the real possibilities of the students.

The analysis and the interpretation of the answers to the above mentioned items allow us to make the following inference: the pre-university education teachers are aware of the importance of intercultural competence as an integral part of their professional identity.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The results of the investigation undertaken allow the following inferences:

- reflection (directed through the items of the questionnaire) on their own beliefs, convictions, professional competences leads to awareness of the importance of the intercultural competence as part of the teachers' professional identity;
- generally, teachers value, in relative similar proportions, both cognitive components of intercultural competence (identification and control of their own prejudices and different

forms of discrimination generated by them), instrumental-methodological components (the use of methods that promote equality, collaboration, individual valorization in school space, and restructuring, for the intercultural point of view, of the methodology used) and expressive, relational-behavioral components (ensuring respecting the rights of all students and the equalization of opportunities in education and the manifestation of adequate expectations for all students, accompanied by the belief that they can all succeed);

- to ensure equal education opportunities and a quality educational approach, to form a solid and coherent professional identity, the development of the intercultural competence of teachers should be undertaken as a priority, should be incorporated and addressed, not only formally, as an important component of initial and continuous teachers' training programs.

## Acknowledgments

The contribution of the authors to this paper is equal.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Drăghicescu, L., Stăncescu, I.. Multiculturalism și educație [Multiculturalism and education]. În Dogaru-Ulieru, V., Drăghicescu, L. (coord.), Educație și dezvoltare profesională [Education and professional development]. Craiova: Scrisul Românesc Fundația-Editura; 2011.
- [2] Giddens, A., Sociologie [Sociology]. București: Editura All; 2000.
- [3] Nedelcu, A.. Fundamentele educației interculturale. Diversitate, minorități, echitate [Fundamentals of intercultural education. Diversity, minorities, equity]. Iași: Editura Polirom; 2008.
- [4] [4] Niculescu, R. M., & Bazgan, M.. Intercultural Competence as a Component of the Teachers' Competence Profile. Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională, 2017; 9(3): 17-41. Available from: [http://lumenpublishing.com/journals/index.php/rrem/article/view/148/pdf\\_1](http://lumenpublishing.com/journals/index.php/rrem/article/view/148/pdf_1)
- [5] Păun, E.. Pedagogie. Provocări și dileme privind școala și profesia didactică [Pedagogy. Challenges and dilemmas related to school and teaching profession]. Iași: Polirom; 2017.
- [6] Rey, M.. De la logica „mono” la logica de tip „inter”. Piste pentru o educație interculturală și solidară [From the "mono" logic to the "inter" logic. Paths for intercultural and solidarity education]. In P. Dasen, Ch. Perregaux, M. Rey (Eds.), Educația interculturală. Experiențe, politici, strategii [Intercultural education. Experiences, policies, strategies] (pp. 129-197). Iași: Polirom; 1999.
- [7] Tomlinson, J.. Globalizare și cultură [Globalization and culture]. Timișoara: Editura Amarcord; 2002.



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Luminița Mihaela Drăghicescu (a), Ioana Stăncescu (b)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Teachers Training Department, Valahia University, Targoviste, Romania,  
lumidraghicescu@yahoo.com (b) Teachers Training Department, Valahia University,  
Targoviste, Romania, stancescu\_ioana@yahoo.com

### *Abstract*

The bullying phenomenon is a reality of the current Romanian school, insufficiently aware by teachers, students and parents alike, both as forms of manifestation and as effects. Numerous studies conducted in the European Union area highlight the tendency of bullying to spread and grow in intensity, a phenomenon with negative impact not only on school life but also on personal and social development. For this reason, in recent years, there has been a constant concern at European level to develop anti-bullying policies and strategies and to identify good practices in this regard, that can be disseminated to prevent and combat bullying. In Romania, efforts are still being made to raise awareness of what bullying is and what its consequences are, the concrete steps in the form of prevention programs, anti-bullying intervention strategies, appropriate educational tools are almost non-existent. Referring to this undesirable reality of the Romanian school, we aim, through an investigative approach, to analyze the extent to which pre-university education teachers are aware of this phenomenon and promptly identify some of its forms of manifestation. The study circumscribes a quantitative approach, conducted through the questionnaire survey, and a qualitative approach, materialized in the organization of focus groups with teachers included in the research sample.

**Keywords:** bullying; socio-emotional competences; educational relations; anti-bullying policies; anti-bullying strategies;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A careful radiography of the world in which we live highlights, beyond changes that have a positive impact on people's lives, a number of changes which must be alarming for us. The crises that we cross - from moral-spiritual to economic ones, intra- and interethnic, interreligious conflicts, aggressiveness and hostility increasingly more present in the behavior of many people - regardless of their social position - outline a picture of a secularized society, marked by a strong dissolution of values, a society in which man is more and more lonely, having an acute sense of alienation, not only in relation to alterity, but also in relation to his own self. Adapting to such a world, the appropriate response to

aggression, violence, bullying, conflict, selfishness, call for increased attention, from the earliest age, to the formation / development of socio-emotional competences.

It is obvious that the school fully reflects these peculiarities, unfortunately negative, of the societal ensemble of which it is a component part. The psychological traits of the child who is, today, student are altered mainly because of their exposure to a number of harmful stimuli with toxic effects on their personality. Modern technologies are not only ways of facilitating communication, information, adaptation, etc., but they often prove to be tools for spreading aggression, hatred, intolerance, xenophobia, etc. In this context, we find, as a general effect, a beginning of dehumanization: our children are more impulsive, more irritable and more aggressive, appealing to physical or verbal violence to solve their problems at school or outside school. Of course, the etiology of these transformations in their personality is a complex one, but we appreciate that beyond the technology that invaded their life and "robotized" somewhat, "amputate", first of all, their ability to feel, to empathize, two are the causes that deeply affect the child in his first years of school: an insecure affective family environment and a school environment marked by a lack of an emotional support of educators, which are focused on the instructional process and concerned, sometimes exclusively, by the intellectual development of the students.

Cantoning in the formal area of education, a phenomenon already characteristic of Romanian schools is bullying. In a sociological study at national level, entitled *Bullying among children*, made by the *Save the Children* Organization in 2016, it appears that "in the school environment, 73% of children say they have experienced a bullying situation between equals at the level of school and 58% at the level of their class "(Grădinaru, Stănculeanu, Manole, 2016, p. 53).

Data on Romania in the OMS report - *Growing up unequal: gender and socio-economic differences in young people's health and well-being. Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (Hbsc) Study: International Report From the 2013/2014 Survey*, which is based on the collection of information from 42 countries in Europe and North America, is presented as follows: the prevalence of bullying among children with 11 years - is 9% for girls and 17% for boys, who admit that they have aggressed other children at least two or three times a month in the last two months, placing us as a country on the fifth place out of 42. At the following ages the prevalence increases, so that at 13 years, 14% of girls and 23% of boys recognize their "aggressor status" (third position), and at 15 years, 10% of girls and 23% of boys experienced bullying as aggressors (fifth position) (2016, pp. 202-203).

A report presenting the situation of bullying in USA schools, conducted in 2014, states that it affects a large number of children in all age groups, but its prevalence can be seen in students in third grades and fourth, in which case about 22% report that they are harassed 2-3 times a month or more (Luxenberg, Limber, Olweus, 2015, p. 21). And this is happening in schools where anti-bullying programs are not yet implemented, one of the most famous program, given the results, being the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*.

In the conditions in which we want secure schools, schools where well-being can become a reality shared by both students and teachers, the first thing we need to do to achieve these goals is to identify the ways in which we can prevent / diminish / combat bullying. This is because the security, the safety of students and teachers, the state of well-being can only exist where any form of violence, aggression or implicitly bullying, has been eradicated. The first step in this direction is, of course, the awareness of the phenomenon and its effects on the personal and social level.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The literature addressing to bullying is not a consistent one, especially if we relate to studies investigating this phenomenon in the Romanian school environment.

The one who has demonstrated a constant concern for the analysis of this phenomenon, for the delimitation of the characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of aggression, and the identification of adequate educational intervention strategies to prevent or combat it, was Olweus D., considered, in fact, the "parent" of the *bullying* concept. In his work, we find the following definition of bullying: "I define bullying or victimization in the following general way: A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative action on the part of one or more other students "(Olweus, 1986 and 1991, apud Olweus, 2013).



In the same author's view, bullying, a sub-category of aggression or aggressive behavior, is defined by reference to three criteria: "(1) It is aggressive behavior or intentional "harm doing" (2) which is carried out "repeatedly and over time" (3) in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power" (Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano and Slee, 1999, p. 11).

From the analysis of the studies focused on this topic, we have identified a variety of behaviors associated with bullying. Remaining within the limits of Rigby's classification, bullying behaviors can take the following forms:

- a) Physical - hitting, pushing, snapping, pinching, constraint by physical contact, personal property/goods destruction, theft, etc.;
- b) Psychological - threats, teasing, labeling, insults, blackmail, nicknaming, spreading rumors and lies, humiliation, mockery, defamation, manifestation of contempt, threatening gestures, deliberate exclusion of someone from a group or activity, manipulation, intimidation, etc. (Olweus, 1999; 2013; Rigby, 2007; Saliceti, 2015).

Referring to students involved in bullying, whether as aggressors or as victims, we can outline the following psycho-behavioral picture (Olweus, 1994; Rigby, 2007; Saliceti, 2015):

- The *bully*: person (or group of persons) who attempts to dominate through violence and abuse - verbal and physical; is impulsive, slightly irritable, aggressive; has no regrets or ability to empathize or has an extremely low level of empathy; has deficiency of attention and oversized self-esteem, sometimes; does not comply with the rules, is not cooperative, being generally antisocial; may have an inappropriate entourage;

- The *victim*: person (or group of persons) who supports violence, abuse; is unable to defend himself; is often excluded from the group of colleagues, being socially isolated; is characterized by exacerbated sensitivity, shyness, insecurity, anxiety, low self-esteem, introversion, low sociability, passivity to aggression, lack of initiative in communication / argumentation, non-assertiveness. But they can also be challenging victims, where anxiety combines with aggressive reactions.

What we need to highlight, in order to understand, once more, the gravity of the phenomenon is that bullying leaves "traces" not only in the lives and health of those involved, in their school performance, but affects public health, the health of the society in which we live.

Rigby (2003, 2007) and Olweus (1994, 2013) warn about the adverse effects of bullying at the psychological and physical levels, in the context of school and personal life. Thus, bullying can lead to reduced physical and mental health of children, decreased self-esteem, decreased ability to concentrate, lead to frustration, sadness, anger, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts. Also, relatively low levels of well-being, low social adaptability, a tendency to isolation or a tendency to aggression, absenteeism, aversion to school, and damage of the emotional and social development are other consequences that victims of bullying suffer. The more worrying is the fact that some of these can also be kept in adulthood (for example, low self-esteem).

From the aggressors' perspective, delinquency, depression, stabilization of aggressive, antisocial behavior are among the most common "outcomes" of bullying, in which they are the main actors.

Given the damaging nature of this phenomenon, it is normal for it to be treated as a major public health problem, and the intervention to prevent / combat it primarily concerns the school environment. Teachers are the ones who, capitalizing their own emotional competences and focusing on the educational climate, on developed relationships among students, can first provide the necessary support to both to the aggressive students and to the victim students in an attempt to prevent future bullying.

Combating the phenomenon requires action at the educational system level based on effective anti-bullying policies that circumscribe optimal intervention measures on three levels:

- teacher` training;
- parents` education;
- formative approaches for students.

Anti-bullying strategies promoted at every level should firstly raise awareness of the existence and severity of the consequences of bullying for children's health, among the main partners involved in the educational act: teachers, parents and students. Also, given the correlation between aggression and the lack of socio-emotional competences, another priority goal should be to develop socio-emotional competences such as: effective identification, management and regulation of negative emotions, empathy, sociability, as well as active listening, assertive communication, negotiation and conflict management

skills. These aspects can be considered the common denominator of intervention programs, which can be personalized according to the target group: teachers, parents and students.

The present study aims to investigate the extent to which teachers are aware of the presence of bullying in school, all the more as the tendency is to deny, minimize the phenomenon and its sometimes devastating effects, or to confuse it with aggression or aggressive behaviors that students develop in their relationships, often.

"Schools - the *Bullying among children* study shows - do not have a common approach to cases of bullying; some teachers are more involved in stopping violent behavior, while others remain passive ("what matters if the teacher cares"). Some children have mentioned that there are situations where some teachers encourage bullying or aggressors (constantly humiliating some children) (Grădinaru, Stănculeanu, Manole, 2016, p. 54).

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main questions of the research approach described in the present study are:

- *To what extent are teachers in pre-university education aware of the existence of bullying in school?*
- *To what extent can teachers identify some forms of manifestations of bullying?*

### 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the investigative approach is to identify the perception and attitude of the pre-university education teachers towards the phenomenon called bullying, focusing on the extent to which the teachers are aware by its existence.

Also, a secondary goal of the micro-research carried out was to emphasize the need to optimize the professional training for the teaching career by introducing modules / disciplines centered on the formation / development of the socio-emotional abilities of the teachers.

### 5. RESEARCH METHODS

The methodological options were "dictated" by the aim and objectives proposed, while ensuring the harmonization of the quantitative approach - which shape an objective picture of the extent to which the teachers know and identify the phenomenon of bullying –with the qualitative one - focused on highlighting personal perspective, marked, of course, by the subjectivity of each of the questioned subjects.

The valued research methods, circumscribed to each of these approaches, were the survey based on the questionnaire and the focus group.

The elaborated and implemented questionnaire was a scale type one, which included a total of 25 closed-ended items, the answers being distributed on a five-step Likert scale, from *to a very large extent* to *a very small extent*. The 25 items of the scale were distributed in three broad categories: the first refers to *forms of bullying* in the classroom, the second category followed *the consequences of bullying*, and the third category focused on *strategies for prevention and combating the phenomenon of bullying*.

The investigated population consisted of 116 teachers, 96 (82%) female and 20 (18%) male, with ages from 28 to 57, from pre-university education, from Dâmbovița, Giurgiu and Prahova counties.

From the 116 teachers, a total of 20 persons also participated in focus group discussions. Their selection was made in such a way as to ensure the homogeneity of the discussion group, as well as the representativeness in relation to the rural or urban environment in which the school operates, the years of experience in school, respectively the didactic degrees obtained.

The information gathered through the questionnaire and the focus-group, appropriately processed, led to a series of interpretations that are the subject of the next section of the study.

### 6. FINDINGS

For the present study we chose to present the results achieved by the questionnaires, referring to the first category of items, the one focused on the forms of manifestation of bullying at the level of classroom.

This first category was composed of five relevant items.

The first item asked teachers to appreciate the extent to which they are confronted in the classroom with the situation where some students ask colleagues to isolate a child. This item refers to one of the forms of manifestation of psychological bullying.

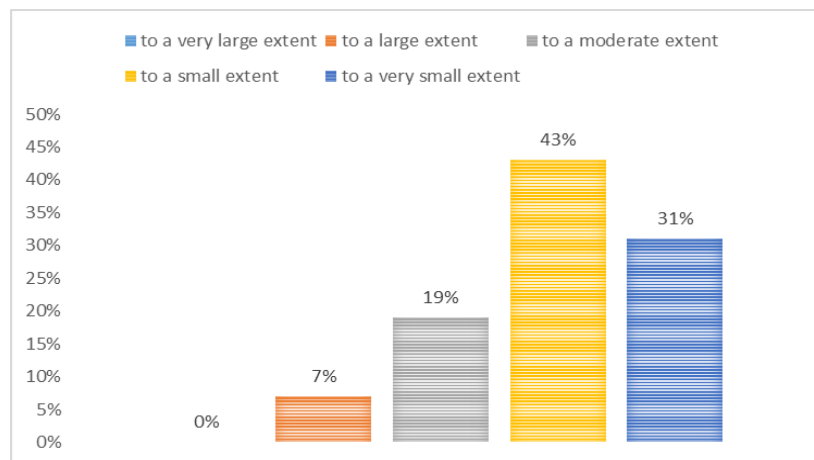


Figure 1. Teacher's opinion on isolation - as a form of bullying

The results for this item (Figure 1) show that, in the perceptions of teachers, this situation is present only *to a small extent* (43%) or *to a very small extent* (31%). Only a small percentage of respondents believe that this situation is the one they are facing *to a moderate extent* (19%) or *to a large extent* (7%).

Analyzing the answers for this item, it is easy to see that the situation in which some students ask colleagues to isolate a child is perceived (possibly erroneously) as a rare one. We can confront here the situation where teachers either do not have a sufficiently close educational relations with their students, so that they can quickly grasp such situations or to be brought to their knowledge of such problems, whether they know the school reality, but due to the fact that they are not sufficiently instructed to handle such a form of bullying, it denies it.

The second item is related to the teacher's opinion on the extent to which, at the classroom level, there are situations in which students humiliate / mock the other colleagues, repeatedly. Humiliation / mockery is another form of psychological bullying.

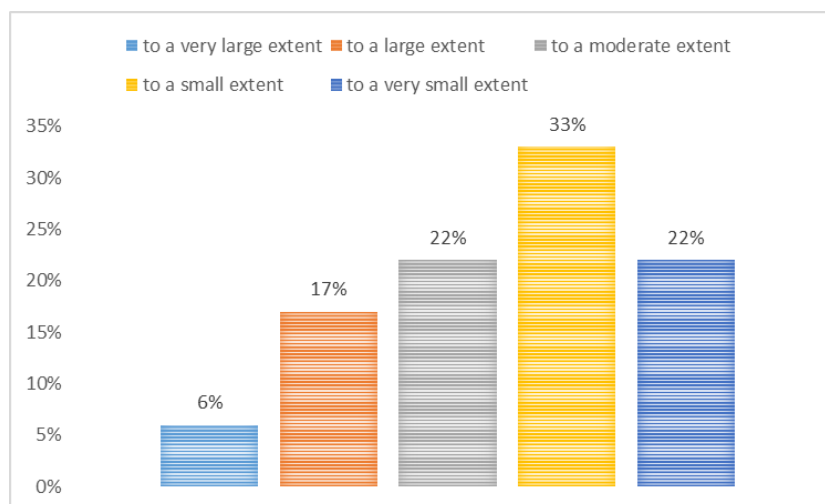


Figure 2. Teacher's opinion on humiliation / mockery - as a form of bullying

The analysis of the results obtained for this item (Figure 2) reveals the following distribution of responses: 6% of the respondents consider that they are confronted with this situation *to a very large extent*, 17% *to a large extent*, 22% *to a moderate extent*, 33% *to a small extent* and 22% *to a very small extent*. The distribution of responses is balanced on this item, which may lead us to the conclusion that there is a significant percentage of teachers who are aware of the presence of humiliation / mockery as a form of psychological bullying at the classroom level. However, there is also a significant percentage of teachers (55%), who consider that such situations manifest *to a small extent* and *to a very small extent* at the level of classroom, contradicting the results of the researches presented in the previous subchapters of this study.

Another form of manifestation of bullying in the school environment is the threat through stealing / damaging belongings. Through the third item of the questionnaire, we intend to highlight the extent to which teachers face such a situation at the level of the students class they work with.

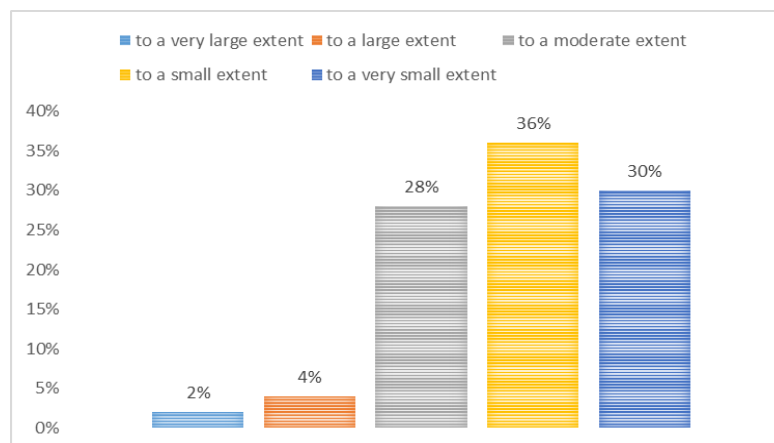


Figure 3. Teacher's opinion on stealing / damaging belongings - as a form of bullying

The responses provided in this item (Figure 3) are visibly distributed to the right part of the figure, which corresponds to the low levels of the Likert Scale, pointing out that respondents consider this situation to be present only *to a very small extent* (30%) and *to a small extent* (36%) at the level of classroom.

Only a small percentage of teachers say that they are confronted with this situation *to a very large extent* (2%) and *to a large extent* (4%) in their teaching activity.

The next item of the questionnaire was focused on identifying the extent to which respondents are confronted in their classroom with verbal aggression among students.

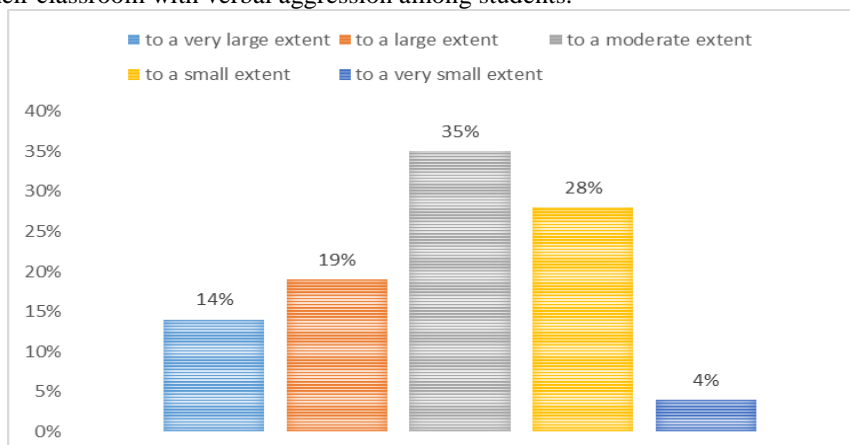


Figure 4. Teacher's opinion on verbal aggression - as a form of bullying

The data obtained, graphically represented in Figure 4, highlights the following situation: among the questioned teachers, 14% declare that they are confronted *to a very large extent* with the situation of verbal aggression among the students, 19% say that they are confronted *to a large extent* with this situation, 35% - *to a moderate extent*, 28% - *to a small extent* and 4% - *to a very small extent*.

Unlike the other forms of bullying investigated in this study, we find that verbal aggression among students is, according to the results, the most obvious and observed form of bullying by teachers. This can be explained by the fact that verbal aggression is an exteriorized form of bullying, extremely easy to identify in student-student relations, even during didactic activities.

Item 5 of the questionnaire focused on another important form of bullying, physical aggression among students.

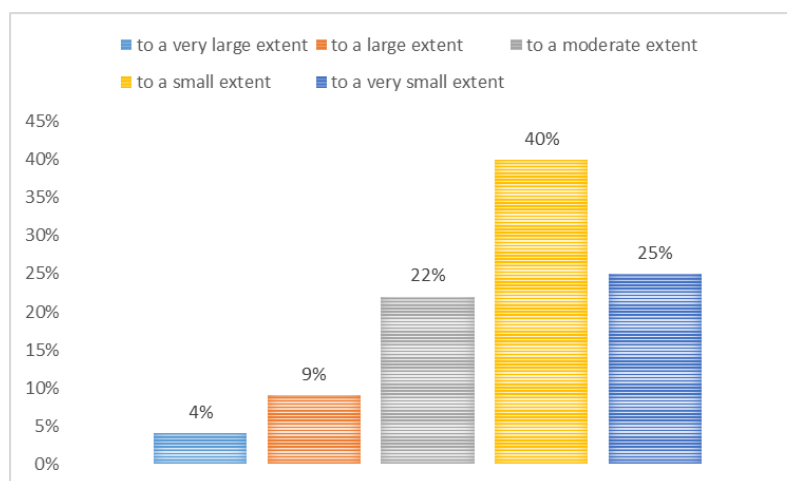


Figure 5. Teacher's opinion on physical aggression - a form of bullying

Figure 5 graphically present teachers' responses related to this type of bullying. Again, we find the distribution of responses preponderant in the low levels of Likert Scale: 25% of respondents say they are confronted to this situation *to a very small extent* and 40% *to a small extent*.

Corroborating the results obtained from the application of the questionnaire and those obtained through the focus groups, we can present the main ideas found:

- in general, the investigated teachers state that they only face to a very small extent, to a small extent or to a moderate extent (with low percentages) with the forms of manifestation of bullying in the classroom: situations where some students ask colleagues to isolate a child, some students humiliate / mocker other students, repeatedly, students who threaten other students by stealing / damaging belongings, students physically aggress other students;
- the only form of manifestation of bullying that respondents identify as a situation they are facing with, to a large extent and to a very large extent, is the verbal aggression among students.

## 7. CONCLUSION

By analyzing and interpreting the data obtained through our investigative approach, which was aimed at investigating the opinions of the teachers regarding the phenomenon of bullying, with an emphasis on its forms of manifestation, we can highlight some general conclusions.

The investigated teachers are only to a small extent aware of the presence and manifestation of the phenomenon of bullying in the collectives of students they work with. This situation may have as a possible cause the insufficient knowledge on the part of the teachers, of their students, the student-student relationships, the problems faced by each students or the class of students as a whole; a distant educational relationship between teacher and students, which can lead to a lack of access to some information and problem situations that may occur at the classroom level. Another cause could be due to the forms of manifestation of bullying, some of which being less visible, more hidden and developed,

usually manifested when students are not in the classroom with the teachers (for example when some students ask others to isolate a colleague, threats, destruction of goods).

The only form of bullying that teachers are aware of is verbal aggression among students, because it is very easy to observe even in didactic activities: during collective discussions or during the process of solving learning tasks on groups.

Of course, another strong assumption is shaped out here: the teachers are not sufficiently trained and do not have enough skills to adequately manage multiple bullying situations. Teachers denied the existence of this phenomenon or minimized the negative impact on students class level, on the educational relations level and on the proper development of each student, somehow masking the reality.

Concluding, we can say that the issue of bullying is no negligible at all, and denial and minimization of the phenomenon will not bring fundamental changes in the direction of its prevention / combating. Some of the solutions could come from the initial and continuing teachers' training, also focused on this dimension. Introducing some contents related to bullying in the themes of initial teacher education disciplines as well as courses / modules within continuous professional development programs can ensure the acquisition of solid knowledge about this phenomenon as well as the development of skills that enable teachers correct approach and effective management of bullying situations.

Also, the formation/development of teachers' socio-emotional competences should be one of the aims of any training program for them. An empathic teacher, a teacher who develops harmonious relationships with his students, who is concerned about their well-being, will certainly be more attentive to situations that "announce" the bullying and much more able to intervene in order to prevent or stop this phenomenon.

## Acknowledgments

The contribution of the authors to this paper is equal.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] \*\*\*. Growing up unequal: gender and socioeconomic differences in young people's health and well-being. Health Behaviour In School-Aged Children (Hbsc) Study: International Report From The 2013/2014 Survey. Health Policy For Children And Adolescents, No. 7. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2016. 276 p. Available from: [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/303438/HSBC-No.7-Growing-up-unequal-Full-Report.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/303438/HSBC-No.7-Growing-up-unequal-Full-Report.pdf)
- [2] Grădinaru, C., Stănculeanu, D., Manole, M.. Bullying-ul în rândul copiilor. Studiu sociologic la nivel național. [Bullying among children. Sociological study at national level]. București: Organizația Salvați Copiii; 2016. 70 p. Available from: [https://oradenet.salvaticopiii.ro/docs/Bullying\\_Studiu\\_sociologic\\_salvati\\_copiii.pdf](https://oradenet.salvaticopiii.ro/docs/Bullying_Studiu_sociologic_salvati_copiii.pdf)
- [3] Luxenberg, H., Limber, S.P., Olweus, D.. Bullying in U.S. Schools: 2014 Status Report. Minnesota: Hazelden Publishing; 2015. Available from: <https://olweus.sites.clemson.edu/documents/Bullying%20in%20US%20Schools--2014%20Status%20Report.pdf>
- [4] Olweus, D. Bullying at school. What we know and what we can do. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; 2013. Available from: [https://books.google.ro/books?id=0Fz1jD9paoQC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro&source=gb\\_s\\_book\\_other\\_versions#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ro/books?id=0Fz1jD9paoQC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro&source=gb_s_book_other_versions#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- [5] Olweus, D. Annotation: Bullying at School: Basic Facts and Effects of a School Based Intervention Program. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 1994 february 21; 35 (7): 1171-1190. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1994.tb01229.x#reference>

- [6] Smith, P.K., Morita, Y., Junger-Tas, J., Olweus, D., Catalano, R. and Slee, P. *The Nature of School Bullying. A cross-national perspective*. London: Routledge. 1999. Available from:  
[https://books.google.ca/books?id=Fj6i8AHNT5AC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro&source=gb\\_s\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=Fj6i8AHNT5AC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro&source=gb_s_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- [7] Saliceti, F. (2015). *Bullies And Victims: A Charming Education To Cope With Distress*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2015; 197: 1161 – 1165. Available from:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282599591\\_Bullies\\_and\\_Victims\\_A\\_Charming\\_Education\\_to\\_Cope\\_with\\_Distress](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282599591_Bullies_and_Victims_A_Charming_Education_to_Cope_with_Distress)
- [8] Rigby, K. (2003). *Consequences of Bullying in Schools*. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 2003 October; 48 (9): 583–590. Available from:  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/070674370304800904>
- [9] Rigby, K. *Bullying in Schools: and what to do about it*. Victoria: ACER Press; 2007. Available from: <https://bullyproofclassroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Kenneth-Rigby-Book.pdf>



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.234-241>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### STEREOTYPES ABOUT BLINDNESS AND PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Rusu Mocănașu Daniela (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Associate Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University, Galați, Romania, E-mail: [daniela.rusu@ugal.ro](mailto:daniela.rusu@ugal.ro)

#### *Abstract*

Social representation of the abilities and potential of people with visual impairment are predominantly stereotypes, blindness being considered to be one of the most difficult and feared human conditions. Often the "sighted" people know very few real elements about the size of the disability, the education and the possibilities of social-professional integration of the visually impaired, most of the information coming from stories conveyed in the collective mind, which create unrealistic, exaggerated images, many times in the fictional realm. The existing stereotypes regarding this category of people are both positive and negative, the blind people being portrayed from objects of mercy, eternally unhappy individuals as a result of a life marked by tragedy, to superheroes, people endowed with a range of mystical abilities, super powers, worthy to admire. Some of these stereotypes are still found today in the Romanian society. The present paper aims to identify among the students of the "Dunărea de Jos" University, the dominant stereotypes about the visually impaired and the main meanings attached to the blindness.

**Keywords:** social representation; stereotype; disability; visual impairment;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of the population has little information about the potential of visually impaired people. In the absence of certain information about their real features, people have built mental models through which they can represent and explain social reality and define the visually impaired.

The system of beliefs included in the content of the social representation regarding the visual impairment constitutes a cognitive landmark, a guide of the social conduct, generator of taking positions towards the other, being used in the orientation in the world, in relation to the other, in designing and evaluating one's own behaviours. By socializing some of these beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation (Turliuc, 2004, pp. 96-98).

The social representation of blindness and the blind are marked by the historical, cultural and economic contexts, circumstances and practices of the group and community to which the individual belongs (Moscovici, 1998, p. 243). They are formed under the pressure of cultural, ideological and behavioral models. The stereotype is an image of a person who embodies widely held beliefs about the characteristics of a group to which the person belongs (Șerbănescu, 2007, p. 171). The sketched



descriptions about the blind were predominantly stereotypes. Since ancient times the blind have been assigned a wide range of divergent characteristics and stereotypes, most of them being negative. Even from the pre-Christian times the serious deterioration of the vision was often explained as a sanction for the transgression of moral and religious norms. Loss of vision was associated with guilt, sin, and shame. The handicap, regardless of its type, was explained through the moral and / or religion model, which rendered it as a result of the lack of social morals and of non-observance of religious precepts, either by the person suffering from blindness, or by his family or by the group he belonged to (Retief, 2018). Under the influence of the medical model, the visual disability was interpreted as a personal tragedy as a result of an unusual event that radically changes one's life, leaving behind a defective body, biologically inferior to "normality" represented by the whole, complete, healthy organism (Oliver, 1990).

Many people believed that blindness is one of the most feared of all disabilities, a beliefs still present in the 1970s. Wagner-Lampl & Oliver (1994, cited in Moore & Wolfe, 1996, p.8) identify existence of a "folklore" of blindness, which included various myths that perpetuate many negative stereotypes and misconceptions. According to Tzvetkova (1997, cited in Papadaki, 2013, p. 485) there are three main categories of sighted people's beliefs with regard to the blind people: negative, positive and neutral. Negative images perpetuate the stereotype of blindness as punishment (Oedipus myth), the belief of the contagious blindness (viewers will become blind if they touch or shake hands with a blind person), the belief that they are evil individuals and associated with begging. Positive beliefs include beliefs about the special powers of the blind, the belief that the blind can better judge and have musical talent. In neutral beliefs, the author identifies the belief that all individuals with visual impairments are people who are totally deprived of their sense of sight, living in total darkness, being helpless and totally dependent on others, the visual impairment being either by birth or acquired throughout life.

Regardless of the elaborated explanations, the content of social representations reflects organized and structured combinations of cognitive and affective elements that allow the individual and the group to reduce the unknown to the familiar (Turluc, 2004, p. 186). According to Abric (1997), the content of any social representation is organized and structured, with a central core and a peripheral system. The central core, consisting of stable, concrete and coherent elements, is the fundamental element of social representation because it determines its meaning and organization. At the same time, it represents the common basis that contributes to the consensus and homogeneity of the group, being determined by the norms and values of the group, by the social and historical conditions through which it passes, by its collective memory. The peripheral system comprises elements which express opinions, descriptions, beliefs or stereotypes about the object of representation, their presence having the role of "the interface between the central core and the concrete situation in which the representation is elaborated or functioning" (Abric, 1997, p. 118).

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Numerous studies on beliefs and social attitudes towards visually impaired people show that large segments of the population have little knowledge of their real abilities and the individuality of blind people, confirming the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes regarding blindness and the blind. Blindness and loss of vision frequently arouses fear of many people, much of the fear held by the wide range of divergent and stereotypical characteristics that have been attributed to individuals who are blind, since ancient times (Moore & Wolfe, 1997, p. 8).

Stereotypes about visually impaired people are both positive and negative. Sighted people describe the blind through attributes such as: visibly repulsive; helpless; pathetic; dependent; too independent; resolute, courageous and brave; full of bitterness, hell-bent, with weights on their shoulders; mean; mentally retarded; endowed with mystical powers, etc. The most common stereotype about the blind describes them as heroes (Sardegna et al, 2002, pp. 21-23). The blind is considered a person worthy of admiration, endowed with miraculous powers which help him overcome all obstacles, to achieve goals that would seem very easy for the sighted people, such as going to school or going to work.

Opinion polls indicate three main stereotypes about the blind, referring to their pathetic situation (they deserve sympathy and pity), to their abilities (either they are totally incapable or have extraordinary non-visual senses) and to the homogeneity of the group traits (all share similar interests). (Pissaloux,

2017, p. 637). The belief in the existence of miraculous compensatory powers, such as "second sight" or clairvoyance is also confirmed by Wagner-Lampl & Oliver (1994, cited Moore & Wolfe, 1997, p. 6).

Following a study on a sample of 115 sighted people in Greece, Papadakis (2013) finds that people with visual impairments are still treated with prejudices about the size of their disability, their education and their integration into society.

It is thought that the blind have additional powers and abilities such as hearing, the sixth sense or better judgment skills. The content of social representation no longer includes stereotypical beliefs that the blind people are sinners, beggars, punished and that they have musical talents and abilities. (Papadakis, 2013, p. 481).

Today's stereotypes about the blind promote mainly a negative image, which reinforces the social stigma of blindness. At the center of these stereotypes are the expectations that the blind people are helpless, docile, dependent and melancholic. (Clinard, 2008, p. 384).

Wainapel (1989, cited Moore & Wolfe, 1996, p.8) points out the general tendency to see people with visual impairments as either completely blind or completely sighted without recognizing types and levels of vision impairments, either as having other disabilities, such as mental retard or deafness, or as being helpless, objects worthy of pity that are unable to lead independent lives, or unable to work except for certain types of jobs, such as salesman or court stenographer.

### **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Does the university program of studies followed by the student structure the content of the social representation of the visual disability? Is there a way to perceive the visual disability specific to the group of students from a certain specialization?

### **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In this article I will identify the stereotypical representations used by the students from three study programs from "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galati in making portraits of people with visual impairments and attaching meanings of blindness. At the same time, we will capture the differences in structuring the content of social representations according to the study program followed. In the present study we stopped at the specialties of Orthodox Theology Social Assistance (OTSA), Human Resources (HR) and Engineering and Management in Food Service and agrotourism. (EMFSA).

We believe that social representations of blindness and visually impaired people perpetuate the cultural stereotypes of Tiresias (blind hero, endowed with supernatural powers) and Oedipus (blind victim, helpless, unhappy, worthy of mercy), but the elements of their social representation are structured differently depending on the university program of studies followed.

### **5. RESEARCH METHODS**

Our study is a qualitative comparative approach made on a sample of 27 student from three university studies programs. Its selection is made by a random strategy, choosing an equal number of students from each specialization. The research is conducted through the interview method.

### **6. FINDINGS**

Data analyse in our approach show that most students have little knowledge of real abilities and the individuality of the visual impairments people, confirming the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes regarding blindness and the blind. Serious impairment of vision and the occurrence of blindness in people's lives is believed to be the result of either natural causes or God's will (as a punishment, as a curse, or as a salvation test), or of the action of evil spirits summoned by various spells performed by those who practice magic.

The belief in supernatural causes of the disease (religious and magical) is prevalent in the explanations elaborated by the students from OTSA (77.7%) and constitutes the core of the social representation of this specialization, while, in the other two university programs of studies, the majority are the explanations that attribute natural causes to blindness (66.6%).

### 6.1. Who are the people with visual impairment?

The attributes that characterize the visually impaired people are both positive and negative, but the images are predominantly negative. The structuring of the attributes varies from one specialization to another, disability interpretation schemes highlighting a central core with predominantly negative traits and a peripheral system with various elements. Figure 1 show the features associated by the students to the visually impaired.

From the analysis of the content of the social representation it is found that, regardless of specialization, the theme of *personal tragedy* is the defining note of the social representations of the visual impairment, regardless of the visual impairment degree. The disability is, first of all, perceived as a disabling condition which places the suffering person in an abnormal condition, at the edge of society, characterized by helplessness, dependency, mercy and misery.

People with visual impairment are seen as defective bodies that lost their balance as a result of serious damage or absence of the most important function. Through the label *defective body*, persons with visual impairment are identified only among individuals whose sight is missing or functions very poorly, considered to be the most important human sense, being either blind or barely seeing with the help of glasses.

They are incomplete, with a “defect” from birth or acquired during their life, dysfunctional, with the balance of all functions disturbed as a result of loss of vision, with a low emotional state, are unable to know the “unknown” and to communicate with the “normal” naturalness of the majority who sees.

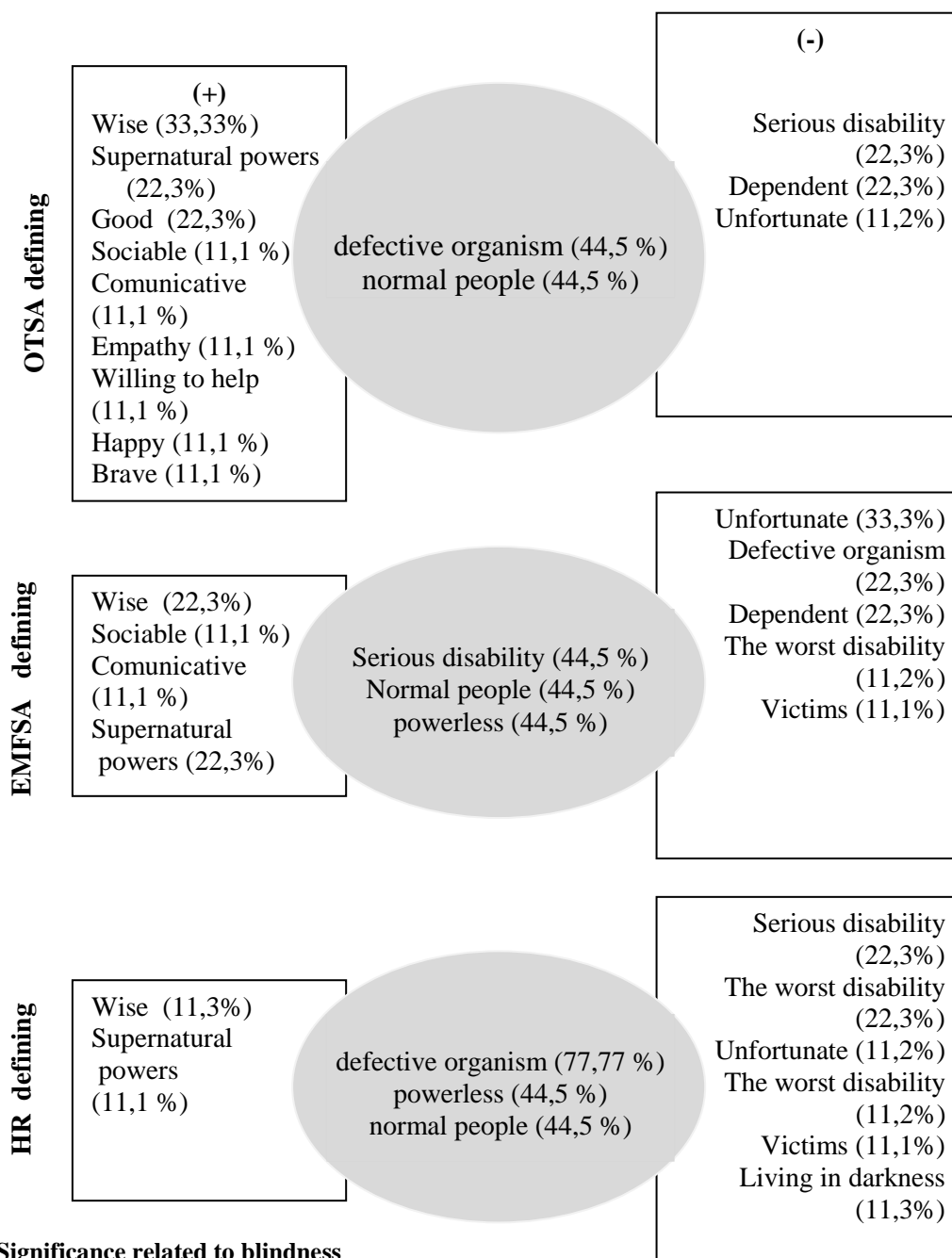
Through the label *serious disability*, impairment of vision is described as a serious, difficult disability, being one of the hardest disabilities, being the hardest by comparison with being without a leg and staying in bed, having a strong impact on the psychic of the individual (“it can cause psychic diseases”) and also to the external environment, creating isolation (“it isolates you from the other people”). Also, blind people are seen *victims without defense*, to be prone to fall prey to the unpleasant events and unable to react to injustice.

The subject of the blind person seen will be the normal person, is secondary in the structure of social representation, including the descriptions such as: “the same as others”, equal to anybody, capable to be independent, to do daily activities without asking the help of others, to start a family, to raise alone and to educate their own children, with a variety of personalities that make them optimists or pessimists according to their education level, the environment where they live or their own nature, the lack of sight not determining the character of a person.

The main components of the peripheral of the representation, resulting from perception reading related to the disabled persons are the following:

- *The wise and virtuous blind*: it is endowed with an inner view that knows how to appreciate and enjoy the small things, evaluates those around without prejudice, has “beautiful” moral values, is good and empathetic. He has supernatural powers (inner view) and support from God;
- *Brave and cheerful*: accept the new way of life, are cheerful and optimistic;
- *Blind beggar*: present faith in the representations of the students of human resources, sends to pencil of some people who declare themselves blind for material benefits, beg or benefit without having the right to social assistance, or they are stolen from different activities;

**Figure 1. The features associated by the students to the visually impaired**



**6.2. Significance related to blindness**

We will reproduce an ensemble of meanings attached to blindness, found in the representations elaborated by the respondents:

Blindness as *punishment*: the stereotype is found only in the social representations of female students from EMFSA and HR specializations, but its presence is marginal, the weights recorded being 22.2% in the case of the first and 11.1% in the case of the latter. The appeal to this type of judgment is made whenever a natural cause that generates the deficiency cannot be identified. The rural environment of childhood (all the respondents living in villages), through the collective mind of the traditional Romanian village marked by the religious and moral model, is one of the factors that play an important

role in perpetuating this belief:

„...it is believed that they did not believe in God and did not respect his words or were wrong about others.” (female, HR)

Blindness as *salvation test*. Faith in the call to salvation constitutes the core of the social representation of the students from the OTSA specialization and a peripheral element in the case of the representations of the other specializations, being found in 77.7% within the OTSA, 11.1% at EMFSA, respectively 11, 1% in the HR. The appearance of the visual impairment until blindness occurs is believed not to be accidental in the life of man because otherwise the whole life would make no sense.

The torment of the sufferer is thus loaded with religious meaning, explained as an attempt that God is testing him in order to be saved. Then everything will depend on whether or not he will be able to obtain salvation.

„blindness is an attempt that God gives to man to save him[...] It depends on how the blind person succeeds in assuming this” (female, OTSA)

Blindness as a result of *witchcraft*: The belief that blindness is the result of witchcraft, a system that functions separately from religion and placed in the service of the devil, is part of the central core of social representation of OTSA students, being found in 44.44%. Spells, tools made by people who "work with the devil", only affect those who are not good Christians:

„ ... No spell cast on the believer.... God does not allow such a thing to a good Christian” (female, OTSA)

This explanation given to the visual impairment can be found, in a very low percentage (11.1%), in the social representation of the students from EMFSA .

Blindness as a result of *curses*. In the core of the representations of the blindness elaborated by the students from OTSA we also find the belief in the existence of curses, the percentage being 44.4%. The blindness is seen as the result of invoking misfortunes for the evil caused by the sufferer or his family by the serious transgression of social norms. It is believed that the practice of cursing is widespread, but the curse has effect only on the nonbeliever and only with the allowance of God:

"... The curse can take root only in man who is not united with Christ." (female, OTSA)

Blindness as *wisdom*: the representation of the blind as the "divine blind" who reaches true and profound knowledge with the help of the inner sight mediated by the soul (the eye of God) is found among the peripheral elements of the social representation elaborated by students from EMFSA (11.1%) and HR (11.1%), and for OTSA students it is part of the central core of representation (33.3). Blindness is positively valued, being perceived as a model of knowing the other, without prejudice, not influenced by the external aspects of the world.

"... a lesson from which one can learn and show others to see more with the inner self ... people can see only with the soul" (female, OTSA)

"... the deep knowledge of a soul, without prejudice to the aspect" (female, HR);

According to Evseev (1994, p. 122), this belief reflects one of the themes of the mythical imaginary, that of wisdom given by the attainment of the inner sight as a result of blindness, the blind people becoming the master of the spiritual world.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Persons with visual impairments are defined predominantly by personal trauma, with the attributes that accompany such a state (deficiency, inability, dependence and limitation). Images about the blind and the visually impaired are mostly stereotypes, being both positive (wise, supernatural power, empathic, understanding the suffering of other) and negative (powerless, dependent, victims, beggars).

Cultural stereotypes that explain blindness as a result of supernatural and / or spiritual causes (witchcraft, curses, divine punishment) are still being conveyed, but they are marginal in social representation. The stereotype of the asexual blind, an individual incapable of engaging in a relationship and of having a family life, is no longer conveyed. Instead, the inability to raise and care for their children is a dominant representation.

The hypothesis of the influence of the program of university studies on the structuring of the attributes by which the blind are characterized was validated, observing the differences between the elaborated representations. The images described by the students from the Orthodox Theology Social

Assistance university study program are closer to reality compared to the images created by students from the other two specializations, containing fewer stereotypes, given the specific study program that puts them in touch with the vulnerable world.

From the analysis of the content of the social representation it is found that, regardless of specialization, the theme of personal tragedy is the defining note of the social representations of the visual impairment, regardless of the visual impairment degree. The disability is, first of all, perceived as a disabling condition which places the suffering person in an abnormal condition, at the edge of society, characterized by helplessness, dependency, mercy and misery. People with visual impairment are seen as defective bodies that lost their balance as a result of serious damage or absence of the most important function. Through the label defective body, persons with visual impairment are identified only among individuals whose sight is missing or functions very poorly, considered to be the most important human sense, being either blind or barely seeing with the help of glasses. They are incomplete, with a “defect” from birth or acquired during their life, dysfunctional, with the balance of all functions disturbed as a result of loss of vision, with a low emotional state, are unable to know the “unknown” and to communicate with the “normal” naturalness of the majority who sees. Through the label serious disability, impairment of vision is described as a serious, difficult disability, being one of the hardest disabilities, being the hardest by comparison with being without a leg and staying in bed, having a strong impact on the psychic of the individual (“it can cause psychic diseases”) and also to the external environment, creating isolation (“it isolates you from the other people”). Also, blind people are seen victims without defense, to be prone to fall prey to the unpleasant events and unable to react to injustice.

The subject of the blind person seen will be the normal person, is secondary in the structure of social representation, including the descriptions such as: “the same as others”, equal to anybody, capable to be independent, to do daily activities without asking the help of others, to start a family, to raise alone and to educate their own children, with a variety of personalities that make them optimists or pessimists according to their education level, the environment where they live or their own nature, the lack of sight not determining the character of a person.

The main components of the peripheral of the representation, resulting from perception reading related to the disabled persons are the following:

- The wise and virtuous blind: it is endowed with an inner view that knows how to appreciate and enjoy the small things, evaluates those around without prejudice, has “beautiful” moral values, is good and empathetic. He has supernatural powers (inner view) and support from God;
- Brave and cheerful: accept the new way of life, are cheerful and optimistic;
- Blind beggar: present faith in the representations of the students of human resources, sends to pencil of some people who declare themselves blind for material benefits, beg or benefit without having the right to social assistance, or they are stolen from different activities;

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Abric J.C. Reprezentările sociale: aspecte teoretice [Social representation: theoretical aspects]. In: Neculau A, ed. *Psihologia câmpului social: reprezentările sociale* [Social field psychology: social representations]. Second edition. Iași: Polirom; 1997; pp. 107-127.
- [2] Clinard, Marshall B. & Meier, R.F. *Sociology of deviant Behaviour*. Thirteenth edition. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth; 2008.
- [3] Evseev I. *Dicționar de simboluri și arhetipuri culturale* [Dictionary of cultural symbols and archetypes]. Timișoara: Editura Amarcord; 1994.
- [4] Moore J.E, Wolfe, K.E. Employment considerations for adults with low vision. In: Corn A.L., Koenig A.J., eds. *Foundations of low vision: Clinical and functional perspectives*. New York: AFB Press; 1996, pp. 340-362.
- [5] Moscovici S. The history and actuality of social representation. In: Flick U., ed. *The psychology of the social*. Cambridge: University Press; 1998, pp. 209-247.
- [6] Oliver M. *The Politics of Disablement*. London: Palgrave Macmillan; 1990.
- [7] Papadaki, M., Tzevotkova-Arsova, M. Social Attitudes and Beliefs of Sighted People towards Blindness and Blind People. *Specijalna edukacija i rehabilitacija* (Beograd). 2013; 12 (4), 481-499. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.5937/specedreh12-4288>.
- [8] Pissaloux E., Velázquez R. (eds.). *Mobility of Visually Impaired People. Fundamentals and ICT Assistive Technologies*. New York: Springer International Publishing; 2017.
- [9] Retief M., Letšosa R. Models of disability: A brief overview. *HTS Theological Studies*. 2018, 74(1), 1-8. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738>.
- [10] Sardegna J., Shelly S., Rutzen A.R., Steidl S.M. Attitude. *The Encyclopedia of Blindness and Vision Impairment*. Second Edition. New York: Facts On File Inc.; 2002. pp. 21-23.
- [11] Șerbănescu A. Cum gândesc românii și cum gândesc ceilalți: prin labirintul culturilor [How Romanian think and how others think: through the labyrinth of cultures]. Iași: Polirom; 2007.
- [12] Turliuc M.N. *Imaginar, identitate și reprezentări sociale: imaginea elementului alogen în mentalul colectiv românesc* [Imaginary, identity and social representations: the image of the allogeneic element in the Romanian collective mind]. Iași: Editura Universității „A.I. Cuza”; 2004.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.242-250>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## CURRENT TRENDS IN EUROPEAN POLICIES ON THE RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

Felicia Cordoneanu (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Lecturer, PhD. "Dunărea de Jos" University, Galati, Romania, E-mail: [feliciacordoneanu@gmail.com](mailto:feliciacordoneanu@gmail.com)

### *Abstract*

During the last decade, the legislative changes made by the EU in the field of social policies have been, to a great extent, the result of the need to prevalently abide by two fundamental principles: equal opportunities for women and men (at all levels of social life, but especially in what labour market is concerned) and gender equality, in the context of an escalating necessity of solving social, economic and political issues caused by gender inequality in European societies. An issue with multiple effects in present-day social life is the imbalance between professional life and private/ family life, which negatively affects the quality of life of both men and women. This study aims at surveying the most recent legislative and social policies documents (henceforth, informative documents and legislative documents) of the European Union, with regard to the reconciliation of work and private and family life, an acknowledged right of European citizens which calls for a legal framework for the implementation and application of the associated measures and solutions. The synthetic analysis of the official documents undertaken in this paper is the result of a thorough investigation carried out on the European Union website. The study raises several significant question for the proposed framework, but it comes down to outlining a number of essential elements present in the documents selected, without advancing answers. The field of work-life balance policy is currently undergoing a transformation process and formulating definitive answers is still untimely.

**Keywords:** Work-Life Balance; reconciliation of work; family life; gender equality, equal opportunities;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Licia Ronzulli, member of the European Parliament in office from 2009 to 2014, became famous for the unusual manner in which she decided to militate for women's rights to reconciliation of private and professional life, by bringing her six-week old daughter with her at work in the European Parliament in 2010.<sup>1</sup> Is her act an example of good practice for our topic of interest? Or is it the mere manifestation of a state of affairs? Fact is that this example reflects a reality and a profound social issue that needs to be addressed.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/24/high-five-licia-ronzulli-children-workplace>, accessed on June, 6 2019



The changes undergone during the last three decades at the global level, at all stages of social reality, are, to a great extent, the result of a paradigm change in what concerns the special interest in the *gender* dimension of social policies. The process was set in motion at the *World Conferences on Women de la Beijing* in 1995. Following the implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, actual steps have been taken, which are monitored and evaluated every five years (Beijing +5, +10, +15, +20, and next year, +25).<sup>2</sup> The action routes established by each of these documents have been afterwards taken up and implemented, from UN recommendations and directives or through other international governmental institutions<sup>3</sup>, to significant legislative changes in the UN member states.

Within the framework of the European Union, the *Beijing Platform* (or the *UN Platform for Action for Gender Equality*) has been enacted by February 25, 2010 European Parliament Resolution on *Beijing +15*.<sup>4</sup> It is a landmark in the European Union gender policy. However, prior to this moment, the direction of action of the EU institutions for enacting measures for observing the rights of people regardless of their gender had been reified by official documents.<sup>5</sup> Starting with 2006<sup>6</sup>, European agencies<sup>7</sup> and governmental and non-governmental organizations have been established, acting either independently or under the aegis of the EU, and focusing on the gender issue. One can list here *European Institute for Gender Equality* (EIGE), and the national agencies in the EU member states (in Romania, *The National Agency for Equal Opportunities* – ANES). The European construction in the social area and for observing the rights of all citizens, regardless of their gender, is grounded in the consolidation of a legislative and institutional apparatus meant to contribute in the implementation of the measures of ensuring gender equality and equal opportunities, and at the same time, in the periodic monitoring and evaluation of the results, proposed changes and solutions for the problems identified.

In 2017, the *European Pillar of Social Rights*<sup>8</sup> was established, as part of the set of priority policies of the European Commission. On the official website of the *European Pillar of Social Rights* one finds the following structure, with three main directions (chapters): Chapter I: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market; Chapter II: Fair working conditions; Chapter III: Social protection and inclusion. Among the five rights listed in the second chapter, one finds the right to work-life balance. “Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence in order to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way.”<sup>9</sup>

## 2. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In theory, the concepts of *work-life balance* or *reconciliation of work and private life* are integrated within a conceptual sets that defines actual and complex models, processes or directions, meant to provide solutions to social issues emerging from the conflict or imbalance between professional and private life. Therefore, the principle of *reconciliation* or *balance* between the two essential dimension of life of contemporary person – the professional and private dimension – represents a *solution* for an actual social problem. Before embarking on the analysis of the most recent documents that provide, for the European Union area, the framework for the implementation of the solutions provided by this principle, it

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women>, accessed on June, 6 2019

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>, accessed on June, 6 2019

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0037+0+DOC+XML+V0//RO>, accessed on June, 6 2019

<sup>5</sup> <https://eurlex.europa.eu/search.html?qid=1567973984237&text=egalitate%20de%20gen&scope=EURL EX&type=quick&lang=ro>, accessed on June, 7 2019

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?qid=1567973151835&uri=CELEX:32010L0041>, accessed on June, 7 2019

<sup>7</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?qid=1567973151835&uri=CELEX:32006R1922>, accessed on June, 8 2019

<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_ro](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_ro), accessed on June, 9 2019

<sup>9</sup> *ibidem*

is necessary that we formulate the problem that has led to the emergence of this principle: *the clash between priority aims for professional life and private life*, equally important, whose achievement requires the same efforts and limited resources (Zedeck & Moiser, 1990).

The *time* resource is the most important among them, as it is necessary, to the same extent, both to building a career (or to having a full-time job for making a living) and to private life. The effect of this state of affairs is a major imbalance in the life of contemporary person, a state of conflict between social roles (Rantanen, 2008) and a social and economic pressure which produce, in their turn, stress, work ineffectiveness, professional and/or personal failure (Clark, 1965).

The concept of *work-life balance* was firstly used in United Kingdom during the 70s (Prasad, 2012). During the 1980s-1990s, the phrase becomes relevant for the policy of US companies. Another phrasing of the same concept is *work-family balance*, which expands the coverage area of the meanings of this principle, being related both to aspects of private life, such as “managing studies, travel, sports, volunteering, personal development and leisure” (Benito-Osori et al, 2014, p.3), and to ways of family organization of families with children or other members of the extended family who need care.

One solution is choosing and investing in only one of the two dimensions. (Macmillan, 2005); another solution, as a variant of the former, entails attaining the professional and personal aims in different phases, at different stages of alternating the professional and the private aims (George, 1993; Levy & Bühlmann, 2016). The topic has been approached in the literature from the perspective of human resources management and from sociological and psychological perspectives.

Under managerial aspect, “Work-Life Balance practices are concerned with providing scope for employees to balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work and so reconcile the competing claims of work and home by meeting their own needs as well as those of their employer” (Armstrong, M., 2006, p. 447). The last perspective above describes the phenomenon of adaptation to present-day socio-economic realities of all couples in which both partners have a job. More types are being identified, reflecting the general picture of possible solutions for the reconciliation of professional and private life: dual-career, dual-income, status-reversal and neo-traditional couples (Duxbury, Lyons, Higgins, 2007, 478-481).

Also from a psychological perspective, in the case of families with children, time pressure difficulties are solved by the two parents in the family group assuming specific tasks: “For mothers, the following factors were associated with increased time pressure: occupancy of an unpaid caregiving role, parenting a child with at least one health/behavioural problem, and the perception of parenting as draining or anxiety provoking.

Regarding the paid work environment, women who were categorized as high strain (i.e., high demands/low control) or active (high demands/high control) also reported higher levels of time pressure. For fathers, greater perceived time pressure was associated with: occupancy of the partner role, the perception of parenting as draining, being a multiple job holder and having a high strain (i.e., high demands/low control) or active (high demands/high control) psychosocial work environment.” (Fitzpatrick et al, 2012)

From a sociological perspective, the topic has been tackled in the literature within the frameworks of social roles theory. Social theories such as the ones formulated by Merton and later Goode emphasised this aspect as early as in the 1960s. Working and family supporting parents are automatically actively employed in two fundamental social spheres: *family*, as a primary social environment for assuming a role, and their *job*, by which one acquires various levels of status, self-esteem and economic resources (Goode, 1960).

### **3.DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES**

The method employed for this research has been the documentary analysis of official documents published on the European Union website related to the issue of reconciliation of professional and private life. The agreed phrasing used in official documents is *work-life balance*. Some documents are of a general nature and describe complex solutions and measures related to various categories of problems in which the imbalance between professional and family life generates negative effects at social level; other documents are more specific, singularizing either a certain category of population active on the labour

market or a specific issue. At the same time, we have identified documents which complement institutional procedures of the European Union and which consolidate and validate a document in force. Without making reference to juridical aspects and European laws, which fall outside the scope of this research, one may note a fairly dense procedural mechanism, justifiable by the exactness demands that any decision of a European institution must meet.

In order to understand the evolution of the work-life balance principle in the European Union, we have resorted to the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union Equality*, enacted on December 7, 2000, following the Treaty of Nice. The constitutional relevance of this document has been consolidated starting with the year 2009, with the Treaty of Lisbon, In *Chapter III Equality*, Article 23 - *Equality between men and women* must be “ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex.” (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, 2000: 13), and *Chapter IV Solidarity, Article 33 Family and professional life*: “1. The family shall enjoy legal, economic and social protection. 2. To reconcile family and professional life, everyone shall have the right to protection from dismissal for a reason connected with maternity and the right to paid maternity leave and to parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child.” (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, 2000: 23)

Before the enactment of the *Charter*, the *work-life balance* principle was scarcely outlined in the European Union policies. In addition, the notion of refining or improving working conditions prevailed in the 1960s-1970s, in close connection with the demands of the labour market at that time, and the attention paid to the principle under focus here was only secondary. “By the turn of the century, an increasing number of women participated in paid employment – notably in the growing service industry, working on fixed term and part-time contracts. There was a growth in marginal workers and welfare provisions had become more stringent and were linked to attempts to secure employment.” (Bursty, N. and James, G., 2015, p. 296)

After the 2004, 2007 and 2011 enlargements of the European Union, the sedimentation of the mechanisms of the European single market brought to light new social problems that needed to be addressed. In this new series of challenges of social reality, aspects related to ensuring equal opportunity were highlighted, thus clearly outlining the principle of work and family life reconciliation. (Bursty, N. and James, G., 2015, p. 296-297).

In the following subsections, we will analyse some of the most recent legislative and informative documents issued by the institutions of the European Union, highlighting the current trends of the social policies on work and family life balance and the direction of action for the next period.

#### A. *Informative documents*

Work-life balance has found its place among the policies of the European Council. On the website of this European institution, under *Policies*, among the 88 policies listed in alphabetic order, one finds described, on a separate webpage, the policy of *work-life balance for parents and carers*. Its necessity and importance is argued by the contents of the *Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU*, which is analysed below. At the same time, the arguments refer to socio-professional realities that hinder the career advancement process for a significant number of people: “In particular, this new initiative seeks to **encourage a better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men**. The **economic loss is €370 billion per year**, due to the gender employment gap in the EU. The work-life balance package should help working parents and carers by not obliging them to choose between their family lives and their working careers” (European Council). On the same webpage is presented the timeline of enacting the directive cited above and the deadline for introducing the Directive in the legislation of the EU member states, which have to transpose the provisions into national law by 2 August 2022).

*The Annual Report 2018 Review of the Social Protection Performance Monitor and Developments in Social Protection Policies* of European Commission for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion refers to *work-life balance policies* in the context of the main messages formulated: “In particular, access to affordable quality early childhood education and care, along with 7 well-designed work-life balance policies, is key to improve children’s life prospects, while at the same time supporting

the labour market participation of their parents, notably mothers” (European Commission, 2018a: 6) “Social inclusion of mothers beyond monetary support is essential, including employment and social connections. However, employment does not protect single mothers from poverty, as there are a number of risk factors related to precarious employment, low wages and less favourable employment conditions that may affect them. Thus, employment policies and policies that ensure work-life balance, are an inherent part of a desirable policy mix” (European Commission, 2018a: 38); “Well-designed work-life balance policies, such as family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements, can also support parent’s participation in the labour market. Several countries have reformed their schemes to support a more gender-balanced take-up, highlighting the importance of fathers’ involvement for children’s well-being, health and development” (European Commission, 2018a: 41-42).

*Second-stage consultation of the social partners at European level under Article 154 TFEU on possible action addressing the challenges of work-life balance faced by working parents and caregivers* is a document which analyses consultations and establishes the EU competencies in the field. The document discusses the objectives of work and family life balance, systematising the priorities in more categories of measures. For example, one topic tackled in the problem definition chapter is the lack of adequate work-life balance and low take-up by men. (European Commission, 2016: 11). The description of current legislative and policy instruments in the member states includes several of the following categories: family-related leave (maternity, paternity, parental, carers leave), flexible working arrangements, childcare and care services to care for elderly, ill and dependent relatives, tax and benefit systems and financial incentives to work. (European Commission, 2016: 23-39).

Legislative aspects	Economic aspects
paid individual leaves around the time of the birth of a child for both mothers and fathers (maternity and paternity leave); • periods of parental leave which fathers are encouraged to share through a combination of both the non-transferability of certain periods and the payment of some form of adequate allowance; • design of policies to ensure no gap between the end of parental leave and available childcare; • a high degree of autonomy for workers to manage their professional and family responsibilities in order to enable both parents to remain in the labour market after the birth of a child, for example through voluntary flexible working arrangements (such as flexible working patterns or schedules) or reduced working hours.	lack of paid leave exclusively for fathers around the time of the birth; • too much reliance on leaves aimed at women relative to men, without incentives for fathers to take leave, (e.g. leaves are not remunerated; fathers can transfer a significant share of the leave to the mother; leaves can only be taken on a fulltime basis); and 272 European Network of Legal Experts (2015) Measures to address the challenges of work-life balance 73 • potential of flexible working arrangements is not properly exploited in such a way as to enable workers to have a reasonable measure of autonomy with regard to the management of their professional and family responsibilities throughout the lifecycle; • gaps between parental leave and available and affordable childcare and/or a risk of reduced employment of those providing informal care to dependent relatives; • tax/benefit systems that discourage the parent earning less (often the mother) from working.

Source: [file:///C:/Users/mushr/Downloads/1\\_EN\\_autre\\_document\\_travail\\_service\\_part1%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/mushr/Downloads/1_EN_autre_document_travail_service_part1%20(2).pdf): 72-73

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), an [agency of the European Union](#), established by the European Council in 1975, publishes in 2015 an informative material entitled *Promoting uptake of parental and paternity leave among fathers in the European Union*. Another organism under the direct supervision of the European Union is European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), which publishes, also in 2015, *Reconciliation of work, family and private life in the European Union Policy review*. Mention should also be made of the study published by the European Statistical Office (EUROSTAT), the EU statistics institute, in 2009, entitled *Reconciliation between work, private and family life in the European Union*.

Last but not least, one should mention the research *Maternity leave policies Trade-offs between labour market demands and health benefits for children* undertaken in 2017 by RAND Europe, a non-profit research organisation that helps to improve policy and decision making through research and analysis, working with European governments and institutions, charities, foundations, universities and private sector firms that seek impartial, quality-assured research.

The analysis of these documents is relevant for the understanding of the evolution of work-life balance policies outside the EU institutional mechanisms. The socio-economic and statistical data is doubled with an analysis of the legislation in force at the time of undertaking the research. Such an approach allows a bird-eye view from a chronological perspective, and also the comparison between the EU Member States.

### **B. Legislative documents**

The most recent document issued by the European Council on June 13 and enacted by the European Parliament on June 20, 2019, is *Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU*. The proposal has been submitted to European Commission by Communication from the Commission: An Initiative to Support Work-Life Balance for Working Parents and Carers, Brussels, on 26.4.2017, COM (2017). The Directive consists of 22 articles. *Legal measures* include: introduction of paternity leave: fathers/equivalent second parents will be able to take at least 10 working days of paternity leave around the time of birth of the child, compensated at least at the level of sick pay; strengthening of the existing right to 4 months of parental leave, by making 2 out of the 4 months non-transferable from a parent to another, and compensated at a level to be set by Member States.

Parents will also have the right to request to take the leave in a flexible way (e.g. part-time or in a piecemeal way); introduction of carers' leave for workers providing personal care or support to a relative or person living in the same household. Working carers will be able to take 5 days per year; extension of the existing right to request flexible working arrangements (reduced working hours, flexible working hours and flexibility in place of work) to all working parents of children up to at least 8 years old, and all carers. *Policy measures* include: ensuring **protection against discrimination and dismissal** for parents (including pregnant women and workers coming back from a leave) and carers; encouraging a **gender-balanced use** of family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements; making better use of **European funds** to improve provision of formal care services (childcare, out-of-school care and long-term care); removing **economic disincentives** for second earners which prevent women from accessing the labour market or working full-time.

**Parents and carers** will profit from a better work-life balance. Moreover, the foreseen increase in women's employment, their higher earnings and career progression will positively impact their and their families' economic prosperity, social inclusion and health. **Companies** will benefit from a wider talent pool and a more motivated and productive labour force, as well as from less absenteeism. The rise in women's employment will also contribute to **addressing the challenge of demographic ageing and** ensuring Member States' **financial stability**.

Article 1 lists the objectives and the aim of adopting this Directive:

“This Directive lays down minimum requirements designed to achieve equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work, by facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life for workers who are parents, or carers. To that end, this Directive provides for individual rights related to the following: (a) paternity leave, parental leave and carers' leave; (b) flexible working arrangements for workers who are parents, or carers.”

DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU: 85

Topics and chapters	Current EU legislative framework	Proposed Directive
<b>Paternity leave</b>	No paternity leave at EU level	10 working days of paternity leave when the child is born
<b>Parental leave</b>	4 months of parental leave Non-paid Guideline on uptake until the child reaches the age of 8 1 month cannot be transferred between the parents Possibility of flexible uptake to be decided by the Member States	4 months of parental leave: Paid at sick pay level To be taken up at least until the child reaches the age of 12 4 months cannot be transferred between the parents Possibility of flexible uptake
<b>Carers' leave</b>	No carers' leave at EU-level beyond time-off on grounds of force majeure	Right to 5 days of carers' leave per year per worker, paid at sick pay level, to take care of seriously ill or dependent relatives
<b>Flexible working arrangements for parents and carers</b>	Currently at EU level the right to request this exists only for parents coming back from parental leave	Right to request flexible working arrangements for parents of children up to 12 years old and workers with caring responsibilities
<b>Protection against dismissal and unfavourable treatment</b>	Currently at EU level protection against dismissal and/or unfavourable treatment exists for maternity, parental, paternity and adoption leave (in those Member States which have paternity or adoption leave). There is no EU-level protection against dismissal and/or unfavourable treatment for carers' leave and for workers requesting flexible working arrangements (except for part-time work).	Protection against discrimination and/or dismissal in cases where workers choose to take or apply to take leave or request flexible working arrangements.

Source: [https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-17-1005\\_en.htm](https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1005_en.htm)

European Parliament *Resolution of 15 November 2018 on care services in the EU for improved gender equality* (2018/2077(INI)) develops upon the work-life balance context in 15 points. With reference to the framework of the social reality that requires the enactment of this resolution, the document, among other things: “recalls that policies on work-life balance should encourage men to take up care responsibilities on an equal basis with women; recognises that low socioeconomic status and low education levels are, for many people, barriers to care services, which only compound the challenges they face in achieving a work-life balance; considers that this requires explicit programming and policy;” (European Parliament, 2018: 7-17)

Report PE580.714v02-00 of 2.8.2016, on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, related to *Motion for a European Parliament resolution on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance* (2016/2017(INI)) comprises the following titles related to the matter under focus here: Family- and care-related types of leave, Care for dependants, Quality employment, Quality of life. (European Parliament, 2016: 16-23). The explanatory statement outlines the actions needed at EU level to improve work-life balance. “This report calls on the Commission to: present a proposal for a revised Pregnant Workers (Maternity Leave) Directive 92/85/ECC, which currently dates back to 1992 and which was adopted under the EU competence in workplace health and safety. Currently existing directive provides for 14 weeks of paid maternity leave and the protection against dismissal. Revision should aim at prolonging paid maternity leave with a diverse formula of payment to allow for accommodation of specific needs and traditions in different Member States; present a Paternity Leave Directive to ensure that men take up their share of caring responsibilities, foreseeing a minimum mandatory and non-transferable paid leave for fathers; present an implementation report of the Parental Leave Directive 2010/18/EU, put forward a Carers' leave directive, as a supplement to the provision of affordable professional care and to enable workers to care for dependents.” (European Parliament, 2016:

26-27). European Parliament Resolution of 4 July 2013, Impact of the crisis on access to care for vulnerable groups (2013/2044(INI)). The document advances the idea that ensuring a satisfactory work-life balance is difficult for women. The numbers for 2013 prove that women are remunerated for their professional activity with wages 18% less than men's, with consideration to the fact that 78% of women carry out care activities. At the same time, "the negative impact of reductions in service provision or the rising costs thereof on employment levels amongst women, work-life balance, gender equality and healthy ageing." (European Parliament, 2013: 11).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The new social realities have triggered profound changes in the life philosophy of contemporary man. The aspirations towards self-accomplishment, high hopes and the constant increase of life standards have altered the scale of needs and the hierarchy of values valid 20-30 years ago. Consequently, new approaches to work optimization are necessary, in the sense of integrating this activity in the context of individual hopes and aspirations to self-accomplishment.

The present paper is a 2019 update on the issues circumscribed to work-life balance and reconciliation of career and family life policies of the European Union. The legislative framework that the European Union has created starting with 2015 has triggered a process of applying concrete solutions. One will be able to respond to the questions formulated along this research study only when this legal framework starts producing visible and quantifiable effects.

The social issue of the conflict between professional life, on the one hand, and the private/ family life, on the other hand, has wider and more profound implications than what was initially estimated at the level of European Union social policies. Although the reconciliation of work and life principle formulates concrete solutions, their application and the improving effects at the social reality level are long-term processes. The more acute are the effects of the conflict between professional and private priorities, the more the implementation of measures related to work and life balance has become a priority within the framework of EU social policies. The documentary analysis of the documents above has generated questions such as: what are the current trends of European Union social policies on the reconciliation of work and family life? How is this field reified by legislation? What are the actual measures taken by the European Union for the implementation of the principles of reconciliation of work and private life and for achieving the work and family life balance? What is the fundamental orientation formulated by good practice principles in this field?

To sum up, the current trends of the European Union social policies in the issue related to the reconciliation of professional and family life are increasingly materialized at legislative level; the actual measures taken by the European Union for the implementation of the principle of the reconciliation of work and private life and of achieving work and family life balance are currently being implemented and represent a priority of the European Union institutions. The solutions for achieving balance/ reconciliation of professional and private/ family life are closely related to solving other social issues specific to gender equality and equal opportunity. The improvement or solving the issue generated by the work-life conflict has great positive implication at the level of social realities on the labour market.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Armstrong, M. (2006), *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*, 10th Ed.
- [2] Benito-Osori, D, Muñoz-Aguado, L., Villar, C, The Impact of Family and Work-Life Balance Policies on the Performance of Spanish Listed Companies in *M@n@gement* 17(4):214 January 2014, pp. 214-236. doi: 10.3917/mana.174.0214
- [3] Bursty, N. And James, G. (2015), Regulating Working Families in the European Union: A History of Disjointed Strategies, in *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 37 (3), pp. 295-308, ISSN 14699621 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2015.1081217>, Available at <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/44620/>
- [4] Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Official Journal of the European Communities. 18.12.2000. 364/22. Available at [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf) Accessed on 28.08.2019
- [5] Clark, J.F., Book Reviews : *Organisational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity*: By R. L. Kahn, D. M. Wolfe, R. P. Quinn, J. D. Snoek, and R. A. Rosenthal (John Wiley and Sons, Inc.,

New York, 1964), *Journal of Industrial Relations*; 7(2): 216-217, First Published July 1, 1965  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002218566500700211>

[16] Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of The Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU, Official Journal of the European Union. 12.07.2019: 79-93. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019L1158&from=EN>. Accessed on 28.08.2019.

[7] Duxbury, Linda, Higgins, Christopher, Lyons, Sean, (2007), Dual-Income Families in the New Millennium: Reconceptualising Family Type, *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 9(4): 472-486 · November doi: 10.1177/1523422307305488

[8] European Commission Second-stage consultation of the social partners at European level under Article 154 TFEU on possible action addressing the challenges of work-life balance faced by working parents and caregivers. Brussels. 12.7.2016 SWD (2016) 145 final.73. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/mushr/Downloads/1\\_EN\\_autre\\_document\\_travail\\_service\\_part1%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/mushr/Downloads/1_EN_autre_document_travail_service_part1%20(2).pdf) . Accessed on 01.09.2019

[9] European Council, <Policies>Work-life balance for parents and carers. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/work-life-balance/>. Accessed on 01.09.2019

[10] European Commission. Social Protection Committee Annual Report 2018 Review of the Social Protection Performance Monitor and Developments in Social Protection Policies Report on key social challenges and main messages, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018a. 60. doi:10.2767/43136. Accessed on 28.08.2019

[11] Eurofound. Promoting uptake of parental and paternity leave among fathers in the European Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. 2015. 26. doi: 10.2806/041743

[12] European Parliament. Motion for a European Parliament Resolution on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance (2016/2017(INI)): 30. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0253\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0253_EN.pdf) . Accessed on 02.09.2019

[13] European Parliament, Resolution of 15 November 2018 on care services in the EU for improved gender equality (2018/2077(INI)): 17. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0464\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0464_EN.pdf) . Accessed on 02.09.2019

[14] European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2013 Impact of the crisis on access to care for vulnerable groups (2013/2044(INI)): 14. Available: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P7-TA-2013-0328+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN> , Accessed on 2.09.2019

[15] Fitzpatrick, Terrie, Janzen, Bonnie, Abonyi, Sylvia, Ivan Kelly, Ivan, Factors Associated with Perceived Time Pressure among Employed Mothers and Fathers, *Psychology*, Vol.3 No.2, February 23, 2012. pp. 165-174,  
a. doi: 10.4236/psych.2012.32025

[16] George, L. (1993). Sociological Perspectives on Life Transitions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 19: 353-373 (August 1993) <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.19.080193.002033>

[17] Levy, R., Bühlmann, F. (2016). Towards a Socio-structural Framework for Life Course Analysis. *Advances in Life Course Research*, Volume 30, December 2016, pp. 30-42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2016.03.005>

[18] Goode, W. (1960). A Theory of Role Strain. *American Sociological Review*, 25: 483-496. doi:10.2307/2092933 accessed on 24.07.2019.

[19] Macmillan, R. (2005). The Structure of the Life Course: Classic Issues and Current Controversies. *Advances in Life Course Research*, volume 9, pp. 3-24

[20] Rantanen, J., Feldt, T., Kinnunen, U., Pulkkinen, L., Work-family Conflict and Psychological Well-being: Stability and Cross-lagged Relations within One- and Six-year Follow-ups, in *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 73(1): 37-51, August 2008, doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2008.01.001 , accessed on 29.07.2019.

[21] Zedeck, S., & Mosier, K. L. (1990). Work in the Family and Employing Organization. *American Psychologist*, 45(2), 240-251. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.45.2.240> , accessed on 24.07.2019.





<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.251-256>

## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### SOCIAL PHENOMENON AND THEATRE. ECONOMIC MIGRATION IN CATINCA DRĂGĂNESCU'S PLAY „ROVEGAN”

Elena Horghidan-Anghel (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) PhD. Student at Doctoral school Socio-Humanities, "Dunărea de Jos" University, Galati, Romania,  
E-mail: elena\_anghel88@yahoo.com

#### *Abstract*

Catinca Drăgănescu is one of the key figures in today's Romanian theatre. As a playwright and stage director she's inspired by Romania's social realities, and she always militates towards a theatre of consciousness, a theatre that's always grounded in 'present tense.' „Rovegan” as a play but also as a theatre show represents a clear example of Drăgănescu's proactive and focused approach towards Romania's social problems. In „Rovegan” she approaches the problem of economic migration. This is one of the most important issues in Romania's society today. The main factors that influence Romania's citizens to make this decision (leaving the country) are poverty and lack of perspective. These main subjects are key elements in Catinca's play. Following the script of the well-known fairy tale „Capra cu trei iezi” by Ion Creanga, the play follows the story of a mother who goes abroad, in Italy to work and her children who remain at home. The main subjects of the play, that bring up violent emotions in the audience, are capitalism as we know it today in Romania and the separation between mother and children.

**Keywords:** social theatre; economic migration; Capitalism; social consciousness; contemporary;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

At the moment, Romania is facing a number of problems that have an impact upon the society and the artists are trying to explore the most profound issues and offer possible solutions.

The Romanian artists start paying attention to a theater that acts as a binder, creating a space for dialogue and debating about the problems that contemporary society is facing to. There are many social categories that remained invisible in Romanian society, whose problems are not expressed; they are not discussed and nobody is looking for solutions in order to change something. One of these categories is represented by the migrants from Romania, those who leave to make a better living abroad, because they do not manage to get on their own feet in their own country.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

„On February 1, 2016 we recorded a net loss by external migration of one Romanian every 5 minutes and 27 seconds, at the population level, according to the INS data. Should I say more? Silent Romania, ignored Romania, that's it. What does it mean to be a good mother: to go away from your children in order to get money for their sustenance, or stay close to them and watch them dying of hunger?” (Drăgănescu, apud Tecuceanu, 2017)

Catinca Drăgănescu brings us attention to these aspects during the interview given on the occasion of the National Theater Festival in 2017. What should be the correct answer? What should a mother do in order to give her children a decent living and a minimum of comfort? About a poor Romania and a poor educational system, about the fact that we do not have a good relationship with the national identity, all these questions are raised by the Romanian artists today.

Catinca Drăgănescu is one of the representative images of the present Romanian theater. Director and play-writer, Drăgănescu has developed an interest in the social area, looking for detailed and profound information and proposing in her texts and plays, themes that reflect various social realities in present Romania such as: economic migration, exodus, degradation of the contemporary world, loss of identity and so on. Drăgănescu proposes a theater of social conscience, a theater deep-rooted at the present time, as stated in an interview given to the critic Iulia Popovici:

„Unlike many of colleagues in her generation, Catinca Drăgănescu has an active creative awareness and a greater availability for risk and for what, in the local context, would be called experiment. And her main area of experimentation is related to the work process and the approached conventions and artistic languages.” (Popovici, 2015, p.144)

In *Yorick* magazine, Catinca Drăgănescu talks about an artist who should be in a judgmental position to the world where he lives:

„We live in a world laid at the crossroads (speaking about Romania and Europe and the whole world). We have consumed almost everything that was to be consumed and it has come again the moment when we need new forms, new ideas, a real process of the past in order to start building a future. It may sound rhetorical, but to me it is a fact. I see a lot of inertia around me; many artists who are too relaxed to go on the stage because they never think about problems, they have few guiding marks, few values and extremely little courage.” (Drăgănescu apud Coman, 2018)

Through her texts and shows she creates, she tries to generate reactions and offer experiences by means of the proposal type she is launching in the Romanian theater:

„My theme is an effect: I wish to accomplish those artistic products that can touch the viewer's conscience, produce a click and make him ask some questions. I am not proposing myself to give him answers, to communicate him my own opinions about the world and life, but to open topics that I consider relevant.” (Drăgănescu apud Iacobuțe, 2019)

This fact does not make her easy to be accepted, sometimes becoming uncomfortable for both public and critics.

The text and the *Rovegan* play represent a clear example of Catinca Drăgănescu's proactive and committed attitude. *Rovegan* presents one of the main problems facing today's Romanian society, namely the phenomenon of labor migration. The main factors that determine such a decision are poverty and lack of alternative, elements that represent central artistic pillars in the director's approach. *Rovegan* play, a text written and directed by Catinca Drăgănescu, casted Mihaela Teleoaca, Silvana Negruțiu and Valentina Zaharia. It is a production of ARENA Association and Replika Educational Theater Center.

The *Rovegan* text started by researching the phenomenon of people migration from Eastern European countries to Western countries and from the topic of *Bitter Cherries* book written by Liliana Nechita, that presents the personal experience of going to work abroad. The *mise en scène*, that the director and play writer puts on, is the contemporary version of the story *The Goat and Her Three Kids* by Ion Creangă. The text describes the journey of a mother who has to go to work in Italy in order to provide to her children the survival support.

Following the plot of *The Goat and Her Three Kids*, Ion Creangă's story, Rovegan is a text written and constructed as an allegory, presenting the goat's story by real means. Dramatically and directorial, Drăgănescu approaches the subject with a kind of detachment, combining the text with show, music, projections and a minimalist decor. This directorial detachment makes the subject of economic migration or rather the separation of a mother from her children provoking violent emotions in the consciousness of the readers or public when they read the text or watch the play. The documentation was done in Vaslui County, where a large part of the inhabitants left for the western countries in search of resources for survival.

Parents departure effects on children can be countless, from school dropout, mental and physical abuse, depression, criminality. From a home perspective, migration is scary. Families crumble, and money earned by departed people can never compensate for the void and disadvantages that a person's absence brings. Although the main argument of leaving abroad is to guarantee a better future for the children and family, the effect is not the one you expect. The effect, most of the times, is a negative one, people lose more than they earn. Going abroad means a full-time job where you can't really leave it when you want to; you have to stay there and take care of others; you let your family pending, they are not allowed to get sick, they are not allowed to suffer, they are not allowed to die:

„Hello. How are you doing, sis'? I have no credit. I was waiting for your phone like a breath of fresh air... What's up, sis'? ... How do you know that? Have you talked to ...? What does it mean she is on her last legs? Tell her I have enough on plate, I need not any of these! You know what? Next time when you call me, call me from her phone. I want to tell her some words in order to get her together. She must be strong ... for the kids ... What do you mean she doesn't talk anymore? How long has she been like that ...? (Long pause) I must come home...? (long pause) And those things, how much does it cost? ... and the money you give to the doctor and nurses ... anyway you have to take her to Vaslui, to the hospital; she dies on her feet there ... yes ... well, I'll send, I'll send . I'll send it tomorrow. (long pause) ... But I won't be able to come home ... I have to stay here ... for a while ... come on ... tell to my mom I love her ... come on, kiss the girls, too ...and that little one ... kiss you, bye, bye. She suddenly turns off the phone and bursts into tears. She wants to scream, but she stops her scream with the hands. She turns off the flashlight and cover herself with the blanket.”(Drăgănescu, 2016, p. 11)

In her play, Drăgănescu juggles between two parallel worlds: the ones left at home and the perspective of those who left the country. Suffering exists on both sides; all suffer, some because they feel abandoned, and others because they give up, forced to detach themselves from home, children, country, enduring humiliation, hunger, fear, despair, loneliness:

„Mioara: My name is Mioara and I am from Romania. Romania. La Roumanie./Signora 2V: We are looking for a care giver for an elderly couple. We offer accommodation and three meals per day, possibility of shower, telephone signal. No pasture. We mention that one of the elderly is immobilized in bed and needs extra care. Housekeeping included. 500 euros per month non-negotiable./Mioara: I am willing to offer my services for taking care of an adult person, for an indefinite period, abroad. I mention that I am 47 years old and living in the fear of God. I ask for seriousness. Please hand on if you are not interested. Urgently!”(Ibidem, p.2)

Migrants live on the middle line of the land; they think about their country, but they live who knows where, in a country whose language is foreign for them, whose lands they do not know.

„Eastern Europeans became, after communism collapse, the new economic slaves of the West. An inside perspective appears here about the chaotic capitalism (original, like democracy) experienced by the Eastern Europe for a quarter of a century and which generates labor shifts from one space to another, with negative effects on professional and personal life.”(Stoica, 2016)

The perspective of the one who left his country is not a happy one and full of beautiful experiences; he will get, most of the time: humility, hard work, payment under the market level, depression, phenomena that lead to an acute form of uprooting. The migrant, after crossing the border, loses himself, remaining stuck somewhere in a house that does not belong to him and a new world, where he does not fully integrate and where he is treated as a second-class citizen.

Catinca Drăgănescu fictionalizes the cases of women from Vaslui who go abroad to take care of elderly people in Italy, leaving at home children who fail to cope with their responsibilities, and fail to

keep the family together. The story begins in Vaslui and the goat is a woman named Mioara, who is preparing to go to work abroad, together with other Carpathian Goats. In this text, Drăgănescu follows the story of both kids and departed goat. By this text, Drăgănescu tells us about disintegration of the family, failure, lack of opportunities, lack of perspective and lack of money. What the play writer tries to point out is that no one abandons her family for good but because she has no other solution; because leaving home seems to be the best solution to guarantee accomplishment of family needs:

„BADANTA 2: I left because of needs; nobody leaves the own children because they lives happily. BADANTA 1: Come on, girl, we all come out of poverty, what else? If you have no money you are good at working on the yoke./BADANTA 2: Yes, ya... yes, she was unlucky.

She was brought here by someone who, as soon as she came, took her to an old man who opened the door to his bedroom in the evening and said that she should sleep there because he wants a wife, too. And when she said she wasn't coming, he kicked her out in the middle of the night and told her she was on her own account. And after that...” (Drăgănescu, 2016, p.6)

The play writer emphasizes the idea, that appears constantly in the text, „that no one leaves the own children because they live well”, the need, the hard living, the lack of money, urges most of people to take their steps to the West. Catinca Drăgănescu inform us from the first lines of the text about the painful effects of the family „separation”:

„V: Once there was a goat, widowed and unemployed for some time, who had three kids. The eldest and the middle-born were very naughty, but the little one was reasonable and hard-working.

S: It is said: There are five fingers on one hand and they don't resemble each other.

V: One day, when she saw that she had no more food to put on the table, the goat called her kids out and said to them:

T: - My dear kids! I have to go to the forest to get some more food. But you, lock the door behind me, listen to each other and not open the door not an any account until you hear my voice.” (Ibidem, p. 1)

Drăgănescu establishes from the first lines the story of contemporary goat who goes to work abroad in order to be able to feed her kids. Just as in the story of Ion Creangă, the goat train her naughty kids to open the door only when they hear her voice: „When I come, I will announce you, so that you will know it'll be me and I'll say to you: Three kids, little kids/Open door to your mommy/Mommy's bringing to you all/Fresh grass on the lips/Milk and salt on the back... (Ibidem, p. 1). After training her kids, the goat went to work: „And as it were, all the roads lead to Rome; so, our goat arrived there, too.” (Ibidem, p. 2)

The play writer does not offer alternatives; she does not offer another exit, another solution, separation of family is the only chance for survival. In a world where there is no alternative, in a world where you cannot choose which path to take because it is already written in your destiny, which is the path you will go, Mioara goat left her kids alone and went after food.

Oana Stoica, theatral critic, says about Rovegan that:

„The show develops like a chorus in which the stories, live music and projections are performative combined, playing in short scenes the film of an abandonment, self and others, motivated by poverty (another torturous line:„We are poor here, too, but nobody knows us at least”). The theatrical fiction is followed by the filmed reality, in the end. Catinca Drăgănescu avoids melodrama, refuses to affect through victimization; she prefers this form of a fairy tale a little bit comic, a little bit magical, which stops the sentimental effusions, but it has a much stronger impact on the public.” (Stoica, 2016)

Catinca Drăgănescu offers different types of games, dramatic scenes, live music, chorus. It also uses the Moldovan dialect, once to give the flavor to the narrative path and to locate the characters. The actresses play several characters, from the main ones (the kids and mother goat), to the episodic ones (Badanta 1, Badanta 2)

“Perceived as an economic detention (it is forced by external circumstances - the poverty), the work away from home causes severe depression. Intimacy is usually low, as well as the leisure time. Therefore, the contact with family or time for oneself is short, so the identity of the migrant is limited to that of worker. In the play, the Moldavian dialect acquires an identity function, which allows the characters to partially preserve their identity.” (Ibidem, 2016)

Drăgănescu maintains a balance between drama and emotion, while preserve, at the same time, the tragic nature of the characters and the humor, the force, the fragility and the irony offering to the reader / the viewer the opportunity to access the experience of the one who left home because of needs, the one without income, the one separated from his house and children.

During the action, the play writer gives us, through the zoology lessons of the little kid, the key by which we can decode the text:

„If you want to make a safe investment, buy a goat! The goat occupies the first places in the top of the animals that produce the most quantity of milk. Goat milk products are highly appreciated in the European Union, where they are sold very well, but to be found on the shelves of supermarkets, they must be approved. Goat milk is an elixir for the health of children and adults as well. Goat milk has the taste and composition closest to breast milk, that's why it is preferred by children. Goat's milk is sweet, fatty and nutritious and it has miraculous properties for our health, perhaps because these animals consume a lot of trees bark, salt, sea buckthorn, rosehip, in principle, they do not refuse anything. Goat's milk is much healthier and more nutritious compared to cow's milk, owning different effects. First of all, the consuming goat's milk protects your body from diseases, strengthens the immune system, relieves depression and makes you more optimistic.” (Drăgănescu, 2016, p. 20)

Associating the women (the labor force) with goat, the domestic animal, makes on the one hand the whole context to become an apparently funny one, but on the other hand when we think that this animal was considered the cow of the poor man, creates immediately the framework in which the Romanian workforce is cheap and willing to do anything to earn some money that they could send home. The comparison of the woman with the goat, underlines the fact that there will always be people whose destinies will be sacrificed, people who do not even have the right, never speaking about the chance, to build another future. Just like a goat that is sacrificed for milk, cheese, hair, skin and meat, so do Romanian women sacrificing their lives for the well-being of the family. The sacrifice that the character Mioara makes has a noble purpose, that her daughters do not follow her footsteps, but unfortunately Catinca Drăgănescu does not give us this perspective, do Mioara's kids choose to take after their mother?

„S: And now, among the thousands of goats in Italy, our two goats were living. This young goat came to look after a gentle and good-hearted man like the bread of God. The old man didn't care about the baby waiting for her at home, as he didn't even noticed that he forgot to put salt in his food. This young goat had been well located. While her mother was training down day by day, saving money and sending everything home; she was blooming, watching night after night on magazines with beautiful animals on the cover and falling asleep dreaming about how she would bathe in all the riches when the time will come, and how proud her sister and mum will be when they will be able to see her getting out of a black car with smokescreens and she will put her beautiful golden hooves on the table in their yard” (Ibidem, p.21)

The hardest lesson is that of the Carpathian Goat raised only for production of meat, only because it is part of a lower species of goats, as well as with the women in Romania, just because they are from Romania, they have no other chance than to have taking care of other children or old people instead of their own family.

„The kid, small domestic goat (*Capra aegagrus hircus*) is a domesticated subspecies of wild goat from South-East Asia and Eastern Europe. Goats are among the first animals domesticated by humans. In the Neolithic the shepherds began to keep goats for milk and meat, but over time, people have discovered that they can also be used as fuel, for clothing, construction and tools. The goat is called the cow of poor man. Because it's cheap and good. Goat is a very practical animal in any household. The goats are ruminant, but if there is not any possibility to

graze, the fodder is good for them, too. It is an animal without too many claims: it eats everything, it does not look for the company of other animals or humans and adapts very easily to the environment.” (Ibidem, p. 14)

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Rovegan is a fairy tale about leaving home, said in Moldavian accents, accompanied by songs, humor, cynicism and a lot of pain hidden in the characters voice. Drăgănescu played with the soul and mind of public/readers, making an invitation to empathy, not in a dramatic way but together with humor of very good quality, this aspect revealing the whole context even more tragic. The experience of the whole endeavor is a laughing-cry in the best possible sense. You go from laughing to crying in a second without even realizing it. The text is raw and sincere, offering the image of a society on the brink of abandonment.

Catinca Drăgănescu chose to close the play with a short documentary from Vaslui County, where the main characters are children left home alone because their mothers went to work abroad. The end of the text, however, concludes with the voice of wolf telling to the goat, who returned home to see and hug her children, that there is no one else there: „The wolf: No one lives here anymore, auntie ... they all moved ... as they could; so, do not scream anymore, that you are talking to the moon, dear auntie... There is no trace of your family through these places.” (Ibidem, p. 32)

The text of Rovegan presents the reality of the society we live in; our parents go away, our young people go away, and this happens everywhere in Romania; poverty persists, and the possibility of leaving abroad can appear at any time. The bottom line is that we live in a tormented society, where the struggle is unfair - some have too much, others have too little and others have nothing. For those in a situation where a family member has to go abroad, the fight takes place between the four walls of the house, and the end of it captures a bleak image - the houses are abandoned, the elderly are tearfully, children are raving after parents. Rovegan is a text and a play about Romania that breaks down silently.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Coman, Elena, (2018), „Crizele teatrului contemporan... în opinia regizorilor tineri: Catinca Drăgănescu, Radu Iacoban, Andrei Măjeri și Dragoș Alexandru Mușoiu”, Revista Yorick.ro, Revista online de teatru, 23 octombrie., text disponibil la adresa <https://yorick.ro/crizele-teatrului-contemporan-in-opinia-regizorilor-tineri-catinca-draganescu-radu-iacoban-andrei-majeri-si-dragos-alexandru-musoiu/>
- [2] Drăgănescu, Catinca, (2016), Textul piesei *Rovegan*, text trimis pe e-mail de către autoare
- [3] Iacobuțe, Ramona, (2019) „Catinca Drăgănescu, regizoare: Revolta se reflectă în discursul meu și pe scenă, și în afara ei”, Suplimentul de cultură, nr. 630, 21 ianuarie. <http://suplimentuldecultura.ro/25948/catinca-draganescu-regizoare-revolta-se-reflecta-in-discursul-meu-si-pe-scena-si-in-afara-ei/>
- [4] Popovici, Iulia, (2015), „Sfârșitul regiei, începutul creației colective în teatrul european”, Ed. Tact, Cluj-Napoca.
- [5] Stoica, Oana, (2016), „Moartea dinăuntru”, Dilema Veche, revistă online de teatru, nr. 656, 15-21 septembrie, text disponibil la adresa <https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/arte-performative/articol/moartea-de-dinauntru>
- [6] Tecuceanu, Florina, (2017), „Catinca Drăgănescu, regizoare, „Rovegan”: „Teatrul poate și avem nevoie să fie, azi, un bastion al adevărului”, interviu publicat pe 20 septembrie în cadrul Festivalului Național de Teatru, disponibil la adresa <https://fnt.ro/2017/catinca-draganescu-regizoare-rovegan-teatrul-poate-si-avem-nevoie-sa-fie-azi-un-bastion-al-adevarului/>



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.257-264>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## APPROACHES OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING IN PSYCHOLOGY

Cristina – Corina Bentea (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Associate professor Phd, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [cristina.bentea@ugal.ro](mailto:cristina.bentea@ugal.ro)

### *Abstract*

The purpose of the present study is to present the paradigm changes in the investigation of happiness. Are highlighted some theoretical and methodological contributions in understanding of the concept in the shift from the hedonic perspective, focused on happiness, subjective well-being and life satisfaction to eudaimonic perspective, focused on psychological well-being, human potential and optimal functioning. According with the theoretical and methodological ways of conceptualizing, the concept of happiness has had slightly different meanings. Subjective and psychological well-being represent related but distinct conceptions of well-being. In the final part, is discussed one of the most referential approach of the happiness in the domain of positive psychology. Seligman's theoretical model of well-being helps us to understand what are the elements which contribute to well-being and what people can do to maximize each element to reach a life full of happiness. The model is in line with the ultimate goal of the positive psychology as scientific study of the strengths and well-being that enables both individuals and communities to flourish.

**Keywords:** happiness; subjective well-being; psychological well-being; good life; life satisfaction; positive psychology;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

From ancient Greek civilization until nowadays, people have always been interested in answering what is happiness. Many philosophers and then scientific researchers, both theorists and practitioners, have concerned about the possibilities to obtain happiness and a fulfilled human life. Frequently, the happiness was directly connected to well-being and the good life. These constructs have been investigated inclusively by psychologists. One of the premises of these studies is that "people all over the world most want to be happy by achieving the things they value" (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003, p. 420).

In the measurements concerning life quality objective well-being is a traditionally used indicator which has operationalized through economic and social standards (income level,

consumptions, material conditions, employment status, physical and mental health, education, social interactions, leisure time, economic security, governance and basic rights, natural environment) that are not depended on individual perceptions and attitudes. Nevertheless, many researchers consider that subjective perceptions concerning well-being of their life are no less good indicators for the quality of life. People perceive, think and react differently to the same social situations, based on their values, goals, expectancies, interests, and previous experiences. Accordingly, is not sufficient to assess the life quality only through objective indicators, well-being and other subjective variables (emotional, cognitive and behavioral) are equally significant.

Traditional psychology approached well-being as a multidimensional psycho-social construct that has generated numerous endeavors of operationalization of the concept. Positive psychology considers well-being both as specific issue for empirical research and important aim for psychological interventions focused on optimization of the human functioning. There are two dominant paradigms regarding well-being: the hedonic approach, focused on happiness, which defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993) and the eudaimonic approach, focused on realization of human potential, which defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Therefore, the objective of this study is to discuss the paradigm changes from the hedonic approach to eudaimonic approach, under the positive psychology perspective, highlighting one of the most important theories concerning happiness and well-being.

## **2. THE HEDONIC APPROACH OF HAPPINESS**

The hedonic view has origins in Epicurus' writings, one of the first hedonist philosophers. For Epicurus, pleasure was simply absence of mental or physical pain. Many other philosophers consider the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain as source of happiness and primary goal in life. Psychologists identify happiness as principal criterion of well-being and define well-being as subjective happiness which consists of the experience of pleasure and absence of displeasure (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The hedonic approach considers happiness in terms of pleasure or subjective well-being. The scientific study of subjective well-being partly appears as a reaction to the dominant approach of negative states in psychology (Diener, 2000).

Diener (1984, 2000) proposes a model of subjective well-being focusing on individual evaluations of the life. The subjective well-being is a multidimensional construct which includes two components. Life satisfaction is the cognitive component consists of judgments about the personal events in life (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), whereas the affective component concerns positive and negative emotions and moods associated with life situations and activities (Diener, Sapyta, & Suh, 1998; Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). Thus, taking into consideration all these three indicators, subjective well-being has defined as the preponderance of positive emotions, the incidental experience of negative emotions, and high levels of self-reported life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). Although subjective well-being has been associated with the hedonistic approach, life satisfaction is not strictly a hedonic concept because it involves cognitive evaluations of individuals about the conditions of their life: "life satisfaction is a conscious cognitive judgment of one's life in which the criteria or judgment are up to the individual" (Pavot & Diener, 1993, p. 164). A great amount of research provides empirical support for subjective well-being as a reliable and valid construct, a function of the balance of mental states, associated with automatic positive thoughts (Wong, 2010).

Regarding life satisfaction, there are two types of theories: 1. bottom-up theories that investigate life satisfaction as effect of other variables and assert that people experience satisfaction in certain domains of life such as job, health, family, social relationships, education.



The overall satisfaction is the result of influence and combining of the domain-specific satisfaction; 2. top-down theories which state that overall life satisfaction is a cause variable which influences or even determines the life satisfaction in different domains of life (Heady, Veenhoven, & Wearing, 1991). Although self-perceptions of the life satisfaction incorporate both objective (wealth, employment status, health, education, social and material resources) and subjective assessments (values, personal attitudes, goals, expectations), most studies have investigated life satisfaction as a global subjective variable. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is one the most popular and widely used measure of life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is not a simply result of life events, but influences in turn important life outcomes (Lopez, 2009). Research shows that life satisfaction is a significant predictor of interpersonal, educational, and vocational success as well as mental and physical health in adults. Also, life satisfaction is negatively associated with multiple risk behaviors in adolescence, including alcohol and drug use, sexual risk behavior, aggressive behavior, victimization, unhealthy eating and exercise behavior. Adults who have high scores for hope have higher levels of life satisfaction (Bailey & Snyder, 2007).

Positive and negative types of affect are separated and distinct of life satisfaction construct. Measures of affective component include both pleasant and unpleasant long-term moods (pleasure, displeasure, calm, anxiety, anger, or sadness etc.) as results of individuals' evaluations of the events that occur in their lives (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Individuals with high scores of positive affect live intense and frequent experiences of pleasure while individuals with high scores on negative affect have higher levels of displeasure (Watson, 2005). It is possible for a person to obtain high scores in both dimensions. Levels of positive and negative affect are stable over time (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Positive affect positively correlates with optimism and self-esteem (Norem & Chang, 2002).

With regard to the components of subjective well-being, people can be divided into four types: (1) Achievers who are satisfied individuals with a high positive affective balance; (2) Aspirers who are unsatisfied individuals with a high positive affective balance; (3) Resigners are satisfied individuals with a negative affective balance; (4) The frustrated are unsatisfied individuals with a negative affective balance (McKennell, 1978).

### **3. THE EUDAIMONIC APPROACH OF HAPPINESS**

Emanating from ancient Greek philosophy, the central idea of this second perspective is that happiness cannot be equated with pleasure. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, written in 350 B.C., Aristotle presents his view about happiness that is still relevant today. He states that every human being need to be happy and leisure provides pleasure and happiness in life. Although people have always sough pleasure, wealth, money, power, honor, reputation and other goods, happiness is the end or goal that people aim in all their activities. According to Aristotle, the highest of all goods achievable by human action is "eudaimonia". The good represents the end of an action and the end is more valuable than the activity itself. Happiness is both the ultimate purpose of human life and a goal in itself, measuring how well a person have lived up to his/her full potential as a human being. Aristotle describes happy life as moral, rational, virtuous, perfect, wise, right, chosen, and good. In his view, happiness is dependent on the cultivation of virtue which is a disposition rather than an activity. "If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be that of the best thing in us" (p. 263). A genuinely happy life requires the fulfillment of a broad range of conditions, including physical and mental well-being. As Aristotle says, "for as it is not one swallow or one fine day that makes a spring, so it is not one day or a short time that makes a man blessed and happy" (1098a, p. 37). Later, in 19th century, the utilitarian philosopher

Bradburn uses the term happiness as synonymous for “eudaimonia”. Eudaimonia and principal elements of “the good life” have been a subject of scholarly interest (Ryff, 1989).

The eudaimonic view (Waterman, 1993) focuses on the realization of human potential and optimal functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Well-being is more than happiness because people who report feelings of happiness and satisfaction or positive emotions are not necessarily psychologically well. The new central concept is psychological well-being, as one important aspect of efficient psychological functioning, defined as full engagement and optimal performance in the existential challenges of life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Subjective and psychological well-being represent related but distinct conceptions of well-being (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002).

Based on life span developmental and humanistic psychology, clinical theories on personal growth and the criteria of positive mental health (Jahoda, 1958), Ryff (1989) developed an integrated theoretical framework of well-being. The author considers that all these guided theories have generated a new model of psychological health based on the conception that well-being means not only the absence of illness but the presence of something positive (Ryff & Singer, 1998). In fact, absence of psychological stressors can reduce the likelihood of suffering and pain but does not ensure thriving in one’s life. Much research suggested that happy people experience a number of benefits ranging from physical health to better relationships to high-level performance (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Moreover, engaging in “happiness-relevant activities”, especially intentional activities, represents one way to facilitate psychological well-being (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

Broadly understood as happiness, psychological well-being has been operationalized as a multidimensional construct (Ryff, 1989) that includes different social, psychological and physiological aspects of life, which are interrelated with and determine each other. The construct consists of six core dimensions which define it both theoretically and operationally (Ryff & Singer, 1998): Personal growth, Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Self-acceptance, Purpose in life, and Positive relations with others. The definitions of each dimension were constructed by integrating different elements from the guiding theories (Ryff, 1989) and were identified what promotes effective adaptation to life events and emotional and physical health (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 1998; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Personal growth relates to being open to new experiences as well as having a sense of continued self-development and realization the own potential. People with high scores on this dimension have feelings of continued growing, needs of improvement themselves over time, and good ability of self-evaluation that drives them to efficient changes in their behavior. Contrariwise, people with low scores have a sense of personal stagnation, low needs of improvement over time, feelings of disinterest toward their personal development and are unable to develop new attitudes or behaviors (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Autonomy refers to peoples’ sense of self-determination, independence, and freedom from norms. People with high scores on this dimension are able to follow their own beliefs and convictions, evaluate themselves by personal standards and regulates their behavior from within, are self-determining and independent, able to resist on social pressures and to think and behave in certain ways. People with low scores in autonomy are more conformist and concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others and tend to rely on external factors in their important decisions (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Environmental mastery means the personal ability to manage life and the surroundings. People with high scores on this dimension have a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment, are able to choose or create contexts that are suitable to their personal needs and values, use and control efficiently the surrounding opportunities and external activities. People with low scores have difficulty in managing everyday events, are unable to change, control or improve surroundings and opportunities and have a lack in their sense of control over external world

(Ryff & Singer, 2008). Self-acceptance is defined as positive attitude towards oneself and one's past life. People with high scores on this dimension have positive attitudes toward themselves, acknowledge and accept multiple aspects of their self, including good and bad qualities, and feel positive about their past life. Contrariwise, people with low scores feel dissatisfied with themselves, tend to be disappointed with what has occurred with their past life, and wish to be different than what they are (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Purpose in life is present when people have life goals and a meaningful life. People with high scores have a sense of directedness, strong convictions that give life purpose, aims and objectives for living. People with low scores have few goals or aims, no belief that their life is meaningful and lack a sense of directedness (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Personal relations dimension refers to high quality relationships with others. People with high scores have warm, satisfying and trusting relationships with others, are capable of empathy, intimacy, affection and concerned about the welfare of others while people with low scores have few close and trusting relationships with others, are unfriendly, isolated and frustrated in their relations and are not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Some dimensions are conceptually and empirically related to the hedonic well-being. Specifically, self-acceptance and environmental mastery dimensions are highly correlated with measures of affective balance and life satisfaction. In contrast, purpose in life and personal growth are strongly correlated and conceptually closer to the eudaimonic well-being (Ryff, 1989). Ryff and her coworkers (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Ryff & Singer, 2006) develop a successful psychological well-being scale which is widely used in measurement of positive mental health.

#### **4. THEORIES OF HAPPINESS: SELIGMAN'S APPROACH**

A number of theories which offer scientific explanations of happiness has developed by positive psychologists. According with the theoretical and methodological ways of conceptualizing, the concept of happiness has had slightly different meanings. Process-activity theories consider that happiness results from engaging in activities which require effort to accomplish certain purposes. Personality predisposition theories stipulates that happiness may be a genetic characteristic which is associated with the personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism. Accordingly, well-being does not change much over time. Need-goal satisfaction theories assert that happiness comes from the necessity of satisfying certain fundamental human needs and striving to achieve appropriate goals (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). One of the most important is Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which states that well-being is a result of achieving autonomy, competence, and relatedness fundamental human needs. In his book *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Martin Seligman (2002) develops his significant theory starting from the assumption that happiness is not fixed that can never increase. The authentic happiness results from identifying and cultivating personal strengths and using them in every day contexts of life (Seligman, 2002). Moreover, there are three different elements which lead to happiness and must take into consideration in analyzing: positive emotion, engagement and meaning. Happiness appears when positive emotions such as pleasure, comfort, excitement are frequent and intense while negative emotions are minimal and rarely experienced. The "pleasant life" is related to pleasure and is one which involves many positive and enjoyable experiences (Seligman, 2002, 2004). People can increase the amount of happiness in their pleasant life when they have the skills to grow and multiply their pleasures. Engagement refers to being fully involved in an activity considered pleasurable and being absorbed by it. All people are able to develop the state of engagement in relation to an activity and should identify what are those activities. The "good life" is one which involves developing and demonstrating of one's "signature" strengths and virtues in activities (work, leisure) (Seligman, 2002). Premise for a

“good life” is to use personal strengths and spend more time in activities which reflect personal values to have more flow in life such as work, love, friendship, relationships, leisure, parenting. The authentic happiness can be increased when people discover their own personal strengths that they already have and take ownership of them (Seligman, 2002). The third element is related to the search for purpose in life. Meaning exists when we have a higher purpose than ourselves. A “meaningful life” consists of belonging and serving something that people believe is greater than they are. The meaningful life is about using the personal strengths in the service of something that is bigger than us (Seligman, 2002). Combination of these three elements generates in authentic and stable happiness (Vella-Brodrick, Park & Peterson, 2009). Authentic happiness results from identifying, developing and using “signature strengths” and virtues to work towards the greater good. This postulation recommends that in order to achieve authentic happiness, people should pay attention to their strengths rather than their weaknesses. Positive emotion, positive traits, and positive institutions are the three pillars of positive psychology that has the goal to increase life satisfaction (Seligman, 2002).

The authentic happiness theory was reviewed few years later, in 2011, when Seligman reformulates the positive psychology goal and promotes the “new Positive Psychology”. The change was from seeking authentic happiness to promoting well-being and human flourishing. The new Positive Psychology is defined as science of well-being which is the new central concept. The PERMA model of flourishing (Seligman, 2011) approaches psychological well-being in terms of five factors: Positive emotions (P), Engagement (E), Relationships (R), Meaning (M), and Accomplishment (A). Positive emotion (P) is the element strongly related with happiness and life satisfaction. According to Seligman (2011), positive emotions can be related to past, present or future events. The emotions related to the past are satisfaction, pride, serenity and accomplishment, those related to the present are joy, pleasure, calm, excitement, ecstasy and plenitude, while emotions concerning the future are optimism, hope and faith. All these types of emotions bring many benefits for mental health, can be measured individually with specific instruments (scales of emotions) and are not necessarily correlated each other. The second element, engagement (E), has the same meaning as in authentic happiness theory. The sense of engagement helps people to completely involve in activity, to remain present, to have feeling that time has stopped, and to experience the flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Relationships are fundamental for a meaningful life. This factor refers to the people’s need of connecting each other, and establishing healthy emotional and physical interactions with other humans to achieve well-being. The next factor, meaning (M), is related with a purposeful existence. Understanding the significance and impact of their work and activities may help people to become fulfilled with what they do. The sense of meaning helps people to become more satisfied with what they do. Finally, the fifth factor, accomplishment (A), refers to the sense of achievement in live. Having accomplishments in life is important to propel people to thrive and flourish. Aside from positive emotion which is a subjective element, all other factors comprise of both subjective and objective components. All five factors contribute to obtaining well-being.

According to Seligman’s studies, optimists cultivate healthier attitudes, adopt healthier lifestyles, respond more adequately to medical prescriptions and tend to believe that their attitudes are important, unlike pessimists. People with high levels of satisfaction with life are more likely to watch what they eat, not smoke and exercise regularly, also having more regular sleep (Seligman, 2011). Interpersonal relationships are sources of support in difficult times that require resilience and also contexts for sharing joy. Seligman (2011) noted that the loneliest people tend to report lower levels of well-being, while those who engage emotionally with others in loving relationships or friendship tend to develop more adaptive strategies to face difficulties. Volunteering for a cause, helping others, contributing to our community, expressing

ourselves creatively, working for a good cause, religion and spirituality are several examples of meaning in life for many people that may help them to become fulfilled and more satisfied with what they do.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The well-being is a multifaceted concept understood as a combination of feeling good, finding flow, having a purposeful life, establishing of authentic connections and having a sense of accomplishment. People are able to obtain well-being through maximizing of all these elements (Seligman, 2011). In this way, the goal of positive psychology is to sustain well-being and contribute to human flourishing.

Seligman's theoretical model of well-being helps us to understand what are the elements which contribute to well-being and what people can do to maximize each element to reach a life full of happiness. The PERMA model can be integrated and applied by individuals in their daily life in a large number of settings. Also, institutions such as family, school, social groups, community can use the model to help individuals to discover and use their strengths to achieve well-being. Such considerations refer to the possibility of developing intervention programs aiming both at individual and collective well-being through thriving. This is the ultimate goal of the positive psychology as scientific study of the strengths and well-being that enable both individuals and communities to flourish.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Aristotle. *Etica nicomahică [Nicomachean Ethics]*. București: IRI; 1998.
- [2] Bailey, T. C., Snyder, C. R. Satisfaction with Life and Hope: A Look at Age and Marital Status. *The Psychological Record*. 2007; 57: 233-240.
- [3] Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Finding flow*. New York: Basic Books; 1997.
- [4] Diener, E. Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*. 1984; 95(3): 542-575.
- [5] Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., Griffin, S. The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*. 1985; 49(1): 71-75.
- [6] Diener, E., Sapyta, J. J., Suh, E. Subjective well-being is essential to well-being. *Psychological Inquiry*. 1998; 9(1): 33-37.
- [7] Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., Smith, H. L. Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*. 1999; 125(2): 276–302.
- [8] Diener, E. Subjective well-being: The science of happiness, and a proposal for a national index. *American Psychologist*. 2000; 55(1): 34–43.
- [9] Diener, E., Oishi, S., Lucas, R. E. Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 2003; 54(1): 403–425.
- [10] Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., Oishi, S. Advances and Open Questions in the Science of Subjective Well-Being. *Collabra: Psychology*. 2018; 4(1): 2-49.
- [11] Heady, B., Veenhoven, R., Wearing, A. Top-down versus bottom-up theories of subjective well-being. *Social Indicators Research*. 1991; 24(1): 81-100.
- [12] Jahoda, M. *Current concepts of positive mental health*. New York: Basic Books; 1958.
- [13] Keyes, C. L., Shmotkin, D., Ryff, C. D. Optimizing well-Being: The empirical encounter of two traditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2002; 82(6): 1007–1022.
- [14] Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., Diener, E. The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success? *Psychological Bulletin*. 2005; 131(6): 803-855.
- [15] Lopez, S. J. *The Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology*. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; 2009.

- [16] Lucas, R. E., Diener, E., Suh, E. Discriminant validity of well-being measures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1996; 71(3): 616 – 628.
- [17] McKennell, A. Cognition and affect in perceptions of well-being. *Social Indicators Research*. 1978; 5(4): 389–426.
- [18] Norem, J. K., Chang, E. C. The Positive Psychology of Negative Thinking. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 2002; 58(9): 993-1001.
- [19] Pavot, W., Diener, E. Review of the satisfaction with life scale. *Psychological Assessment*. 1993; 5(2): 164-172.
- [20] Ryan, R. M., Deci, E. L. Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*. 2000; 55 (1): 68–78.
- [21] Ryan, R. M., Deci, E. L. On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 2001; 52(1): 141–166.
- [22] Ryff, C. D. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1989; 57(6): 1069-1081.
- [23] Ryff, C. D., Keyes, C. L. M. The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1995; 69(4): 719-727.
- [24] Ryff, C. D., Singer, B. H. The contours of positive human health. *Psychological Inquiry*. 1998; 9(1): 1-28.
- [25] Ryff, C. D., Singer, B. H. Best news yet on the six-factor model of well-being. *Social Science Research*. 2006; 35(4): 1103-1119.
- [26] Ryff, C., Singer, B. Know Thyself and Become What You Are: A Eudaimonic Approach to Psychological Well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*. 2008; 9(1): 13-39.
- [27] Seligman, M. E. P. *Authentic happiness: Using the new Positive Psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. London: Nicholas Brealey; 2002.
- [28] Seligman, M. *Flourish: A New Understanding of Happiness and Wellbeing*. New York, NY: Free Press; 2011.
- [29] Snyder, C.R., Lopez, S. J. *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 2007.
- [30] Vella-Brodrick, D.A., Park, N., Peterson, C. Three Ways to Be Happy: Pleasure, Engagement, and Meaning-Findings from Australian and US Samples. *Social Indicators Research*. 2009; 90(2): 165-179.
- [31] Waterman, A. S. Two conceptions of happiness: Contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1993; 64(4): 678–691.
- [32] Watson, D. Rethinking the Mood and Anxiety Disorders: A Quantitative Hierarchical Model for DSM-V. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. 2005; 114(4): 522-536.
- [33] Wong, P.T.P. What Is Existential Positive Psychology? *International Journal of Existential Psychology & Psychotherapy*. 2010; 3: 1-10.



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### MUSICAL-PERFORMING ELEMENTS IN THE SONG CREATION OF COMPOSER NICOLAE BRETAN

Adelina Diaconu (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [adelinadiaconu94@yahoo.com](mailto:adelinadiaconu94@yahoo.com)

##### *Abstract*

The cult lied appeared at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century in the musical environment of Viennese Classicism, in the creation of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), then continued at a high level of understanding of the expressive possibilities of the genre, by Franz Schubert (1797-1828), followed by Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), or Hugo Wolf (1860-1903). The Romanian lied reaches its heights of perfection in the twentieth century, and the specific feature of our soul that is reflected in its structure is the nostalgic sense of longing. This feeling represents the synthesis of the Romanian ethos. The composer Nicolae Bretan (1887-1968) occupies a special place in the history of European music. In his operas and his numerous songs, Bretan sought the essential nature of the song and the expressive potential of the human voice. His plurivalent artistic personality impresses the researchers of his life and creation and makes them want to enter more into the secrets of his work, because, besides his work as a composer, Nicolae Bretan was a conductor, director and opera soloist. The creation of lied belonging to the composer Nicolae Bretan is large, comprising over 200 works on various lyrics by Romanian, Austrian, Hungarian and German poets, but also on his own lyrics.

**Keywords:** Lied; Bretan; Romanticism; Eminescu; performing;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of music confirms that in order to become an autonomous genre, the lied needed a long period of accumulation and lasted for centuries until the composers realized its significant strength. The lied, this miniature voice genre, has its origin in the popular song, the song that forms the basis on which the song was crystallized during the centuries. True, lied is a miniature genre, but expresses in quintessence an extremely rich spiritual universe. The songs deepen the meanings of the poetic text and manage to express the most diverse and nuanced thoughts and feelings. The cult lied appeared at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century in the musical environment of Viennese classics, in the creation of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), then continued at Franz Schubert (1797-1828), followed by Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), or Hugo Wolf (1860-1903).

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Romanian lied reaches its heights of perfection in the twentieth century, and the specific feature of our soul that is reflected in its structure is the nostalgic sense of longing. This feeling represents the synthesis of the Romanian ethos. The whole art of the Romanian composers of the 20th century focused on discovering the modalities of expressing the ideas expressively through the musical language. The expressive dimension of the recitative has made the Romanian musicians attach special importance to it, becoming an original solution, a particular feature of the Romanian vocal creation. Since the contribution of vocality is to a large extent influenced by a certain organization of the musical text, the importance of this vocalism in this organization - as a factor and source of expressiveness - differs according to the genre of music, current, style, composer. The vocal configuration appears in different contrasting forms and in the Romanian song. One of the methods used is to expose the vocal writing in a declarative manner, in a cantable form, giving rise to a reciting cantando, or profoundly influenced by parlato style, generating that type of recitativo secco and parlando-rubato. The vocal broadcasting required for the interpretation of these types of recitative will therefore be different from that used in lyrical songs, lyrical in which the melodic configuration requires another type of phrasing and impostation. Among the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century composers in the lied creation we find: Alexandru Flechtenmacher, Gheorghe Dima, Eduard Caudella, George Stephanescu, Tiberiu Brediceanu, Nicolae Bretan, Mihail Jora, Martian Negrea, Theodor Rogalski, Sigismund Toduță or Paul Constantinescu.

## 3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The composer Nicolae Bretan (1887-1968) occupies a special place in the history of European music. In his opera work and his numerous lied, Bretan sought the essential nature of the song and the expressive potential of the human voice. His plurivalent artistic personality impresses the researchers of his life and creation and makes them want to enter more into the secrets of his work, for besides his work as a composer, Nicolae Bretan was a conductor, director and soloist Opera House. Bretan's creations send a humanitarian message, either by painting the abysses of the human soul, and here we mention the works: *The Evening star* (1921), *Golem* (1924), *Arald* (1982), which notes the Creator's science of exposing music to the misery and greatness of human nature, or through a humanity in which love of peers defeats all hatred and injustice: *The Heroes of Rovine* (1935) and *Horia* (1937).

Bretan's works go beyond the Italian opera tradition, and the arias and duets are similarly constructed, bypassing the brave, because singing becomes a form of expression of the human soul, approaching the origins of the song.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODS

The creation of lied belonging to the composer Nicolae Bretan is vast, comprising 200 songs on various verses by Romanian, Austrian, Hungarian and German poets, but also on his own lyrics. It is the author's science, singing in turn, to make vocal songs and to portray various worlds and feelings, which reveals the composer's appeal to this miniature genre. Bretan engages all the musical parameters in the service of the surprising music of the inexpressible. He uses varied possibilities of musical expression without losing formal unity. The piano accompaniment highlights the expressive moments in the poems used, sometimes sharpening certain plans, more intense than the voice or text itself would do. Bretan also often avoids the high piano register, but also the lowest, in order the instrument does not exceed the voice in volume. It is noticed that the piano does not have concert moments or virtuosity passages, the composer preferring the accompaniment to be very dynamic on the dynamic plane, which helps him to express the essence in his purest form.

## 5. FINDINGS

Bretan's vocal creation is full of spontaneity and simple language. Unlike composers as Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, or Richard Strauss, who created orchestral lied, pushing this chamber genre to the opera, Bretan restored the simple form of lied, rejecting the symphony of the late Romantics, and giving the miniature genre the intimacy that is own.



Nicolae Bretan's creation on Eminescu's lyrics is rich, the composer making 25 songs for various voices. The composer imagined a sometimes spirited musical world, sometimes melancholic, managing to gently revive the atmosphere and feelings that crossed the texts chosen from the poet Mihai Eminescu's lyrical creation.

### Sleeping Birds (1912)

This lied is written in E Major, the binary measure composed of 4/4, in the *Andante con moto* tempo, the metronomic pulse 69, with the bipartite double bipartite ABAB'. Voice speech is superimposed on a piano accompaniment in left-handed artifacts linked to various intervals, such as large 6th, perfect 5th or large 3th, suggesting a one-of-a-kind atmosphere. Modular inflections occur at C # minor and C major, B major and A minor, then the original tone returns. Bretan uses unexpectedly the harmonies on certain phrases and words, such as the phrase *sleeping in peace*, where the first word of *peace* uses a chord from A # minor with seventh diminished, harmony that repeats itself to the next degree, intended only for the piano, which also picks up the vocal melody, as an echo to those previously asserted. Besides, the major-minor alternation is permanently used in the lied creation of the composer. The same harmonic journey is also present in the second part of the lied, with the mention that the last two verses are repeated.

A rhythmic figure constantly present at the voice along this lied is the eighth note followed by a sixteenth, while the piano has a group of fourteen sixteenth arpeggiatus arranged as a harp accompaniment:

Voice intervals are simple, small and large seconds, small and large thirds, perfect 4th and 5th. The piano uses intervals that fall within the limits of a perfect octave, melodic or harmonic. The first part of the strof has an arpeggiatic accompaniment, when the vocal melody has an ascendant meaning, and when the vocal melody has a downward sense, starting from the sound at 2, the piano accompanies with chords and rhythmic-melodic figurations in the minor-major in the right hand, which suggests the magnificence of the night scene. Also, the voice and the piano have a fermata on the first sound, creating a time-suspension effect, this method being used in the last phrase of the song, where the composer ends with a melodic third position:

On a dynamic basis, Bretan reduces the piano intensity range, which appears several times during this work, suggesting the state of sleepiness and nocturnal beatitude of nature. The graphic signs that mark the fluctuating dynamics - *crescendo-decrescendo* are often used, and there are numerous indications related to the technique of execution and phrasing in the score for the piano: phrasing *legato*, accents, *arpeggiato*, *marcato*. Agogics: the *Andante con moto* tempo of the beginning is maintained until the end, while only a *tenuis* appears on the rhythmic-melodic figurations in the right hand, and in the final measure appears the wide indication that strengthens the effect of the last verses on those who listen to: *all dream and harmony ... good night!*

The ambit of this lied is located between the sounds E3 and A4, having a tessitura that is characteristic of the high soprano voice. The phrases generally do not require a long breath, being constructed over a single measure. The voice must be modulated according to the dynamics required by the composer to best suggest the environment created by this lied, and also to highlight the meanings of the text. Thus, in the first verse, sung in *mezzavoce*, the voice must be warm, undulate, velvety, like the feathers of the birds looking for their bed on the branches of the trees. A sigh of the springs is musically marked by a descending phrase on the sound of the fermata, where the voice blooms helped by the height of the sound, but also by the diffong of the word in which only the springs start sighing. The atmosphere instantly calms down, and the lyrics *sleep the flowers in the garden ... sleep in peace!* the voice may be whispered, giving only a small emphasis on the first syllable of the word of peace, marked by the composer by a dissonance. In the second part, which is similar to the first one, the voice may increase in intensity, but little, because the piano hue is always marked in the score, and in the final sentence it is very important that the voice transmission be very clear and sure, for to realize that suspension in acute in a low shade that emphasizes the words *all is dream and harmony ... good night!*

#### Why are you weeping, forest? (1920)

The first part of this lied is in the minor tonality, the binary measure composed of 4/4, and the indication of tempo is *Andante*, the metronomic pulse 67, the form being multipart ABCB'C'DDv. Throughout the work, the composer often uses superelevation of steps IV and VI and the harmonic and melodic version of the minor, not modifying to other tones except in the last part, where he transforms the tonality of the F minor to sensitivity for the major G tonality, by sudden change of armor and prolongation the sound, which will connect with this last part through a fermata. This suspension leaves the listener the impression that the melodic discourse can be turned in any direction, and the greater the effect will be, the part that follows obviously contrasts with tempo, dynamics and execution: *cantabile, dolce*. Bretan uses paradoxically the major because the text suggests sadness, melancholy, resignation - that is, through this last section of the lied, the composer expresses the attitude and, above all, the resignation of nature to the irreversible flow of time.

In this lied of folkloric inspiration, Bretan used a great variety of elements to suggest the endless movement of the forest. From the first measure, what is the question posed by the lyrical ego of the forest, there is a rhythmic effect - the voice comes in syncopy, after the piano agreement, with a song suspended on a fermata on the F4 sound, followed by three mordents written with real notes, on an anapestic formula that suggests a grueling move:



The phrase from the voice is then taken identically by the right hand to the piano, in imitation, suggesting the echo of the forest. The same procedure is found in the second sentence, only that the imitation appears on this left hand, because the right hand has *tremolo* on large thirds. Another aspect is the appearance of the fermata in the first sentence for the first time, and in the second sentence, it appears in the fourth degree, for the first time. Bretan changes the binary meter to the ternary on the last verse - *with the branches to the ground* - where he uses the minor melodic variant with the fourth step altered and an exceptional rhythm division, the triplet of quavers. The end of the question is marked by a new fermata, on a double octave piano, at which point the measure changes again. Everything that follows is the answer of the forest, which begins with a formula consisting of the four-point four-fold formula followed by a half-note, and the accompaniment of the piano is arpeggiated with quavers:

The image shows a musical score for a lied. It consists of two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are in German and English. The piano accompaniment is in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It features arpeggiated chords and quaver patterns. Dynamics include piano (p) and piano fortissimo (pff). The score is for the first system of the lied.

The repetitive rhythmic formulas continue in the following two measures. On the following verse, *and my foliage crumbles*, Bretan introduces an asymmetric measure of 5/4, with a reduced agreement over four and a sixteen septolet, which provides an important momentum of movement that has an attack effect on the minor it follows. Bretan creates a very powerful effect on those who listen to this lied by the tempting rupture: after only six measures of *agitato* on the lyrics *Blow the wind in the one way / The singers leave me, / The wind blows from one side, / Winter is here, the summer is away*, Bretan suddenly stops the turbulent movement in the accompaniment of the piano, changing the groups of fourteen sixteen arpeggiated with doomstellar accords, and the voice descends with an octave below, thus pointing ingeniously from musical point of view the resignation of the forest - *And why not to go, / If the birds pass ?*. Bretan returns the rhythmic structure from the beginning of the forest response into the following measures, again suggesting the continuous movement of creeping, then returns the *agitato* side with the same rhythmic structure as the first *agitato*, the climax of the lied, whose phrases have a descending course towards a fermata on the last syllable of the word *wings*, in the fortissimo:

The image shows a musical score for a lied. It consists of two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are in German and English. The piano accompaniment is in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It features arpeggiated chords and quaver patterns. Dynamics include piano fortissimo (pff) and fortissimo (f). The score is for the second system of the lied.

At this point, Bretan suddenly changes the atmosphere by introducing a slow ending part in *pianissimo* with a *cantabile* indication and *dolce*. Here, the melancholy of the voice is superimposed over the sixteen arpeggiates in the high right hand register and the narrow ranges from the left hand to the piano. The lyrics *and leaves me desolated, withered and numb / And with my own loneliness, only with it !*, repeats, and after the fermata of the second syllable of the word *only*, the lied ends with an arpeggio in

the Major tonality, starting from the small octave to the sound of G 4 in the right hand, with the fermata both in the voice and piano:

De mă " qiu nu mai cu roll  
trăs - te cu in in mei ner et. 1"  
On - ly men " ry and pain. "

Cluj, 1920

This miniature masterpiece by Nicolae Bretan reveals an abyss of contrasts, longings and accomplishments. The force of this work lies in the ability to continuously transform the rhythmic structures. The dynamics present in this work is rather rich, being deduced from the composer's instructions, but also from the ascending or descending lines of the song's course. There are also terms and notes related to the execution technique, such as *dolce* or *legato* of expression and phrasing, but also agogic indications: *Andante*, *a tempo*, *agitato*, *cantabile*, *ritardando*, *rallentando*.

The vocal tessitura is typical of a lyrical soprano, with an extended voice range. Considering the predominantly dramatic nature of music, and that this lied is built on rhythmic and agogic contrasts, the voice must express tensions and relaxations in music through a clear, penetrating emission with a round, sometimes metallic, sometimes velvety voice and full of melancholy.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The timelessness of the music composed by Nicolae Bretan is due to the character of his songs, which are deeply rooted in the Romanian folkloric treasure, as well as to the composer's science of worshipping the songs and of raising them to musical masterpieces, thus enrolling in the line of Romanian composers representative for the beginning of the 20th century. His vast creation of songs includes a very wide range of themes and musical motifs, and his compositional genius knew to use all the musical parameters for the rendering the feelings that cross the verses of the various poets, and also to maximize the expressiveness of the human voice. In the 25 songs created on the verses of Mihai Eminescu, Nicolae Bretan expresses the ideas of poetic genius by melodies of apparent simplicity, which in fact denotes an attitude of humility towards the creation of the national poet and the beauty and fascination of the thematic universe that can be identified in Eminescu's poems.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Books:

- [1] BRETAN, Nicolae *Viața mea*, [My life], Cluj, 1939  
BRETAN, Judith *Uraganul. O viață pentru Nicolae Bretan. Mărturisire în fragmente*, [The hurricane. A life for Nicolae Bretan. Fragmented confessions], Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj, 2013  
BRUMARU, Ada *Romantismul în muzică*, [The Romanticism in Music], Ed.Muzicală, 2 vol., București, 1960
- [2] BUȘULENGA DUMITRESCU, Zoe *Eminescu*, [Eminescu], Editura Tineretului, București, 1963  
CĂLINESCU, George *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, [The history of Romanian literature, from beginning to present], Editura Minerva, București, 1982
- [3] COSMA, Viorel *Muzicieni români. Compozitori și Muzicologi*, [Romanian musicians. Composers and musicologists], Lexicon, Editura Muzicală, București, 1970

- COSMA, Viorel *Muzicieni din România*, [*Musicians from Romania*], Lexicon bio-bibliografic, vol. 1, Editura Muzicală, București, 1989
- [4] EMINESCU, Mihai *Poezii*, [*Poems*], vol. 1-3, Editura Minerva, București, 1982  
GAGELMANN, Hartmut *Nicolae Bretan. Liedurile sale. Operele lui. Viața sa*, [*Nicolae Bretan. His songs. His operas. His life*], traducere de Petru Forna, revizuit de Pavel Pușcaș, (după originalul *Nicolae Bretan. Seine Lieder - Seine Opern - Sein Leben*, Tipoholding, 1998, România) Editura Tipoholding, Cluj, 2005
- [5] GARCIA, Manuel *Treatise on the art of singing, (Tratat asupra artei cântului)*, editat de Albert Garcia, Leonard & Co, Londra, 1924  
GIULEANU, Victor *Tratat de teoria muzicii, [Music theory treatise]*, vol. 1 și 2, Editura Grafoart, București, 2013

Musical scores:

- [1] BRETAN, Nicolae *25 de lieduri pe versuri de Mihai Eminescu*, [*25 songs on poems by Mihai Eminescu*], Editura Octopodium, București, 1993
- [2] BRETAN, Nicolae *25 de lieduri pe versuri de poeți români, maghiari, germani*, [*25 songs on poems by romanian, hungarian, german poets*], Editura Muzicală, București, 1980
- [3] BRETAN, Nicolae *Luceafărul*, [*The evening star*], operă într-un act, partitură voce-pian
- [4] BRETAN, Nicolae *Omul de lut (Revolta lui Golem)*, [*The man of mud; the rebel of Golem*], dramă muzicală într-un act, partitură voce- pian
- [5] BRETAN, Nicolae *Arald*, [*Arald*], operă într-un act, partitură voce-pian (manuscris)
- [6] BRETAN, Nicolae *Horia*, [*Horia*], operă în trei acte, partitură voce-pian
- [7] Haignon, David. "Caring" John Major: portrait of a Thatcherite as a One-Nation Tory. *Observatoire de la société britannique*, 7 | 2009, 177-196.
- [8] Helm, Sarah. 'Brexit: The Uncivil War proves Hamlet right: the play's the thing'. *The Guardian*, January 10th, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/10/james-graham-drama-brexit-the-uncivil-war>



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS OF HAPPINESS METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN

Corina Dobrotă (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Ph.D. Prof., Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail:

#### *Abstract*

Happiness, seen as one of the six universal basic human emotions, seems to be conceptualized, according to Kövecses (2000) in fundamentally similar terms across languages. On the other hand, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis favours the idea according to which semantic structure conditions the non-linguistic knowledge, thus resulting in a different perception of the surrounding reality, which includes the perception of emotions. The present paper aims at examining the conceptual schemes at the basis of happiness metaphors in English and Romanian, and the (non) equivalent correspondences that may be observed between the two, so as to verify the validity of such claims.

**Keywords:** conceptualization; metaphorization; equivalence; translatability; semantic content

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Happiness as a multifaceted concept has always been the focus of keen interest on the part of researchers belonging to various areas of expertise, as it is quite difficult to define and render into words. According to OED, it has multiple meanings, as follows: "1. The quality or condition of being happy: a) good fortune or good luck in life generally or in a particular affair; success, prosperity; b) an instance or cause of good fortune; 2. a) The pleasurable contentment of mind, deep pleasure in or contentment with one's circumstances; b) an instance or source of pleasure or contentment; 3. Successful or felicitous aptitude, fitness, suitability, or appropriateness; felicity" (2019). Therefore, it can be stated that there are sub-types of emotions that are subsumed to the general category HAPPINESS which should also be taken into account when analysing its linguistic realizations. It goes without saying that in assessing the state of happiness, typically equated to pleasure, contentment, felicity, prosperity, a high degree of subjectivity is always present, making it even more difficult to fully comprehend and explain. Being such an elusive concept withstanding the strict limitations of a textbook definition, it is no wonder that more often than not it is linguistically actualized by means of metaphorical expressions, defying the confinement of fixed meanings. It is often said that everyone experiences happiness in a personal subjective manner, and there are as many happiness types as there are individuals, which makes it hard to conceptualize and actualize

in language. Metaphor, with its special equivalence mechanisms, transposes the abstract into the concrete in a manner that seems most accessible to speakers across cultures.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Therefore, it is no surprise that the metaphorical expressions of happiness, one of the six basic human emotions, are at the forefront of linguistic study, especially from the point of view of Cognitive Linguistics. Drawing on its close connection with psychological and sociological sciences, cognitivism provides a fresh perspective upon the mechanisms whereby human beings understand and express the surrounding reality. Starting from Chomsky (1972), who saw the interconnectedness between linguistics and psychology as a given, metaphor has gradually been accepted as not only a mere ornament pertaining to stylistics, but as an integral part of everyday speech, enabling the speakers to grasp concepts via an intricate system of associations.

In any case, the first who used the term “conceptual metaphor”, trying to explain linguistic meanings via concepts in a clearer manner were Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999). Their studies are central to the entire movement connected to cognitivism, which also includes psychological, epistemological, and sociological studies, whose main claim is that people basically think in terms of metaphorical mappings that achieve correspondences between a typically abstract source domain and a normally concrete target domain. This approach is rather empirical, as it states that the human body is a central point of reference in the linguistic realization of mainly abstract concepts, and therefore the human body and language “cannot be investigated in isolation from human embodiment” (Evans & Green, 2006:44).

It seems that certain concepts that are more difficult to grasp, due to their complexity and centrality in the human universe, are virtually impossible to express in a non-metaphorical manner, such as time, which is usually described in terms of concrete space and movement (cf. Gibbs, 1994). It is only fair to point out that happiness, quite an abstract and subjective notion, appears to fall in the same category, and requires metaphorical representation based on embodied experience.

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

As it is considered that sensory experiences precede abstract understanding, it is predicted in conceptual metaphor theory that the conceptual mappings in language are unidirectional, connecting the concrete to the abstract. In other words, abstract concepts are predicted as always being understood in terms of concrete words, and source-target mappings are predicted to be grounded in embodied experience. Since human beings experience the physical world in similar ways, it has been hypothesized (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999) that similar mappings between source and target domains will be detected in unrelated languages. Indeed, at first sight it is quite obvious that the figurative expressions used in reference to happiness in English and Romanian, such as the instantiations referring to verticality and upward motion. Thus, patterns of concrete-to-abstract mappings emerge in language via structured metaphors (Kövecses 2002). The present research aims at discovering the main patterns at the basis of the dead metaphors referring to happiness in English and Romanian, in order to prove that such patterns are universal and transgress language boundaries.

## **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

These discernible patterns found in English and Romanians can be compared and contrasted in order to assess the validity of the assumption that people speaking unrelated languages share the same conceptual schemes and cognitive models, as they resort to the basic universal core of human knowledge and embodied experience. In case any deviations are found, they may be accounted for by the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, essentially claiming that the language we speak shapes the universe around us, and we perceive the surrounding world and everything pertaining to it via our native language.

## **5. RESEARCH METHODS**

The present research is based on a small-scale corpus analysis, consisting of the most common conceptualizations of happiness in English and Romanian, as found in specialized literature and phraseological dictionaries. More specifically, it was attempted to answer the research questions by the

comparison and contrast of linguistic realisations of happiness metaphors in English as source language and in Romanian as target/secondary language. In doing so, the analysis of the available self-made corpus of metaphors observed the three stages of metaphor analysis as proposed by Cameron and Low (1999: 88, as cited in Charteris-Black 2004: 34), i.e.:

- a) collecting examples of linguistic metaphors;
- b) generalising on their basis so that to reach the conceptual metaphors of which they are an actualization;
- c) using the results to suggest patterns of thought and comprehension.

As the present study is a contrastive one, a fourth step is added, consisting of the comparison between the patterns of thought and comprehension in English and Romanian, aiming at discovering (dis)similarities between the two languages (and cultures/mentalities) in terms of conceptualizing happiness. More specifically, it was attempted to see if the metaphors are preserved in the Romanian translation of the English metaphors collected from various significant researchers dealing with the topic.

## 6. FINDINGS

The main source of the English corpus is mainly due to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), Kövecses (1989, 1991, 2000), Stefanowitsch (2006), who propose as the main schemes of structuring the understanding of the emotion in English the following two patterns: HAPPINESS IS LIGHT and HAPPINESS IS UP, as can be seen in the following fundamental hypothetical mappings and sample expressions:

### A) Metaphor: HAPPINESS IS LIGHT

Examples:

English	Romanian
Look on the bright side.	Privește partea bună a lucrurilor.
Her face glowed with happiness.	Fața îi strălucea de fericire.
You are the sunshine of my life.	Ești soarele vieții mele/lumina ochilor mei/tot ce am mai scump pe lume/Îmi luminezi viața/Aduci lumină în viața mea.

### B) Metaphor: HAPPINESS IS UP

Examples:

English	Romanian
We had to cheer him up.	A trebuit să-i ridicăm moralul/ să-l înveselim/consolăm.
They were in high spirits.	Erau bine dispuși/ în toane bune.
I'm soaring with joy.	Plutesc de fericire.
Lighten up!	Nu mai fi așa serios!/ Ia-o mai ușor!

At first sight, despite a certain inequality in overlapping the two metaphorical patterns, which is after all to be expected, English and Romanian choose the same images to actualize happiness linguistically. When rendering the English instantiations into Romanian there are cases of semantic loss and displacement, but all in all, the patterns are operational in both languages.

It goes without saying that these basic metaphors for happiness also have specific complex extensions in English, which further analyze the various types of source domains that humans resort to when describing the multi-faceted state of happiness, among which the following are salient:

### Metaphor: HAPPINESS IS LIGHT CONTAINED IN THE EYES (Kövecses 1991:31):

Examples:

English	Romanian
Amusement gleamed in her eyes.	I se citea amuzamentul în ochi/ Îi luceau ochii de veselie.
His eyes glinted as he told us the good news.	Ochii îi sclipeau când ne-a adus vestea cea bună.
His eyes radiated with joy.	Îi străluceau ochii de bucurie.
His eyes were bright with joy.	Îi străluceau ochii de bucurie.



#### HAPPINESS IS BEING OFF THE GROUND

Examples:

English	Romanian
I am soaring with joy.	Plutesc de fericire.
She was on cloud nine.	Era în al nouălea cer.

#### HAPPINESS IS BEING IN HEAVEN

Examples:

English	Romanian
It was paradise on earth.	Era raiul pe pământ.
Being with you is like being in seventh heaven.	Cu tine mă simt ca în rai/ paradis/ al nouălea cer.

#### HAPPINESS IS FEELING LIGHT (AS OPPOSED TO HEAVY)

Example:

English	Romanian
Lighten up!	Relaxează-te/ las-o mai moale/ nu te îngrijora/ nu te necăji!
Take a load off!	Ia-o mai ușor!

#### HAPPINESS IS WARMTH

Examples:

English	Romanian
His smile warmed the cockles of her heart.	Zâmbetul lui îi încălzea inima.
They felt all warm and fuzzy inside.	Simțeau cum îi cuprinde fericirea/ Simțeau cum li se încălzește inima.

#### HAPPINESS IS VITALITY

Examples:

English	Romanian
She's animated with joy.	Bucuria o însufletește.
He was alive with joy.	Era fericit și plin de viață.

#### HAPPINESS IS HEALTH

Example:

English	Romanian
I feel very good about it.	Acest lucru îmi creează un sentiment pozitiv/ Acest lucru îmi dă o senzație foarte plăcută.

#### HAPPINESS IS A PLEASURABLE SENSATION

Example:

English	Romanian
I was tickled pink.	Eram extrem de satisfăcut/mulțumit.

#### HAPPINESS IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER

Examples:

English	Romanian
We were full of joy.	Eram plini de bucurie.
He was overwhelmed with joy.	Era copleșit de fericire.
His heart swelled with joy.	I s-a umplut inima de bucurie/fericire.
His heart burst with joy.	Nu-și mai încăpea în piele de bucurie/fericire.

#### HAPPINESS IS A CAPTIVE ANIMAL

Example:

English	Romanian
His feelings of happiness broke loose.	S-a lăsat pradă fericirii/ S-a lăsat în voia fericirii.

#### HAPPINESS IS AN OPPONENT IN A STRUGGLE

Examples:

English	Romanian
Happiness took complete control of him.	Și-a pierdut cu totul controlul de fericire/Fericirea l-a luat complet în stăpânire/ Și-a pierdut capul de

	fericire.
He is a real killjoy.	E genul care îți strică tot cheful/ E posac/morocănos.

HAPPINESS IS INSANITY/A DISEASE/INTOXICATION

Examples:

English	Romanian
She was mad with joy/ She was crazy with happiness.	E nebună de fericire.
Her good mood was contagious.	Buna ei dispoziție era contagioasă.
I was drunk with joy.	Eram beat de fericire.
I'm high on life.	Sunt beat/copleșit de fericire. Mă simt fericit că trăiesc. Mă bucur de viață. Îmi place viața mea.

HAPPINESS IS A NATURAL FORCE

Example:

English	Romanian
We were carried away with happiness.	Ne-a luat valul de fericire.
He was swept off his feet.	N-a mai știut de el de bucurie.

HAPPINESS IS A (DESIRED) HIDDEN OBJECT

Example:

English	Romanian
I am searching for happiness.	Îmi caut fericirea.
[...] the pursuit of happiness	căutarea fericirii/urmărirea fericirii/dreptul la fericire

HAPPINESS IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY

Example:

English	Romanian
You can't buy happiness.	Nu poți cumpăra fericirea/ Fericirea nu se cumpără cu bani/Fericirea nu poate fi cumpărată.

HAPPINESS IS AN ANIMAL THAT LIVES WELL

Examples:

English	Romanian
He is as happy as a clam.	E foarte fericit.
He is as happy as a pig in shit.	Nu mai poate de fericire/mulțumire.

The sources of the English metaphors are for the most part the following: Lakoff & Johnson (1980); Lakoff et al. (1991); Kövecses (1989, 1991, 2000a). The Romanian instantiations are personal translations, as prompted by the linguistic competence of the author as a native speaker and supported by various phraseological dictionaries.

First and foremost, it should be noted that in many instantiations happiness is equated with joy, as most of their semantic content seems to overlap, and the metaphoric mappings are preserved. Other possible partial synonyms for happiness, such as satisfaction, cheerfulness, contentment, have also been included in the corpus. As it appears, the wide range of source domains which have been proposed for the target domain of happiness are both ontological and orientational, including conceptual domains involving dimensional scales (verticality, upward movement), physical sensations and states associated with happiness, and the construal of happiness as a force or animate agent such as a type of animal or phenomenon.

As expected, the main conceptual patterns are preserved in Romanian, supporting the universality of the linguistic expression of happiness, despite the fact that not all the examples in the English corpus have equivalent metaphorical counterparts in Romanian. On the whole, it seems that Romanian also conceptualizes happiness in terms of light and motion on a vertical scale. As far as the more marginal realizations of happiness are concerned, like the ontological submappings centered on animals, opponents

and physical sensations, it is no wonder that the Romanian language lacks the necessary resources and prefers a literal translation.

In addition, it is to be remarked that the Romanian counterparts do not always observe the initial mapping in English, but instead resort to related submappings occurring in other English actualizations, except for the quite low number of cases when metaphoricity is lost and replaced by the literal translation. Oddly enough though, in many cases the Romanian language transposes the conceptual scheme into HAPPINESS IS LOSS, equating happiness to an uncontrollable phenomenon, resulting in linguistic expressions like "a-și pierde capul", "a-și pierde controlul", "a fi copleșit", "a fi luat de val", etc., with a more overtly negative dimension than in English. Therefore, it can easily be speculated that the Romanians typically have a darker view of the world, choosing to focus on the negative aspects of this positive emotion.

In the same vein, the conceptual schemes which put happiness in relation to health and vitality, although quite straightforward and quite easy to motivate, pose a problem in the Romanian translation, which needs the explicitation of the image in a sort of paraphrasial rendering quite devoid of metaphoricity.

A special mention is due to the final instantiations consisting of ossified similes, that do not actually have an equally figurative counterpart in Romanian, the typical translation strategy being to equate them to the superlative, i.e. "foarte fericit". There are however certain livresque possibilities to perform a similar-effect functional translation, by means of religiously marked terms of comparison, such as "fericit ca Lazăr" (literally "happy as Lazarus") or "fericit ca un izbăvit din iad" (literally "happy as a person delivered from hell"), although none of these equivalents have been attested in specialized phraseological dictionaries so far. There is also an equally literate counterpart, originating in Ion Creangă's well-known memory book "Memories of My Boyhood", viz. "vesel ca vremea cea bună", but none of these figurative translations are in current use or even part of the mental lexicon of the average speaker.

In any case, the most interesting instantiation seems "to be to be tickled pink" which, according to Kövecses (1989:129) chooses as source domain PLEASURABLE SENSATION; it is rather difficult to translate into Romanian, the possible equivalents being the literal "extrem de satisfăcut/ mulțumit"; it is obvious that the action proper (a gădila), and the colour reference (roz) are not included in the Romanian actualization, probably due to their distributional specificity..

## 7. CONCLUSION

So, it can be concluded that happiness is metaphorically represented in quite a similar manner in English and Romanian, as apparent from the analysis of the conceptual schemes in current use. Both languages make use of linguistic actualizations of the two main metaphorical patterns HAPPINESS IS LIGHT and HAPPINESS IS UP/VERTICAL MOVEMENT, with a significant preference for the latter. As expected, certain actualizations do not overlap, as is the case of the submappings where the vehicle is health, vitality, captive animal, opponent, natural force or pleasurable sensation, but on the whole the differences are not significant. In case the metaphor is not operational in Romanian, the preferred translation technique is explicitation and paraphrasing, with an evident loss of metaphoricity. The special case of similes is also devoid of Romanian counterparts, being, more often than not, replaced by the mere superlative of the adjective "happy".

Thus, although the corpus used in the research is quite small-scale, the hypothesis of our research is validated, i.e. unrelated languages, in our case English and Romanian, generally resort to the same conceptual metaphors to represent happiness, one of the six basic human emotions. The differences found in the linguistic actualisations of these schemes may be interpreted as being due to the slightly more pessimistic view of the world that is specific to the Romanians, who see even happiness in terms of loss and negative phenomena.

However, the number of such instantiations is quite low, so that it is safe to conclude that the patterns describing the abstract concept of happiness by means of embodied experience and concrete images are common in English and Romanian; therefore, happiness is a universal emotion which is metaphorically rendered in language in an equally universal manner.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] \*\*\* <https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/84070>, accessed on June 26th 2019
- [2] \*\*\* <https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor>, accessed on June 26th 2019
- [3] Barcelona, A. On the plausibility of claiming a metonymic motivation for conceptual metaphor. In A. Barcelona (ed.) *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter; 2003. 31–58.
- [4] Black, M. *Metaphor*. In M. Black (ed.) *Models and Metaphor*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press; 1962. 25–47.
- [5] Cameron, Lynne, and Low, Graham (Eds.). *Researching and applying metaphors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1999.
- [6] Charteris-Black, Jonathan . *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 2004.
- [7] Chomsky, N. *Language and Mind*. Enlarged ed. New York, MIT: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.; 1972.
- [8] Cooper, D. *Metaphor*. Oxford: Blackwell; 1986.
- [9] Coulson, S. Electrifying results: ERP data and cognitive linguistics. In M. Gonzalez-Marquez, I. Mittelberg, S. Coulson & M. J. Spivey (eds.) *Methods in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins; 2007. 400–423.
- [10] Davidson, D. What metaphors mean. In S. Sacks (ed.) *On Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1979.
- [11] Evans, V. & Green, M. *Cognitive Linguistics. An Introduction*. Edinburgh: University Press; 2006.
- [12] Gentner, D. & Bowdle, B. F. Convention, form, and figurative language processing. *Metaphor & Symbol* 16-3; 2001. 223–247.
- [13] Gibbs, R. W. *The Poetics of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1994.
- [14] Gibbs, R. W. Why cognitive linguists should care more about empirical methods. In M. Gonzalez-Marquez, I. Mittelberg, S. Coulson & M. J. Spivey (eds.) *Methods in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins; 2007. 2–18.
- [15] Hasson, U. & Giora, R. 2007. Experimental methods for studying the mental representation of language. In M. Gonzalez-Marquez, I. Mittelberg, S.
- [16] Coulson & M. J. Spivey (eds.) *Methods in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 302–322.
- [17] Kövecses, Z. *Speaking of emotions*. Berlin: Springer; 1989
- [18] Kövecses, Z. *Emotion concepts*. Berlin: Springer; 1990.
- [19] Kövecses, Z. Happiness: A definitional effort. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*. 1991.6(1):29–46. Kövecses, Zoltán. *Metaphor and Emotion. Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2000.
- [20] Kövecses, Z. *Metaphor. A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2002.
- [21] Kövecses, Z. *Metaphor in culture: Universality and variation*. Cambridge, MA/New York: Cambridge University Press; 2005.
- [22] Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press; 1980.
- [23] Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books; 1999.
- [24] Langacker, R. *Grammar and Conceptualization*. Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter; 1999.
- [25] Mac Cormac, E. R. *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor*. Cambridge, Mass.:The MIT Press; 1985.
- [26] Stefanowitsch, A. Words and their metaphors: A corpus-based approach. In A. Stefanowitsch & S. T. Gries (Eds.), *Corpus-based approaches to metaphor and metonymy*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter; 2006.pp. 63–105.
- [27] Taylor, J. *Linguistic Categorization*. Third ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2003.



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## DEVELOPING INTERVIEW SKILLS IN ENGLISH: HOW TO HANDLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Carmen Oprit-Maftei (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [carmen.maftei@ugal.ro](mailto:carmen.maftei@ugal.ro)

### *Abstract*

Interviewing is an important part of the selection process since it enables the recruiters to discover relevant information which cannot be found in the supporting documents, such as creativity, spontaneity, enthusiasm, ambition, handling pressure and so on. In addition to assessing the applicant's interpersonal communication skills, the face-to-face interview enables the hiring committee to achieve a greater understanding of the applicant's key competencies and specific qualities. In order to be able to make a good impression at their first job interview undergraduates need effective preparation. Skill development activities can be included in Business English seminars, devoting time to CV and cover letter writing and to learning interviewing strategies which would enable undergraduates to present themselves to prospective employers and therefore to develop realistic expectations. The present paper is part of a broader project which will materialize in a students' book, whose main aim is to equip my Business English students with relevant skills which would increase their employability chances. It also advocates the ESP teacher's role as an adviser or a counsellor who plays an important part in undergraduates' personal growth. The material is designed to develop their public speaking skills, presentation skills, critical thinking, knowledge and competencies necessary to contribute to the society. The present paper focuses on the types of questions usually asked during a job interview.

**Keywords:** oral communication competence; interview skills; interpersonal skills; non-verbal communication;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Technology evolves at an amazing pace having a great impact on the various means of communication. Business needs to change accordingly therefore students must constantly adapt and seek proper training in order to meet the new requirements of the jobs of the future. Nowadays the business environment places an increasingly greater emphasis on the ability to communicate efficiently. Potential employees must be able prove their ability to communicate interpersonally in order to share information in business meetings and discussions, to interact with their colleagues in a friendly work environment, with managers when presenting reports or graphs, as means of contributing effectively to the decision-making process and with potential clients when negotiating or trying to persuade them.

Undergraduates are generally expected to be able to deliver speeches to an audience mainly during their exam sessions or when they defend their dissertation or thesis. A job interview will always include a

short oral presentation as part of the hiring process, which can be a nerve-racking experience. Persuading a hiring committee that an applicant has a skill set eligible for employment can be a challenging task but with the proper training it can be overcome successfully.

In my opinion academic training should be tailored to meet the specific requirements of the jobs of the future. The job market has changed significantly in the last years due to dynamic effects of technology breakthroughs. Consequently, the current needs and interests of undergraduates should be considered when designing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials, in general. It should be based on achieving realistic goals and objectives and focus on developing the main skills needed for employment in today's society. The present paper is part of a broader project which aims at helping my students increase their confidence in their own abilities and improve their employability skills thus facilitating the transition from discussing real-life situations to graduation and employment.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The complex role played by the ESP teacher has been widely discussed in the academic community. In my opinion, ESP teachers have a much more challenging task as in addition to introducing the new vocabulary related to various fields of business and reviewing grammar: they are expected to develop their students's employability skills in an attempt to increase the chances for career success. Therefore, ESP teachers need, as Basturkmen (2017:48) put it, additional skills and knowledge for the teaching process. I believe that their role is much more complex than that. In addition to being a skilled instructor and a designer of materials which would meet the undergraduates' specific needs in order to fulfil the expectations of today's business environment, I advocate for the role of the teacher as a counsellor, having a genuine interest in helping students and coaching them to perform better in a job interview thus playing an important part in their personal growth and career development. When I design my courses I always foster public speaking activities and project-based approaches that would provide opportunities for students to overcome shyness, to gain self-confidence and facilitate interaction. In the long-term this would enhance their oral production and improve their personal development.

A job interview simulation scheduled for my 3<sup>rd</sup> year Business English students was described in detail in Oprit-Maftei (2019). In addition to the job description analysis and self-analysis at the end of this activity my students will also be able to evaluate performance through self and peer assessment. The present paper is based on the same job interview simulation that harmonizes integrative learning with operational learning and mainly focuses on the types of questions used to differentiate applicants on the basis of their skills, abilities and knowledge.

Since the students enrolled in the International Relations programme study English for six semesters, the emphasis is now placed on being able to communicate efficiently rather than on grammar and vocabulary. At this level the focus is on developing special skills such as presentation skills, communication skills, public speaking skills and/or negotiating skills.

Dealing with questions in a job interview is an integral part of job interview simulation. My students are expected to deliver a short presentation introducing their career objectives, relevant volunteer work, main strengths and skills that would make them suitable for the job.

The hiring committee is usually made up of three or four students who are previously instructed to assess the following aspects:

- job interview etiquette (whether the applicants greeted them and properly introduced themselves using their full name, whether they initiated the handshake or not or sat down uninvited)
- body language (interview posture - straight back, shoulders are held back, position of arms and hands while speaking)
- eye contact (it is extremely important as it shows assertiveness and confidence or, on the contrary avoiding eye contact shows low self-esteem and anxiety)
- enthusiasm, creativity, open-mindedness and assertiveness (as these qualities are not displayed by the supporting documents)
- the way they handled questions bearing in mind that there is no perfect answer to many of these job interview questions, the interviewers just test the speed of reaction, logic and creativity; however clichéd answers should be avoided

- overall presentation (whether they described their background, volunteer work and character accurately avoiding, mentioned relevant qualifications for the job, provided examples to illustrate their main strengths and managed to convey the right message that they are a good choice for the position).

An extremely important stage of a job interview is the applicant's dealing with additional questions. After delivering the oral presentation each applicant is asked a (different) set of six questions which range from ordinary to odd. The teacher selects a set of six questions printed on paper and hands it over to the members of the hiring committee who are also recommended to ask questions of their own. The difficulty of questions is subject to the English level of each applicant. Regardless of the undergraduates' English proficiency levels, spontaneous and creative answers are highly encouraged.

Each interview usually starts with a lead-in question such as: *Why should we hire you?* which opens up further questions that assess how knowledgeable an applicant is, their level of creativity, work experience and so on.

Basically in any job interview, the hiring committee is mainly interested in certain aspects summarized by Innes (2016:12) as follows:

1. *Can the applicant do the job?*
2. *Will the applicant do the job?*
3. *Does the applicant fit in with the other employees and the organization as a whole?*

Therefore all types of questions which are usually asked during a job interview aim at finding out more information related to one of the above-mentioned areas so to help the hiring committee decide whether the applicant is suitable for that job.

McDermott & Reed (2012:15) identified five questioning styles which are selected by interviewers based on their level of experience:

- open questions – it is the most common type and the questions usually begin with *How, What, When, Why* (*How would you deal with an unhappy customer?*) – they require more than one-word answers such as *yes* or *no*;
- closed questions – they require a specific answer: *Have you ever used SmartPLS software application?*
- probing questions – used to ask for more detailed information such as *Tell us more about your experience ...*
- leading questions – usually begin with *I see you are skilled with Java?* or *In your cover letter you mentioned that you are a problem-solving person. Can you exemplify several cases in which you demonstrated your problem-solving skills?*
- combination questions – the interviewer combines two questions and multiple styles into one statement such as : *What experience do you have in making presentations and how do you rate your skills in this area?*

Basically the main types of interviewing questions identified by Verderber, Verderber & Sellnow (2010: 191-192) are the following:

- *warming-up questions* - used in order to establish rapport with the applicant in an attempt to help them overcome anxiety;
- *direct questions* - well-planned questions a priori designed and formulated especially to facilitate the disclosure of information relevant for the job requirements;
- *follow-up questions* – asked when seeking for additional information.

Doyle (2019) mainly distinguishes between the *behavioural interview questions* and *situational interview questions*. The former type of questions requires real-life examples of work-related situations showing how the applicant reacted in the past such as: *Tell us about a time when you worked under pressure*. Thus based on past behaviour the interviewers can identify the applicant's knowledge and skill set such as creative and analytical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, risk-taking and others. The latter - *situational interview questions* help identify possible reactions to a hypothetical situation that the applicant may face at work such as: *How would you react if you were dealing with a difficult customer?*

In addition there are *stress based and surprise interview questions* (McDermott & Reed, 2012:31) which are used by interviewers to find out relevant information in an unusual way, for instance large

organizations like Google or Microsoft sometimes ask questions such as: *If you were an animal, what would you be?*

Due to time constraints we used a combination of questioning styles for our job interview simulation. The set of questions selected for each student included:

- one common question such as *Why should we hire you?* or *Why do you think you are suitable for this post/job/position?*
- one projective question investigating possible future behaviour and opinions such as *How would you be able to compensate for the lack of work experience?*
- one behavioural question for which we required examples based on the real experiences encountered by my students such as *What was the toughest job-related problem you have ever faced?*
- and ended with at least two odd questions such as *Which superpower would you like to have?* or *If you could have dinner with a celebrity, who would you choose?*

Most of the questions we used have been compiled as a result of fruitful collaborations with companies from the private sector and with HR professionals who were willing to share their expertise. Some of them were provided by former students who found this activity extremely helpful and wanted to contribute by sharing their experience with us.

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present paper aims at answering the main following questions:

1. Would a job interview simulation arouse the ESP students' interest in developing job-related competencies and improve their personal skills? And if so, would the correlation between education and the labour market requirements contribute to developing strong communication skills which in turn may foster good working relationships and boost career success?
2. Will this learning environment which promotes personal growth help them reach their potential and prepare them for the jobs of the future?

Over the last years ESP teachers have been complaining about their students' declining interest in grammar and vocabulary. Due to this type of activity my students' attendance rate increased and they admitted at the end of the semester that it was a motivating experience and even if it was nerve-racking it eventually proved to be a better way to construct knowledge.

### 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It goes without saying that effective communication is extremely important in today's highly competitive work environment. In recent years there have been great concerns about the mismatch between graduate skills and the skills needed in the Romanian labour market. In order to get the maximum benefit from education and thus increase employability, universities have to make strenuous efforts to adapt their offers to the changing economic conditions. The present study aims at demonstrating that the students' communication skills would be improved, and their presentation skills could be enhanced by adapting the ESP material including activities which not only aim at raising the undergraduates' English proficiency but also relate to the overall process of personal growth. Such an approach would lead to the graduates' increased self-confidence and to higher employability rates at job interviews thus reducing the long term mismatch between the labour market demand and offer.



## 5. RESEARCH METHODS

The present paper is based on an experiment which involved my 3<sup>rd</sup> year Business English students. Their perspectives were gathered at the end of the semester in the form of questionnaire data.

Being able to communicate effectively is one of the major requirements of today's labour market. Well-developed interpersonal skills are highly sought by employers nowadays. Learning assertive communication techniques may strengthen relationships and help control stress, leading to increased self-esteem. My students admitted that, even though it was not easy to talk about themselves, they subsequently found it easier to talk about their strengths and weaknesses, to mark their attributes without being too modest or bragging. What is most important is that they learned a lot by objectively assessing their colleagues (due to the student-to-student peer assessment process) and they chose not to make the same mistakes. Not only did all students provide an affirmative answer to the question investigating whether the activity was helpful, but they also explained why I should use this activity with my future students, as well.

## 6. FINDINGS

When introducing this activity to the final year undergraduate students they were reluctant at first but soon they realized that in order to confidently articulate a coherent presentation at a real job interview they need to be well-trained and have strong communication skills. During these activities (oral presentations, interview simulations) the emphasis is always placed on developing communication skills and on overcoming public speaking anxiety.

The main difficulty when answering behavioural interview questions lay in giving specific examples of occasions in which they demonstrated particular behaviours or skills. When answering the situational interview questions or projective questions which investigate possible future behaviour or opinions, the undergraduates provided evidence of certain essential employability skills, which are increasingly more valued by employers, at such as communication, adaptability, problem-solving, decision-making or ability to work under pressure. As an exercise for all closed questions which required a short specific answer, we expected longer answers with examples based on the real experiences if possible, unless the question sounded like: *Can you describe yourself in one word?* Due to this activity they realized that employers don't expect to talk about something spectacular to highlight their employability skills, on the contrary, speaking about some common activities (for example planning a trip with their colleagues, scheduling and prioritizing activities and so on) may demonstrate certain highly-sought skills such as creative, organized, punctual, adaptable or persuasive.

Another stressful situation that any job applicant may encounter is to answer to the following question: *How would you describe yourself in three words?* Most of my students chose the following overused words ranked in order of frequency: *friendly, sociable* and *hard-working*. In order to make a difference the word selection could be rather challenging. The hiring committee is particularly interested in how an applicant thinks, which cannot be shown neither by common word nor by business jargon. The best way to deal with this kind of question is to be genuine and think about the qualities that best describe them. After these explanations their answers changed to *creative, ambitious, meticulous, generous, eager to learn, curious, empathetic*.

The odd or surprise interview questions were by far the most challenging. Even if it is generally recommended to take some time and think before answering when it comes to undergraduates who learn English as a second language, experience has proven that the faster they answered, the better the response. Unfortunately in many cases the more they thought and tried to answer a question like this in a memorable way it resulted in no answer at all, just uncomfortable silence which affected their self-confidence. By assessing their colleagues they learned how to be spontaneous and to convey enthusiasm.

An example of an unusual questions is *Would you prefer to be an eagle or a penguin?* Several students answered that they would prefer to be penguins as these marine birds live in colonies, help each other and are highly sociable. Only one student answered that he would prefer to be an eagle because thus he could fly high in the sky and see the most beautiful landscapes in the world. The take-home message from this experience was that there are no perfect or ideal answers to these questions but spontaneity, creativity and logic are the main factors to consider.

At the end of this activity my students found out more about how to answer to various types of job interview questions. Even if public speaking can be a terrifying experience for most undergraduates due to a lot of practice required by this type of activity they are now better-prepared. They also became aware of the non-verbal communication factors (posture, facial expression, body language, eye contact and others). They even understood the importance of a sincere smile.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Attending a job interview does not necessarily require public speaking skills; however an applicant is expected to be articulate, intelligent and knowledgeable.

As previously mentioned, all stages of a job interview need prior extensive research and preparation. Dealing with questions in a job interview can be a dreadful experience to anyone but especially to undergraduates who struggle to enter the job market. However a good command of verbal and non-verbal communication skills, proper job interview etiquette, confidence and a sincere smile are all key factors which may boost their chances of landing a job. These essential elements of success based on solid knowledge in their field of expertise would increase their self-confidence and therefore would lead to professional success.

Handling questions (which may range from ordinary to completely unpredictable ones) is not only about providing the proper answer spontaneously, it is a much more complex process which requires in addition to critical thinking skills and a good command of communication, body language, eye contact, facial expression, posture, hands and assertive attitude.

Improving students' professional communication skills is essential in today's society as employers expect graduates and even undergraduates to have excellent communication skills. Therefore the ESP teacher has to adapt the teaching material to meet the curriculum requirements, the specific needs of the ESP students and the labour requirements, transgressing boundaries and devoting special attention to the undergraduates' personal growth.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Foley Mark, Hall Diana, *Advanced Learners' Grammar*. Harlow Essex, Pearson Education Limited: Longman; 2003.
- [2] Oprit-Maftei Carmen, *Job Interview Simulation – Developing ESP Students' Communication Skills*. INNO-LSP 2018, *The Annals of University Of Constanta: Philology Series Vol. XXX (1/2019):127 – 136*. Available from [http://litere.univ-ovidius.ro/Anale/volumul\\_xxx\\_2019-1/12.%20JOB%20INTERVIEW%20SIMULATION%20-%20DEVELOPING%20ESP%20STUDENTS%27%20COMMUNICATION%20SKILLS%20-%20Carmen%20Oprit-Maftei%20-%20pp.%20127-136.pdf](http://litere.univ-ovidius.ro/Anale/volumul_xxx_2019-1/12.%20JOB%20INTERVIEW%20SIMULATION%20-%20DEVELOPING%20ESP%20STUDENTS%27%20COMMUNICATION%20SKILLS%20-%20Carmen%20Oprit-Maftei%20-%20pp.%20127-136.pdf)
- [3] Verderber Rudolph, Verderber Kathleen, Sellnow Deanna, *Communicate!*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning; 2010.
- [4] Doyle Alison, *Student Job Interview Questions and Answers*, 2019. Available from: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/student-job-interview-questions-and-answers-2063815>
- [5] Basturkmen, Helen, *EST Teacher Education Needs*, 2017. Available from: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching/article/esp-teacher-education-needs/94355A07092D3EFDAD6EC5A5D52CCA85>
- [6] Innes James, *The Interview Question and Answer Book: How to be ready to answer the 155 toughest interview questions*, Pearson United Kingdom; 2016.
- [7] McDermott Joe, Reed Andrew, *Top Answers to 121 Job Interview Questions*, London: Anson Reed Limited; 2012.



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### HOW TO KEEP YOUNG LEARNERS OF ENGLISH HAPPY AND FOCUSSED. GRAMMAR THROUGH STORIES

Iulian Mardar (a)\*

Antoanela Marta Mardar (b)

a) ) PhD Student, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Galati, Romania, iulian19722002@yahoo.com,

(b) Lecturer PhD, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Galati, Romania, Antoanela.Mardar@ugal.ro,  
Romania,

#### *Abstract*

Teaching through stories is a method as old as the language itself, but it is rarely (if ever) used in teaching school subjects, including languages. Although numerous teachers grew up with stories and used this accessible instrument in order to discover the world around them, to learn new things and to stimulate their imagination, once become adults they seem to have forgotten how much stories influenced their lives and their personal development. Nowadays, children may learn new things by using far more attractive sources of information and that is why stories tend to be replaced by television shows for children or by animated movies which help children of all ages learn and better understand various science-related aspects, facts of life and facts of nature. Nevertheless, since most knowledge is acquired by students from textbooks, shouldn't this teaching tool be adapted to their needs and abilities? To be more specific, shouldn't textbooks be structured so as to allow the teachers working with young learners, in particular, to teach new and abstract notions through stories? The present paper will demonstrate that young learners of English may be kept happy and focussed if they are given the chance to learn grammar through stories. Teachers play a very important role as they have to use their imagination in order to create plausible stories and appropriate materials for further practice.

**Keywords:** teaching; grammar for young learners; grammar stories; home-made handouts; tenses;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching, in general, is a complex and challenging activity which is conditioned by a series of factors such as the learners' age, their personality and learning styles, the subject and the topic to be approached and the teaching materials available, among others. When it comes to teaching young learners to communicate correctly in a foreign language, the challenge is even greater. Many might think that teaching English to young learners (aged 6 to 9) means, basically, teaching words and simple sentences and the most popular songs and nursery rhymes come to confirm this opinion (e.g. *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* teaching parts of the body, *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe* teaching numbers from 0 to 20 and some verbs, *Old McDonald Had a Farm* teaching farm animals etc.)

There are also songs teaching colours, or words related to time, food, wild animals, weather and even songs teaching grammar (e.g. Past Simple : *Hey, Diddle, Diddle* see <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46952/hey-diddle-diddle>, last visited on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2019, at 11:06), but there are not any songs teaching the difference between Present Simple and Present Continuous, for example, or problematic aspects regarding the interrogative and negative verb forms for Present Simple and Past Simple.

Even though there are numerous handouts, lesson plans, presentations, poems and other didactic materials meant to help students understand and correctly use verbs in English, none of them tells them why verbs have more than one form and how these verb forms should be used correctly (see [https://en.islcollective.com/resources/search\\_result?Tags=simple%20past%20song&searchworksheet=GO&type=Printables](https://en.islcollective.com/resources/search_result?Tags=simple%20past%20song&searchworksheet=GO&type=Printables), a wide collection of handouts including well-known songs of famous artists processed so as to allow teachers to work on specific verbs with their students).

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a tendency among the various editors of English textbooks for children to promise new and attractive ways of presenting the English grammar to the young learners to whom the respective books address. Although most of them promise to make learning English an enjoyable and fun activity, the only means of achieving their aims is by strictly adding colourful, somehow cheerful drawings to impress their readers. Sometimes jokes and funny dialogues are introduced, but they are far from making grammar notions enjoyable indeed. It goes without saying that children may be easily amused, but making them laugh or entertaining them with drawings which teach the truly relevant aspects does not mean teaching them grammar.

Thus, the real challenge when teaching English grammar is teaching it so as to make it accessible to the young learners who have no grammar notions in their native language and lack the mental power of understanding abstract notions, irrespective of the domain envisaged.

The result, far too often visible throughout our over thirty-five years of teaching activity, is that numerous young learners of English are practically unable to communicate in this foreign language after studying it for two years. Reference is not made to mass education, where the teacher is sometimes overwhelmed by the number of students, but to private classes or, the so called one-on-one English classes where teachers work with small groups of students. How is this even possible?

Why do teachers fail in transmitting their knowledge to their young learners and in making them communicate effectively in English and why do young learners refuse to acquire certain knowledge from their teachers? Is it entirely the teachers' fault, or there are other factors conditioning such an attitude on the part of young learners, as well? Can English be taught outside its specific grammar rules? Definitely not. The only exception is the case when native speakers of English teach their children English as their mother language. As regards the rest of the world, the English grammar seems to be a gate through which a student has to go in order to speak it correctly.

The importance of grammar in English language teaching is made obvious if we consider the fact that “[w]hen the TESOL Quarterly first began publication in 1967, the teaching of grammar (i.e. the teaching of morphological inflections, function words, and syntactic word order) was a central concern in English language teaching.” (Celce-Murcia 1991:459) Actually, “the teaching of grammar had often been synonymous with foreign language teaching” for 2,500 years. (Rutherford 1987, qtd. in id. *ibid*)

Considering the aspects mentioned above, the present paper will demonstrate how young learners of English can be happy and focused while learning otherwise difficult grammar notions in this foreign language.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are many voices saying that teaching English to young learners is not a good idea, being counterproductive, or, to put it differently, a waste of time. Other voices say that starting to learn English very early in life gives the individuals an advantage when they grow up. Of course, children who are constantly exposed to English will have a better pronunciation, will recognize the words faster than the others and will find learning English easier. Is this valid for grammar, too?

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODS

In 2001, an experiment showed that six and seven-year old children, unaware of grammar rules in their native language, can be taught English grammar. The experiment took place in a Chinese-speaking country, which made it even more revealing, since there are no formal tenses in Chinese. Verbs have only one form, regardless of the physical time the speaker wants to refer to. How was teaching English tenses possible to those children? Was there a way to make them understand tenses instead of memorizing a set of rules and applying them mechanically? How about the second and the third forms of the verb? What were they good for? What about the interrogative and the negative for Present Simple and Past Simple, where the verb *to do* changes the rules of the game? As the title of this article clearly states, the answer is: through stories.

Before presenting some of the stories used in this Chinese experiment, mention should be made that the stories may be applied in any country where English is taught as the second language or as a foreign language. Romanian speaking students, for example, have a hard time remembering to use the auxiliary verb *to be* and of the *ing* ending to form the present participle of the main verb for various tenses in the continuous aspect. Another problematic aspect is related to dropping the ending *-s* used for the third person singular in the interrogative and negative sentences formed with the Present Simple Tense. Similarly, Romanian learners of English tend to use the second form of the verb after the auxiliary verb *did* in negative and interrogative sentences as a result of memorizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> form of most irregular verbs. The stories and handouts below are only a few examples of how English grammar notions may be taught through stories and anecdotes. In many cases, the stories were doubled by funny, on-the-spot explanations which made an impression on the young learners and helped them remember grammar rules for a longer period of time. However, these explanations will not be included in the present paper, as they may vary according to each teaching situation and to the teacher's ability to improvise.

#### TEACHING PAST TENSE SIMPLE: THE OLDER BROTHERS OF VERBS

Children's world is populated with fantastic beings, heroes with superpowers and old people who speak words of wisdom. In the experiment mentioned above, the verbs were not just simple words denominating actions, but heroes, characters in a story. They became the inhabitants of a country where all the words were alive. Thus, the verbs were young or old people doing exactly what their names suggested: Mr. Play played all day long, Mr. Sing sang all day long, Mr. Eat was a chubby little boy who ate all day long, Mr. Sleep was an old man who used to sleep in a long chair on a veranda and so on. There was only a little problem: they could not speak about their past. They were aware of the fact that days passed by and they would have liked to talk about what they did in the past, but they were not able to do that. On the other hand, their **Older Brothers**, who had been born before those times could not talk about what they did every day. They could talk only about their past lives. Being curious by nature, the little children wanted to know who the Older Brothers were. Anticipating this situation, a list with the most common irregular verbs was prepared in advance and given to the students:

Verb	Older Brother	Verb	Older Brother
Mr. Drink	Mr. Drank	Mr. Give	Mr. Gave
Mr. Eat	Mr. Ate	Mr. Sit	Mr. Sat
Mr. Run	Mr. Ran	Mr. Go	Mr. Went
Mr. Write	Mr. Wrote	Mr. See	Mr. Saw
Mr. Read	Mr. Read	Mr. Do	Mr. Did
Mr. Sleep	Mr. Slept	Mr. Put	Mr. Put
Mr. Fly	Mr. Flew	Mr. Say	Mr. Said
Mr. Draw	Mr. Drew	Mr. Get	Mr. Got
Mr. Take	Mr. Took		

**Table 1. The list of some irregular verbs, with their second form.**

The story says that, little by little, the verbs and their Older Brothers realized that they could help each other expressing things which they would not normally be able to. Thus, Mr. Eat could tell his friends what he had eaten by asking his older brother, Mr. Ate to speak for him. In exchange, Mr. Ate was able to tell everybody what he ate every day or usually by asking his little brother, Mr. Eat, to speak for

him. All the Verbs and their Older Brothers always helped each other, as brothers should always do and they lived happily for days. Then, one day, they heard someone crying. At the beginning, there was only one voice, but soon the crying could be heard on many voices. When they looked around, they saw that verbs such as Mr. Like, Mr. Wash, Mr. Stop, Mr. Jump, Mr. Walk and so on were crying their eyes out. The reason was soon to be found out: they did not have older brothers. They were, each and every verb taken separately, an only child. Mr. Make, who can do many things, came with a brilliant idea: he made a mask for the verbs who did not have older brothers, to wear it and look like their older brothers, if they had had any. The mask was named 'the ED mask'. The story says that Mr. Make was a good maker, but his spelling was not very good. In fact he wanted the mask to be called END because the mask had to be placed at the **end** of the verb but he misspelled its name and called it the ED mask. And so, since those times, the mask has been known as 'the ED mask'.

Once students understood what they had to do in order to express actions in the past, they were given a short story in which only the verbs in the table were used and they were asked to change *every day* with *yesterday* and the verbs with their *Older Brothers*. When they realized how easy it was to narrate events from the past, they were instantly able to write a story about things which happened in the past and most students could not wait to write another one. Here is an example of such a text which can be easily converted from present to past:

*I wake up at 7 a.m. every day. I go to the bathroom and I wash my face. I also brush my teeth. Then I go to the kitchen. I sit at the table and I eat a sandwich. After I eat the sandwich, I drink a glass of fresh orange juice. Next, I go back to my room, I put on my school uniform, I take my schoolbag and I go to school. I get to school at 7:50. After I say hello to my classmates, I take my book and my notebook out of the schoolbag and I get ready for the class.*

Using the table with which the students had been provided, and the ED mask, the students had no problems turning all the sentences in the text from present to past.

When confronted with Older Brothers who were identical with their younger verbs, the students were told that these verbs were twins, but one of them had been born some minutes before the other, becoming thus the Older Brother. Many parents call them by the same name (because verbs have parents, too), but Mr. Read asked everybody to call his older brother as they called colour red because, for some reason, that was his favourite colour. Mr. Put's older brother had nothing against being called just like his little brother because, as he used to tell everybody, he liked the idea of not being older than his twin brother. Not even by one second!

### **TEACHING PRESENT TENSE SIMPLE: MR. DO TO THE RESCUE**

The negative and the interrogative of Present Simple are usually taught before Past Simple, but this work is not about the right order of teaching grammar items. Many teachers change the order in which they teach certain notions every year for different reasons. Some do this because they are still trying to find the magic formula which can make learning English the most pleasant experience in the life of a student, others because they follow trends found in new books or because they need a change in their teaching strategy in order to avoid boredom. The teaching methods and the order in which new notions are taught may be changed, but, regardless of the order, the fact remains that young students enjoy learning grammar through stories and retain facts more easily in this way.

Using the auxiliary verb *to do* in order to form negative and interrogative sentences is an important issue for the students whose native languages do not imply the use of auxiliary verbs for this purpose. If we consider Romanian, interrogative sentences are formally identical with their affirmative counterparts, the only aspect distinguishing these two types of sentences being the rising intonation and the question mark used at the end of questions: *Tu ai un măr. Tu ai un măr?* ↗ (You have an apple. Do you have an apple?) Young learners of English find it difficult to understand what an auxiliary verb is, most of them being unable to make the difference between the concepts of *tomorrow* and *yesterday*. Such young learners may be explained that *to do* is a verb which helps them form interrogative sentences, but what if things were presented in a different manner? Instead of calling *do* an auxiliary, we could call it *Mr. Do, the hero who saved the other verbs*. The result of such a story-based approach resulted, in our case, in having the students all ears, interested and captivated by the new notions to be taught. The story of the amazing DO is presented in the paragraphs below.

Long, long time ago, there were no people on our planet. Only trees, flowers, lakes, butterflies and... words. Words did happily whatever their names suggested, just like in the story about the Older Brothers. But, one day, Mr. Be, a mean verb, discovered that he was the only one able to ask a question by simply changing his place with the word which named the entity the verb *to be* talked about (i.e. the subject of the sentence): "I am a teacher. *Am I* a teacher? He is a pilot. *Is he* a pilot?" and so on. The mean Mr. Be constantly teased the other verbs, asking them to ask questions, but all the other verbs could do was to embarrass themselves by saying things such as: "Eat I? Fly you?" and so on. Mr. Be would laugh at their misfortune until one day, when verbs decided that they had to do something about it. They had a meeting and they all started repeating the same thing: "We have to *do* something. We must *do* something. We need to *do* something. What can we *do*? Is there anything we can *do*? There must be something we can *do*!" After a while, they noticed that the name of Mr. Do was in each of their sentences. Since Mr. Do was not at the meeting because he was busy doing things, the other verbs decided to pay Mr. Do a visit, because he was the only one who could help them by doing something about it. After all, his name was Mr. Do, wasn't it? "Please, Mr. Do, you have to do something and help us make questions!" the verbs asked him as soon as he opened the door of his house.

"First of all, you have to say *hello*", Mr. Do replied.

"Yes, hello, Mr. Do! Can you help us?" they asked him again.

"Yes, there is something I can do, because that is my name", Mr. Do said, proud of himself, "but you have to do something for me, too".

"Anything you want!" the rest of the verbs cried in one voice.

"You have to let me be the one who starts sentences. Every time I want to say something, the Subject jumps in front of me and I never get to be the first. I want to be the first every time you ask questions", he explained.

To cut a long story short, the other verbs agreed to let Mr. Do be the first in questions. After that, rivers of questions beginning with *Do* and ending in *every day*, *twice a week*, *on Mondays* etc. started flowing on our planet: "Do you fly every day? Do you eat fish on Mondays? Do they go there twice a week? Do we need to brush our teeth twice a day?" and thousands upon thousands of other questions.

All the verbs were happily reciting and even singing questions up and down the hills covered with flowers when, suddenly, they heard someone crying. They stopped talking at once and listened more carefully. This is how they realized that there were three voices crying, not only one. They soon discovered three little children crying under a bridge over a river of questions. They were *He*, *She* and *It* who were crying because nobody had invited them to be part of questions. As a matter of fact, when Mr. Do helped the verbs make questions, only I, You, We and They were there. He, She and It were still sleeping, being a little lazy. So, Mr. Do was asked, again, to help. He agreed to help them, but wanted something else in exchange: he should be the only one to end in letter *s*. He had noticed that, in sentences such as "He plays every day. She reads every evening. It barks at night" the verbs ended in an *-s*. Since he had two letters, *e* and *s*, in sentences like "He does his homework every Saturday. She does her best." etc. he could not accept other verbs to have the same honour. Eventually, all the verbs accepted Mr. Do to be the only one to have this *-es* ending for he/she and it and since then Mr Do has done his work as required taking front position in questions and the *-es* ending when appropriate.

## 5. FINDINGS

Stories as the ones above have a stronger impact on young learners, which means that they will remember the grammar rules explained in this way for a longer period of time. It goes without saying that a lot of practice was needed after the students were told the story and they were explained why it is wrong to say "\*He doesn't walks" or "\*He runs?". In order to help them practice at home, various handouts were created. One of the handouts used in an English centre in Romania, where the method of teaching grammar through stories is largely used is presented in Appendix 1.

The method of teaching grammar through stories is not to be used exclusively with young learners. Four, five and even six graders enjoy stories which are adapted for their age. Their level of understanding is different due to the fact that, by the time they get to those grades they will have been exposed to logical thinking. At the same time, their vocabulary is wider and their area of interest is more diverse. Stories as the one in Appendix 2, meant to present the main tenses or to review them, may be catchy and revealing.

## GOING THE EXTRA MILE: THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Stories are entertaining and it has been proven that people retain information better and for a longer period of time if it is put in an anecdote. Nevertheless, is this thing alone enough to be a successful teacher of English? According to Bălan et al., a teacher may have nine roles in the classroom: *controller, assessor, organizer, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, investigator* and *motivator* (2001: 52-57). While all the roles above are real and important, it seems that the one role which excites and makes young learners pay full attention in class was left out: the *actor*. A teacher has to act in order to capture the students' attention and to compensate for the way textbooks present grammar: in a boring and linear manner, using tables which mean little to nothing to young learners. A teacher needs to go the proverbial extra mile in order to make things more interesting in the classroom. Still, how many teachers are able or willing to do this? Our profession is underestimated and faculties "producing" teachers do not give them the right training to make children forget that they learn something as difficult as the grammar of a foreign language and to give them the feeling that they are in a world where they can have fun with words which, otherwise, would scare them.

Books on teaching English focus on teaching the four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – without necessarily including teaching grammar in a special chapter. It seems that grammar is taken for granted and that teaching is seen as a part of the four skills mentioned above. This is one of the reasons for which to many young learners do not like grammar. Teachers teach tenses and other grammar notions in an abstract manner, a fact which leads to mechanical learning – the wrong way to learn almost anything. We opened many classroom books for young students and what we saw is that there are texts in the form of jokes, short stories or cartoons meant to teach vocabulary (words and expressions), but there are no stories explaining grammar. Even the most successful series of English classroom books used in Romania present grammar as being something that has to be done, lacking enthusiasm and imagination. Grammar is presented in such a manner that the teacher has to be creative and to compensate for the lack of fun, even if the book is entitled *Grammar is fun* (Paidos 1997, 2001). A book with such a title would have at least jokes about grammar or funny explanations, or a cute character explaining grammar in a way meant to put a smile on the young learners' faces. This one is definitely not the case. As a matter of fact, the book under discussion is just as dull as any other school grammar book.

Other books such as *Grammar Booster* (Roderick 2002) open the lessons with a very short, but funny cartoon introducing the grammar item to be taught. The explanations, though, look nothing like a story. The fact that the dialogues between a smart dog and his not very smart human friend are also provided in the form of audio files may be a plus, but not necessarily. A good teacher, with a little bit of acting talent, can do a better job, especially in those classrooms where there is no CD-player.

Being a classroom book preferred by many teachers, *Round-up* (Evans 2005) has more colourful drawings, some of them depicting funny situations and characters, but the grammar is presented in the same dull, schematic way, as if all the children were philology specialists used to work with tables. Tables are useful, but they have a story behind them most of the times. Our explanations are adapted to the magical age of childhood, where the presence of superheroes and other fantastic beings help young learners understand grammar. Talking about magic, there is a book for elementary students whose title is *Magic English* (Mateciuc 2007), but the only magical thing about it is that the explanations disappeared completely. It is up to the teacher to explain when to add letter *s* in the case of Present Simple, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, and especially why.

It is not the aim of this research paper to make a list of all the books which do not present grammar through stories. It is enough to say that, after using or trying to use tens of textbooks, over the years, we have not seen such a book, yet. The stories and the handouts we use in the classroom are our own. A more serious thing is that, unfortunately, the grammar-translation method is still used on a large scale, at least in Romania. This is a very old method which, according to Vizental, has principles and techniques "similar to those used for teaching 'dead' languages such as Latin or Greek" (2008: 28) and which needs to be combined with other methods since the mentioned method is "doomed to fail" (id. *ibid.*).

Going the extra mile works very well with some classical methods of teaching. Behaviourism, for instance, is one of the methods which has excellent results after the students have understood the mechanism behind the grammar item. Generally speaking, the English textbooks do not have enough grammar exercises so that they could build what we call 'linguistic reflexes' in students. Teachers all over the world must come up with new exercises, found in books of grammar exercises or designed by them



because, with no exception, children constantly forget grammar markers such as the letter *-s* at the end of the verbs in the Present Simple for the third person singular, the *-ing* ending in the case of continuous tenses, changing the second form of the verb with the first form of the verb in the presence of the auxiliary verb *did* and so on. We have found it very useful to support the stories explaining the grammar items mentioned above with gestures suggesting them. The results have always been astonishing. The children not only make the necessary changes when they see the gestures, but they also prove that they understand the process, in their own way. As Marin puts it, understanding is one of the main features of behaviourism: "când se formează o legătură ori o asociere, aceasta reprezintă, desigur, cunoașterea problemei, cunoașterea relațiilor diferite care există în lumea exterioară; dar când le folosești data viitoare, aceasta este ceea ce numim intuiție. Cu alte cuvinte, aceasta înseamnă utilizarea cunoașterii, utilizarea legăturii dobândite" (Marin 2018: 151).

Some stories were doubled by other stories to correct common errors. For instance, the students were told a story in which the verb *did* was a shark which could feed on one kind of words only: the Past Simple or the second form of the verbs. When this shark entered, the second forms of the verbs (a.k.a. the Older Brothers) swam away in a split second. Moving the hand in such a manner as to suggest a shark swimming triggered in our students the reflex of changing the Older Brothers with the first form of the verbs, because they were those little fish swimming along with the shark and helping it keep the skin clean. Some of the students use the Past Simple of verbs in the presence of *did* only to see the hand imitating the swimming of a shark and to hear us making noises meant to suggest a thriller movie. They had fun and considered practicing English as a game, as something entertaining, but what really happens is that they prove to be aware of the necessary changes to be made.

For continuous tenses, the *-ing* ending became the tail of a dog. The story says that verbs liked to play a lot, but did not have human friends to throw the ball or a Frisbee. The God of the English Language accepted to play with them, but only if they accepted to wag their tails every time he threw the Frisbee. The verbs accepted and the God of the English Language brought his Frisbees: *am*, *are*, *is*, *was*, and *were*. When the students had to make sentences in the Present Continuous Tense and forgot one of the two grammar markers, all we had to do was to make gestures suggesting throwing a Frisbee or wagging the tail, depending on the forgotten marker. Most of the time, children who learned Present Continuous, for example, forgot the *-ing* ending, but quickly remembered it when they saw their teacher wagging an imaginary tail. Many of the students made the same gesture without being told to do so. It was their way of having fun and of showing us that they understood the necessity of using the "tail" represented by those three letters (i.e. *-ing*). Following a proverb which says that there is more than one way to skin a cat, the stories and the gestures may vary from teacher to teacher, if they have enough imagination to come up with their own fantastic explanations and the suggestive gestures. This is what going the extra mile is about. This and the effort of turning into an actor able to captivate the audience with the body language and the inflections in their voices.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The world is in an ever changing course and so are the teaching methods, but some things are still as they were at the beginning of the world, such as playing and listening to stories with fantastic characters. TRIZ or "the science of inventions" (TRIZ being "the Russian acronym for the Theory of Inventive Problem solving developed by Genrich Altshuller" (Vizental 2008: 50) may be a method suitable for all ages, "from children to rocket scientists" (Sidorchuck and Khomenko 2006, qtd. in Vizental 2008: 51), but stories will always be preferred by the majority of children and maybe by some scientists, too. In a world where children have to learn abstract things such as mathematics, and very down-to-earth concepts such as money, measuring time, gravity, friction forces etc., stories are their getaway vehicle. The great success the cartoons and animated movies have proves that children (and not only them) relate to fantastic worlds in which everything is possible. If a mouse can defeat a cat every time, if a man becomes very strong after eating the spinach from a can, then why not having verbs running over the fields, having fun and being happy that Mr. Do helps them make questions? English is not just a foreign language any longer. It is a means of communication in the modern world and learning it from early ages is an advantage. The grammar-translation method is anachronic, belonging to times which have long been gone.

“Earlier in this century, this method was used for the purpose of helping students read and appreciate foreign language literature. It was also hoped that, through the study of grammar of the target language, students would become more familiar with the grammar of their native language and that this familiarity would help them speak and write their native languages better. Finally, it was thought that foreign language learning would help students grow intellectually; it was recognized that students would probably never use the target language, but the mental exercise of learning it would be beneficial anyway” (Larsen-Freeman 2000: 11).

The twenty-first century finds the planet in a process of globalization through a language used in commerce, tourism, computers, music and movies to name a few human activities. In spite of this, the methods of teaching it have changed very little. Behind eye-catching drawings and short – sometimes funny, too – dialogues, we find the same method of learning grammar formulae and tables by heart, without explaining why. In essence, young students get the same unuttered answer to the questions they ask every time they are asked to change the form of the verb or to add an ending: why? The unuttered answer is “Because I said so!” The students will mechanically apply rules, and they will eventually speak correctly, but because of all the rules which seem to defy logic (why would you use the second form of the verb in an affirmative sentence in the Past Simple Tense, but not use it in the interrogative sentence?!) children do not grow fond of grammar and even have the tendency to reject it.

The Chinese experiment and all the handouts we have been using for years and years have proved that teaching grammar through stories has better results. The children have fun listening to the stories and understand why they need to do all those changes in order to make grammatically correct sentences. It goes without saying that the explanations are not the scientific ones, but ask the children if they care. As long as the children are very young (elementary school), they need to develop communication skills in English, speaking this language correctly. The scientific facts about tenses, for example, are for university students who study English in order to become specialists in philology sciences, but if they want to become teachers of English and to teach elementary school students, they should be ready to tell their students stories. Unfortunately, they will have to make their own stories because the editors of English textbooks for children forgot how they learned a lot of important things when they were little: through stories teaching them how to behave, how to love their family, how to be good, how to eat vegetables, how to treat animals, how not to kill insects just for the sake of killing etc. A world in which grammar books consist of stories explaining grammar rules without naming them “rules” would be a better world. Until then, teachers are on their own.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- [1] Bălan R., A. Cehan, C. Ciută, M. Dascălu, E. Gheorghiu, E. Olaru In-service Distance Training Course For Teachers of English. British Council, Polirom: București, 2001.
- [2] Celce-Murcia, M. Grammar Pedagogy in Second and Foreign Language Teaching, in TESOL Quarterly, vol. 25, No. 3, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: USA, 1991.
- [3] Larsen-Freeman, D. Teaching Language: From Grammar to Grammmaring. Heinle & Heinle: Boston, MA, 2001.
- [4] Marin, T. Pedagogie. Pro Universitaria: București, 2018.
- [5] Sidorchuck, T. and N. Khomenko Thoughtivity for Kids: Developing Creativity, Imagination, Problem Solving and Language in Ages 3-8, Through TRIZ and Other Innovation Methods; a Study Manual for Teachers of Preschoolers and Pre-service Teachers, Goal/QPC, 2006.
- [6] Vizental, A. Metodica predării limbii engleze. Strategies of Teaching and Testing English as a Foreign Language. Polirom: București, 2008.

## **CORPUS**

- [7] Evans, V. Round-up Starter. Pearson Education Limited: China, 2005.
- [8] Mateiciuc, I. Magic English. Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, R.A.: București, 2007.
- [9] Paidos C. and C.D. Paidos Grammar is fun. Polirom: Iași, 1997.
- [10] Paidos C. and C.D. Paidos Grammar is fun. Polirom: București, 2001.
- [11] Roderick, M. Grammar Booster 1. New Editions: Oxford and Athens, 2002.


**WEB SOURCES**

- [12] [http://tesol.aua.am/tq\\_digital/TQ\\_DIGIT/VOL\\_25\\_3.PDF#page=92](http://tesol.aua.am/tq_digital/TQ_DIGIT/VOL_25_3.PDF#page=92)
- [13] Pedagogic Grammar and Second Language Acquisition, at <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/cels/essays/secondlanguage/atkins2.pdf>
- [14] Poetry Foundation, at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46952/hey-diddle-diddle>, at [https://en.islcollective.com/resources/search\\_result?Tags=simple%20past%20song&search\\_work\\_sheet=GO&type=Printables](https://en.islcollective.com/resources/search_result?Tags=simple%20past%20song&search_work_sheet=GO&type=Printables)


**APPENDIX 1. MR DO TO THE RESCUE – PRACTICE**

**Mr. DO To The Rescue!**


I am Mr. DO, a very strong verb!




I eat. Eat I? I eat not.




Help, help! Please, Mr. DO, help us!



DO I eat? 

I eat.

I DO not eat. 

Thank you, Mr. Do, you are a real hero!

I = eu You = tu He = el She = ea It = el/ea (things, animals) We = noi You = voi They = ei/ele

**Exercise 1. Put Mr. DO in front of the following sentences to ask questions.**

- a. You play computer games every Sunday. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. We ride our bicycles every afternoon. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. They watch television every evening. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Johnny and Vicky go to school five days a week. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I have a story book. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. You like reading. \_\_\_\_\_
- g. They watch cartoons. \_\_\_\_\_
- h. We fly kites. \_\_\_\_\_


Always REMEMBER:  
 S + V = I eat apples every day.  
 DO + S + V = DO I eat apples?


**Exercise 2. Take Mr. DO and little NOT to say “no”. Use the sentences in Exercise 1.**


- Example: a. You **do not** (don't) play computer games every Sunday. b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ g. \_\_\_\_\_
- h. \_\_\_\_\_
- Notice this: **do + not = don't**. Okay?

Hey, what about us?!


**He** **She** **It**




He eats. She eats. It eats. 


Do he eats? Do she eats? Do it eats? 


Okay, I will help you. Give me your “s” and letter “e”.




**Mr. DO To the Rescue! Again! With “s” and “e”! What a team!**


Does he eat? 


Does she eat? 

Does it eat? 

He eats. She eats. It eats.

He doesn't eat. 

She doesn't eat. 

It doesn't eat. 

Thank you, Mr DO, letters “s” and “e”! You are real heroes!

**Notice: does + not = doesn't. He doesn't, she doesn't, it doesn't.**

Always REMEMBER: S + Vs = He eats apples. She eats apples. It eats apples.  
 Do + es + S + V = Does he eat apples? Does she eat apples? Does it eat apples?



APPENDIX 2

SIXTH GRADE - UNIT 4 - Not just another Halloween Story – The Monstenses Attack



It is Saturday afternoon. Brian fell asleep on the sofa, in the living room. He was reading a book and books usually make him sleepy... He soon started dreaming.

He was in the middle of the forest, surrounded by six knights on floating...skateboards, but the skateboards were not shining.

"I am looking at you, now, Brian, asking you to help me, but you are doing nothing", Sir Present Continuous said. His skateboard, made of To Be1 and Ving, was dirty.

"Yes, I looked for you yesterday, but you were not here. What did you do yesterday, why didn't you help me?" Sir Past Simple asked. His skateboard, made of V2 and Did + V1 was dusty.

"When I was looking for you, yesterday, you were watching television, you were not helping anybody", Sir Past Continuous reproached him from his scratched skateboard made of To Be2 and Ving.



"Yes, he never helps us. He likes to sit and do nothing all day. He doesn't think of the others", Sir Present Simple completed. His skateboard, made of V1(s) and Do/Does was worn out.

"I do not think that he is going to do anything to help us, and I am his newest friend!", Sir To-Be-Going-To Future said. His skateboard, made of To Be1 + going to + Ving was wrinkled.

"He will help us, I promise", Sir Future Simple said. "He will wake up and he will help us. If not, we will attack him!" His skateboard, made of will and V1, was filthy.

Brian was paralyzed. He could not move a muscle. The six knights grew angrier and angrier. They came closer and closer. The distance between them was shorter and shorter. The dream was getting longer and longer. The story became less and less interesting, and more and more annoying, so Brian woke up screaming:

"Make up your mind, monsters, are we going to do tenses or talk about adjectives?"

"You had a nightmare, dear", his mother told him. "You should not read horror stories before falling asleep" she said and took away his book.



Activity 1. Match the knights with the boxes by writing the correct number on them. Do not make mistakes, or the knights will attack!

1. Sir Present Simple 2. Sir Past Simple 3. Sir Past Continuous 4. Sir Present Continuous

S + to be1 + Ving  
 To be 1 + S + Ving?  
 S + to be1 NOT + Ving  
 Now, right now, at this moment etc.

S + V2  
 Did + S + V1?  
 S + did NOT + V1  
 Yesterday, long time ago, last month etc.

S + V1(s)  
 Do(es) + S + V1?  
 S + do(es) not + V1  
 Every day, never, once a week, seldom etc.

S + to be2 + Ving  
 To be2 + S + Ving?  
 S + to be2 NOT + Ving  
 Yesterday at 5 p.m., when the rain started etc.



**MCDSARE: 2019**  
**International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the**  
**Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education**

**A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH**

**Antoanela Marta Mardar (a)\***

**Iulian Mardar (b)**

(a) Lecturer PhD, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Galati, Romania, Antoanela.Mardar@ugal.ro,

(b) PhD Student, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Galati, Romania, iulian19722002@yahoo.com,  
Romania,

***Abstract***

Starting from the fact that sentences are part and parcel of human communication, irrespective of the language under discussion, and that their form and meaning may vary to a great extent depending on the speaker's intentions of communication, the present paper aims at approaching the multifaceted nature of interrogative sentences (also questions) in English by taking into discussion possible definitions and classifications of such sentences, their morphologic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic features and the ways in which (some of) these features favour a series of (common) mistakes on the part of non-native speakers of English, in general, and of Romanian speakers, in particular. The ultimate aim of such an approach is, on the one hand, to raise the learners' awareness with respect to the complex nature of questions in English, and to suggest a linguistically integrative approach to teaching questions in English to upper-intermediate and advanced learners, on the other.

**Keywords:** direct questions; disjunctive questions; indirect questions; indirect speech acts; intonation.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Sentences are generally agreed to be the basic syntactic unit used by people in communication. Depending on the messages to be conveyed, people may choose to express their thoughts and feelings by creatively combining a wide range of formally and semantically diverse sentences.

The complex and multifaceted nature of sentences is illustrated by the fact that specialists in various fields such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics or Neuro Linguistic Programming, among others, approach the possible relationships existing between the speakers' linguistic choices in the process of communication and their specific behaviour or personal and professional development. Sentences are also taken into discussion by researchers operating in various branches of linguistics such as: phonetics, morphology, semantics, pragmatics and stylistics, but the fact remains that sentences are traditionally an inherent part of syntax. The specialists' constant interest in the formal and semantic characteristics of sentences has favoured a series of interesting definitions and classifications, illustrative for the gradual move from traditional approaches to modern (structuralist and generative transformational) ones.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

**2.1.** Traditional syntax defines the **sentence** as “an expression of a thought or feeling by means of a word or words used in such a form and manner as to convey the meaning intended” (Curme 1931: 1, qtd. in Croitoru 2002: 6). Reference is also made to the fact that a **sentence** may be represented by “a group of words which makes complete sense” (Eckersley 1963, qtd. in id. *ibid*), or by a unit “which contains a complete utterance formed according to a definite pattern” (Zandvort 1961 qtd. in id. *ibid*).

Different from the specialists embracing the traditional approach to sentences, the structuralist ones, who consider that **sentences** represent “the largest unit of grammatical description” (Lyons 1985, qtd. in id. *ibid*.) focus on their formal independence and on the distributional properties and dependences which may be established within them. For instance, Bloomfield (1933, qtd in id.: 7), defines the **sentence** as “a grammatical unit between the constituent parts of which there exist distributional limitations and dependences, but which can itself be put into no distributional class”. The same view is made explicit by Palmer (1986 qtd. in id. *ibid*.) who states that a **sentence** is “the largest unit to which we can assign a grammatical structure”.

Last, but not least, the generative transformational view that grammar “specifies the infinite set of well-formed sentences and assigns to each of these one or more structural descriptions” (Chomsky 1965, qtd. in id.: 7-8) brings to the fore a new approach to **sentences**, which are regarded as the basic units of syntax, a linguistic level placed between morphology and semantics. In fact, generative transformational models integrate the morphological level into the syntactic one. The boundaries existing between these two levels may be easily effaced since they both operate with units of form, i.e. with words and sentences, respectively.

**2.2.** As regards the possible classification of **sentences**, reference is most often made to sentence typologies conditioned by their **form/structure**, by their **semantic content**/the speakers’ **purpose of communication** and by their **status** or **grammatical dependence** (Bantaş 1996: 81). Although the **structure** of a question may vary from simple to complex and the **subordination** relationship is relevant when approaching **indirect** questions, special attention will be devoted to the semantic classification of sentences in English which clarifies the linguistic and communicative function of **interrogative** sentences in contrast with the declarative, imperative and exclamatory ones.

Thus, specialists consider that speakers use **declarative sentences** (affirmative or negative) when conveying information, **interrogative sentences** when requesting information, **imperative sentences** when trying to determine somebody to do something by issuing commands, by making requests or by giving advice and **exclamatory sentences** when expressing feelings and emotions which denote either positive attitudes (e.g. admiration, enthusiasm, joy, surprise, happiness, satisfaction, etc.) or negative ones (e.g. horror, terror, disgust, dissatisfaction, disappointment, regret, sadness, grief, etc.) (Croitoru 2002: 13-21). Referring to the same typology, Bantaş (1996) states that **declarative sentences** (also called statements) are used to affirm, state or declare something (positive or negative) usually without any emotional implications, **interrogative sentences** are expressions of the speaker’s/writer’s curiosity, **imperative sentences** include commands proper, requests or invitations and **exclamatory** sentences denote positive or negative attitudes. (Bantaş 1996: 82, 83, 86)

**2.3.** Focussing on **interrogative** sentences, mention should be made that such sentences may be further classified into categories which combine relevant semantic aspects and formal restrictions. Moreover, there are instances in which linguistic variation in one and the same type of interrogative sentence allows for a different contextual interpretation on the part of the speaker or implies relevant differences in terms of register or variety of English. For instance, the speakers’ pragmatic interpretation of **tag questions** is agreed to change considerably when switching from **rising** to **falling** intonation. If the former type of intonation expresses the speakers’ uncertainty regarding the truth of their statement, the latter will point to the speakers’ need to have a confirmation on the part of their interlocutors. Moreover, deviation from the standard word order in questions may be favoured by the speakers’ need to use American English (*You know him?*), rather than British English (e.g. *Do you know him?*), or by their need to adapt the structure of their questions to an informal rather than to a formal context.

**Interrogative sentences** or **questions** are “expressions of the speaker’s curiosity” (Bantaş 1996: 83) and such sentences are commonly selected in order to request information, generally implying that an answer is expected. Considering the formal and semantic specificity of interrogative sentences in

English, specialists (Bantas 1996, Croitoru 2002) refer to the following types of questions: **general/yes-no questions, special/ particular/ wh-questions, alternative questions, tag/ disjunctive questions** and **declarative questions**.

**2.3.1. Yes-no questions** (also **general questions**) are interrogative sentences to which an affirmative (yes) or negative (no) answer is expected. Such questions require a subject - operator inversion, the do-periphrasis being used in the case of present and past tense verb forms. As regards yes - no questions in which other tenses are used, inversion needs to be operated between the (modal) auxiliary verb, which is visible in the surface structure of the sentence, and the subject.

When asking yes-no questions, certain choices (e.g. the use of assertive forms rather than non - assertive ones) highlight the speakers' preference for the positive or negative orientation of the interrogative sentence:

- e.g. *Did you buy something for Mary?* (Is it true that you bought something for Mary?)  
*Didn't you buy her a present?* (Is it really true that you did not buy her a present?)

Moreover, relevant pragmatic differences may be noted when speakers make specific morphologic choices in yes-no questions. For example, the use of **any** and its derivatives in such questions, rather than of **some** and its corresponding derivatives is contextually relevant because the former will be selected in instances in which speakers require information from their interlocutors, whereas the latter will be used when speakers need a confirmation regarding something they assert to be true:

- e.g. *Did anyone tell her the news?* (I do not know if anyone told her the news and I expect you to tell me – the speaker requires information)  
*Did someone tell her the news?* (I assert somebody told her the news – the speaker requires confirmation)

**Some** and its derivatives are also used in yes-no questions to express **offers**, e.g. *Would you like some biscuits?* or **requests**: e.g. *Can you lend me some money?* These are examples of indirect speech acts because speakers use questions not in order to obtain information from the interlocutors, but in order to offer something to or request something from somebody.

**2.3.2. Wh-questions** (also **special/particular**) are sentences introduced by such interrogative words (pronouns, adjectives, adverbs) as: **who, whose, whom, what, which, when, where, how, why**. Speakers use **wh- questions** when they need to obtain specific information regarding the doer of the action, the possessor of one or more objects, the place or time of the action, the manner in which the action is performed, or the reason why an action takes place, among others. To put it differently, question words are used with reference to different parts of the sentence or clause elements, thus having different syntactic functions:

- e.g. *Who told you that?* (subject)  
*Which dictionary did you buy?* (direct object)  
*Who(m) did you send the parcel to?* (indirect object)  
*How wide did they make the cupboard?* (objective complement)  
*When will they come back?* (adverbial modifier of time)  
*Where do they live?* (adverbial modifier of place)  
*How much does she know about this?* (adverbial modifier of intensification)  
*How often does she go there?* (adverbial modifier of frequency)

Similarly to **yes-no questions**, **wh-questions** used to obtain specific information regarding the predicate, the objects (direct, indirect and prepositional) and the adverbial modifiers (manner, place, time, reason, etc.) require subject -operator inversion. This is not the case of **wh-questions** used to inquire about the subject or the attributes describing it.

Regarding questions introduced by **what** or **who**, they may prove problematic and difficult to approach because the two **interrogative pronouns** may be used to require specific information about both the subject (*What happened there?/ Who knows the truth?*) and the object in a sentence. In the former situation there is no inversion between the subject and the corresponding auxiliary verb, whereas in the latter (*What did they expect to find there? /Who(m) were they talking about?/*) subject - operator inversion is compulsory.

When the **question word** is part of a prepositional phrase, the preposition may be placed either at the beginning, or at the end of the question, the two grammatically correct variants being different only in terms of register:

e.g. *About whom were they talking?* (formal English)  
*Whom were they talking about?* (informal/ colloquial English)

**Wh-questions** may be intensified for stylistic effects and may thus acquire an emotive value when combined with such emphatic structures as: *on earth, the hell, for god's/ heaven's sake, ever* or, as Stannard (1977: 198 qtd. in Croitoru 2002: 18 ) suggests, with “stronger expressions” such as: “*the dickens, the devil, the blazes*”:

e.g. *Who on earth did this?*  
*Why on earth are they looking at me like that?*  
*Who the hell do you think you are?*  
*When for god's sake did he go there?*

**Ever** is commonly used in colloquial interrogations to emphasize the speakers' surprise, consternation, or annoyance, in such cases stress being laid on both the question word and on **ever**:

e.g. *'Who 'ever was she looking for?*  
*'What 'ever are they trying to do?*

However, such examples are not to be confused with or mistaken for those in which **whoever** and **whatever** are relative pronouns:

e.g. *Whoever they may be, I cannot accept their offer.*  
*Whatever she may say, nothing can be changed now.*

Last but not least, mention should be made that speakers often prefer using abbreviated **wh-questions** made up of a question word and a final preposition (e.g. *Where from?*) or of the question word only (e.g. *What?*) in colloquial contexts as such questions greatly simplify their oral communication.

Referring to abbreviated questions as automatic question responses to statements, Stannard (1977, qtd in id.: 19) groups them into two main categories:

1. Where the agent or prepositional part of the command is missing, and the response asks for further clarification. Such questions are uttered with a falling tone, the preposition taking end position, and emphasis falling on it as the active agent:

e.g. *Go quickly → Where to?*  
*Open it → What with?*

2: Responses of surprise, consternation or mere misunderstanding of the complete sense in which the whole idea is questioned and repeated with the accent on the question word which takes final position. Such questions are uttered with a rising tone:

e.g. *Open the bottle with this pin.*  
*With what?*

Yes-no questions and wh-questions function sometimes as **rhetorical questions**, being associated with contexts in which speakers do not expect any answer from their interlocutor(s). In such cases the corresponding interrogative sentences represent merely an inner thought or troubling issue to which speakers hope to find an answer themselves:

e.g. *Have I done something wrong?*  
*What have I done to deserve this?*  
*Who might have stolen my wallet?*

If inversion is operated in **rhetorical questions** observing the corresponding grammatical principles, the subject – operator inversion is never visible in the so-called **indirect (embedded) questions** which observe the standard word order used in declarative sentences:

e.g. *He asked me why I had left so early.*

The grammatically wrong sentence \**He asked me why had I left so early* where inversion is operated is commonly encountered with speakers unaware of the morphologic changes undertaken by the words introducing **indirect questions**. They are no longer **interrogative** pronouns, adjectives or adverbs, but **relative** ones, as they establish a syntactic (dependency) relationship between the main (also regent) clause and the subordinate clause they introduce.

**2.3.3. Alternative questions** are sentences by means of which speakers imply the idea of choice to one of the two or more alternatives mentioned in the question: e.g. *Would you like milk or tea?* Reference is usually made to two types of alternative questions, one resembling yes-no questions (see the example above) and the other resembling **wh-questions**: e.g. *Which would you like: coffee, tea, or water?* However, different from **yes/no questions**, which have a final rising tone, **alternative questions** imply a



rising tone on each item and a falling tone on the last one so as to show that the enumeration is complete:

e.g. **Yes-no:** *Shall I bring you some beer or wine (↗)?*

**Alternative:** *Shall I bring you some beer, (↗) wine (↗) or water (↘)?*

Referring to **alternative questions**, Bantaş (1996: 84) groups them into "limited/ finite questions which have the nature of a closed list, of a limitative enumeration and unlimited/open questions, which have the nature of an illustrative/exemplifying enumeration".

**Alternative questions** may be formed, as well, by adding a matching negative clause or the structure **or not?** to the positive **yes-no questions:** *Are you coming (or aren't you)?/ Are you coming (or not)?*

**2.3.4. Tag questions** (also **disjunctive/ tail questions**) are used when speakers expect a confirmation of the truth of their statement. Negative tag questions are appended to affirmative statements, whereas negative statements are followed by affirmative tag questions. A falling tone is used for both parts of the sentence when the statement expresses an assumption and the tag question expresses an expectation. On the other hand, a falling tone in the statement sentence followed by a rising tone in the tag question will imply the speakers' uncertainty about the truth of the statement:

e.g. *He likes pizza (↘), doesn't he (↘)?* (I know he likes pizza and I need confirmation)

*He likes pizza (↘), doesn't he (↗)?* (I do not know if he likes pizza. I need you to tell me)

Since the affirmative or negative form of the verb in the tag question is conditioned by the affirmative or negative meaning of the statement, special attention should be paid to the various means of expressing negation in English.

The use of **negative adverbs** such as: *hardly, scarcely, seldom, rarely, never* will always require an affirmative tag question:

e.g. *He has never talked to her, has he?*

*He is hardly a reliable friend, is he?*

The noun determiners **little** and **few**, which are semantically negative, meaning 'not enough', are used with positive tags, whereas their semantically positive corresponding forms **a little** and **a few** are followed by negative tag questions:

e.g. *Few people take such risks, do they?*

*He has a few friends, doesn't he?*

In examples such as: *I don't think (that) she is your best friend, is she?* the absence of negation in the tag is explained with reference to the negative particle used in the independent clause, which applies semantically to the that-clause. In such cases of transferred negation, the subject of the tag question is taken from the subordinate clause, not from the main one.

Last, but not least, statements including the adverb **only** may be followed by either positive or negative tags, but the positive ones are usually preferred, given the restrictive meaning implied in this adverb:

e.g. *He was the only person found guilty, was he?*

*He was the only person found guilty, wasn't he?*

Considering the simple present (affirmative or negative) the verb **to be** for the first person singular, the aspect should be pointed out that this form is hardly ever used in tag questions, because it is considered too formal. Consequently, the form **are** will be preferred when the personal pronoun I is combined with the simple present of the verb **to be** in the statement preceding the tag question (Thomson and Martinet 1986: 113):

e.g. *I am rather short to play basketball, aren't I?*

*I am not playing tennis too well, are I?*

As far as possible **subject** restrictions in tag questions are concerned, more or less complex noun phrases used to denote the subject of the proposition in the statement, must be replaced by the corresponding pronoun which is co-referential<sup>42</sup> with the subject: e.g. *My sister's best friend from secondary school got married, didn't she?*

Existential statements built with the introductory **there** must preserve this impersonal subject in

<sup>42</sup> Co-reference is a semantic property which establishes the relation between the noun phrases from the two sentences on a basis of equivalence.

the tag question: e.g. *There is something intriguing about that boy, isn't there?*

Instead of a conclusion, there is also a less common type of tag question in which both the statement and the question are positive, the tag always having a rising intonation: e.g. *You have had many financial problems, have you? / So she is your best friend, is she? / These are his ways, are they?* Such tag questions are used when speakers want to express their sarcasm, suspicion or irony regarding the statement made.

**2.3.5. Declarative questions**, included by some specialists in the classification of declarative sentences, and by others in the classification of interrogative ones, are formally identical with a statement, but have a final rising intonation which is specific to interrogative sentences:

e.g. *You passed the exam?* ( ↗ )

Such questions are not used in formal British or American English, but they are quite frequent in informal or colloquial contexts and in American English, in particular.

**Declarative questions** logically resemble statements because the corresponding auxiliary/ main verbs which take front position in standard questions are omitted by speakers for the sake of communicating efficiently and the subject – operator inversion is no longer visible in the surface structure of the sentence.

Let us consider a few examples from the famous film *Taxi Driver* directed by the Martin Scorsese and released in 1976:

PERSONNEL OFFICER (O.S.): *No trouble with the Hack Bureau?*

TRAVIS (O.S.): No Sir.

PERSONNEL OFFICER (O.S.): *Got your license?*

TRAVIS (O.S.): Yes. (Schrader: 2) [...]

[...] TRAVIS: *You kiddin?* Who else would hack through South Bronx or Harlem at night?

PERSONNEL OFFICER: *You want to work uptown nights?* (Schrader: 3) [...]

[...] TRAVIS: *What is your name?* My name is Travis.

CONCESSION GIRL: Awh, come off it, Pal.

TRAVIS: No, I'm serious, really...

CONCESSION GIRL: *Ya want me to call da boss?* Huh? *That what you want?* (Schrader: 9)

Given the very informal context and the variety of English used by the characters, i.e. American English, the number of standard interrogative sentences in which subject-operator inversion is operated (*What is your name*) is significantly smaller than that of declarative questions in which the clause elements observe the word order specific to statements (*Got your license?*; *You kiddin?*; *You want to work uptown nights?*; *Ya want me to call da boss?*; *That what you want?*)

The examples in the latter category seem to be the simplified versions of the formally and grammatically correct questions:

*(Have you) Got your license?*

*(Are) You kiddin?*

*(Do) You want to work uptown nights?*

*(Do) Ya want me to call da boss?*

*(Is) That what you want?*

Whether such examples should be called **declarative questions** or **elliptical questions** is debatable and it is not an aspect to be clarified by the present paper. Nevertheless, different from **yes-no** and **wh- questions**, which most often favour mistakes regarding the subject operator inversion, **declarative questions** may prove very useful and accessible to certain non-native speakers of English such as Romanian, French, Italian and Spanish, among others, who may find relevant similarities between the structure of **interrogative** sentences in their native language and that of **declarative questions** in English. The sentences included in these two categories are marked by rising intonation, and by specific punctuation (question mark) these being the only elements to distinguish a **statement** proper from an **interrogative sentence** and a **declarative question**, respectively.

Questions in Chinese also observe the word order used in **declarative questions** the word “ma” being added at the end of a statement so as to indicate that it is a question:

e.g. *Nǐ shì Lǐ Xiānshēng.* → *You are Mr Lee.* VS.

*Nǐ shì Lǐ Xiānshēng ma?* → *Are you Mr. Li?*

An interesting aspect worth mentioning is the fact that the question particle **ma** is used only in **yes-no questions**, the wh-questions requiring the use of another particle: i.e. **ne**. In both cases, word order is identical to that used in declarative sentences.

Considering the **semantic content** and the **pragmatic function** of interrogative sentences, reference may be made to other typologies, which may be relevant in both oral and written communication. For instance, speakers may use **hypothetical** questions (e.g. *What would you do if you won the lottery?*) when they want their interlocutors to consider imaginary or hypothetical situations and **leading** questions when they want to obtain the answer they desire or when they want to induce a certain idea on their interlocutors: *What do you think of the terrible side effects of drugs?* (the speaker induces the idea that drugs have terrible side effects); *Were you with your family at the time of the crime?* (the speaker wants the interlocutor to confirm that he/she was with his/her family at the time of the crime). Such further typologies are an indicator of the wide variety of interpretations and functions that questions may have in different contexts and of their complex and multifaceted character.

### 3. ARGUMENT OF THE PAPER & ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE THESIS

The theoretical aspects regarding the types of sentences discussed in the present paper have been approached by various specialists who have focussed on a series of relevant morphologic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and/or stylistic aspects from a traditional, structuralist or generative transformational point of view. Most of the relevant morpho-syntactic aspects regarding sentences in English have been briefly explained in a series of accessible practical grammars, as well, which provide further extensive material for practicing sentence structure from a traditional point of view, in particular.

Practical grammars are mostly used by teachers working with primary, secondary and high school students, whereas theoretical studies are mostly used by university teachers working with undergraduate students, in particular. This may be a problematic aspect, since pre-university students have extensive practice without too much reference to the theoretical background supporting certain grammatical choices and university undergraduate students are mostly exposed to theoretical studies divided according to the common branches of linguistics (phonetics and phonology, lexicology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and/or stylistics) without being always helped to make connections and without having the chance to extensively practice, for instance, syntax notions from various perspectives, i.e. traditional, structuralist and generative transformational.

Under the circumstances, the present paper suggests that teachers should use a multi-faceted theoretical and practical approach to sentences in English which may prove very useful with both pre- and university students.

Pre-university students should be taught English grammar by comparing and contrasting the new notions in English with the corresponding grammar notions in Romanian and the approach should combine all the relevant phonologic, morphologic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic aspects. As regards university students, they should be required to possess fundamental traditional grammar knowledge in both English and Romanian when considering specialising in philology studies, so as to focus on other new (structuralist and generative transformational) multifaceted approaches to sentences from both a theoretical and a practical point of view.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

There is more to questions than meets the eye. Children are fascinated by questions and they discover the world around them by asking lots of questions. This may be regarded as a sign of intellectual progress and as a very important step in the evolution of human beings who are likely to become independent and aware of all the realities surrounding them if all their questions are rightly answered at the right time.

Moreover, questions, themselves, are a fascinating world, the human history being filled with questions of utmost importance, from general interrogations such as *Where do we come from? What was*

*there before the Big-Bang? Is there life after death?* to questions which have changed destinies, such as *Quo Vadis?*, or which have led to long lasting controversies: *Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani?*

Many questions have not been answered yet, but this should not make people lose hope. If a picture may be worth a thousand words, a question may be worth a thousand pages. A seemingly simple sentence such as: *To be or not to be?* may be and has been the starting point of greatly inspiring philosophical answers possibly covering hundreds of pages. This means that asking the right question is an aspect of utmost importance in communication and people should be familiar with all the relevant aspects which need to be taken into account when using interrogative sentences in their oral and written communication.

Given the great variety of theoretical and practical aspects to be considered in relation to the form and meaning of sentences, initially in one's native language, in our case Romanian, and subsequently in English as a foreign language, the extensive practice with pre-university students needs to be doubled by an appropriate and adequate theoretical background and the dominantly theoretical approach used with university students needs to be doubled by specific practice.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- [1] Bantaş A. Descriptive English Syntax, Iaşi: Institutul European. 1996.
- [2] Bloomfield, L. Language, New York: Holt, 1933 in Croitoru E. 2002. 7.
- [3] Chomsky, N. Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1965 in Croitoru E. 2002. 7-8.
- [4] Croitoru, E. The English Sentence Structure Galaţi: Editura Fundaţiei Universitare "Dunărea de Jos" Galaţi: 2002.
- [5] Curme, D. Syntax Boston: D.C Heath Company; 1931, p.1, in Croitoru, E. 2002. 6.
- [6] Eckersley, E.C. A Concise English Grammar for Foreign Students, England: Longman, 1963, in Croitoru, E. 2002. 6.
- [7] Lyons, J. Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics London: Cambridge University Press, 1985, in Croitoru, E. 2002. 7.
- [8] Palmer, F. Grammar (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Penguin Books 1986, in Croitoru, E. 2002.7.
- [9] Schrader Paul, Taxi Driver, the script, pp 2, 3, 9, [https://www.raindance.org/scripts/Taxi%20Driver %20script.pdf](https://www.raindance.org/scripts/Taxi%20Driver%20script.pdf) (consulted on 12 July 2019 at 2: 38 p.m.)
- [10] Stannard, A. W. Living English Structure London: Longman 1977, in Croitoru, E. 2002. 18, 19.
- [11] Thomson A. J. and A. V. Martinet. A Practical English Grammar. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- [12] Zandvort, R.W. A Handbook of English Grammar England: Longman, 1961 in Croitoru, E. 2002, 6.



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## (UN)QUESTIONABLE USE OF ANGLICISMS IN ROMANIAN COMPUTERESE

Iulia Cocu (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Associate Professor, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: niulia24@gmail.com

### *Abstract*

In recent years, due to the fact that, on the one hand, English has become a lingua franca of communication, being all-pervasive in fields such as economics, business, IT or medicine and, on the other hand, to the fact that technology has evolved at a very fast pace, new specialised terms have emerged in order to accommodate this rapid change, which more often than not do not have equivalents in other languages. The present paper is intended to present the influence that English has had over the specialised terminology in the field of computer science, focusing on the English language as a primary source for a great number of lexical and morphological innovations in the Romanian information technology-related vocabulary. The paper will demonstrate that, although the use of Anglicisms may be the only solution due to the untranslatability of the specialised computer science terms in some cases, there are also instances in which the respective terms can either be translated or have a phonetically and orthographically adapted Romanian equivalent. The conclusion of the study is that the Romanian language displays a natural general disposition towards adopting and adapting borrowed information technology terms to the detriment of their perfectly functional Romanian equivalents. Most often, the translation of the specialised terms occurs when the respective word is used by and widely known to the general public, whereas the very specialised English terms are adopted as such when they refer to specific branches of IT.

**Keywords:** Anglicisms; information technology; borrowings; vocabulary;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the increasing interest in achieving globalisation has led, from a linguistic point of view, to the tendency towards the prevalent use of English in numerous domains of activity, among which business, diplomacy, politics, higher education, medicine and the media.

On the other hand, the Romanian lexical system is characterised by an open character, a fact confirmed by the massive loans from different European languages such as English, French, Italian, German, Russian etc. in the last few decades. The specialised language of computer science, which plays an important and, at the same time, special part in this category of loans, is evolving at an astonishing pace, expanding worldwide at a scale which is difficult to match by any other domain, with an extremely high rate of innovation and renewal, most IT texts being written in English, which functions as a lingua franca in this domain, too. As a consequence of this very fast pace of renewal, the translation of most IT

terms poses a problem to many translators since the Romanian IT terminology can't always keep up with this evolution. That is the reason why most IT terms are translated into Romanian by using borrowings and calques, the more specialised the language the more borrowings and calques being used.

The present paper focuses on Anglicisms used in computer science and aims at providing a complex, yet not exhaustive, classification of these IT-based terms, the examples being selected mainly from English IT textbooks intended for computer science students and covering a wide range of areas in the field of IT such as hardware, software, databases, computer networks, or the Internet.

## 2. TERM TRANSLATION PATTERNS IN THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE OF IT.

In Vinay and Darbelnet's view (1958:85), borrowings or loans are commonly used in translation "to overcome a lacuna, usually a metalinguistic one (e.g. a new technical process, an unknown concept), borrowing being the simplest of all translation methods", whereas a calque is "a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements. The result is either i) a lexical calque (...), i.e. a calque which respects the syntactic structure of the TL, whilst introducing a new mode of expression or ii) a structural calque (...), which introduces a new construction into the language."

The Oxford Dictionaries mention the fact that the term *Anglicism* was first used in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and refers to an expression from English used in another language. According to DEX, an *anglicism* is "a specific English expression; a borrowed English word, without being necessary, in another language and not integrated into it." (our translation)

In the present paper, the term *Anglicism* includes both words of English origin, which are in the process of assimilation and terms which have not been fully adapted to the Romanian language rules.

According to Postolea (2017:169), whose classification will be used to group the approximately 250 IT terms, provided by the author of the present paper, computer science Anglicisms may be classified into three further categories, depending on their degree of naturalisation in Romanian, namely: full loans, acclimatised loans and assimilated loans.

### 2.1. FULL LOANS

As Sorina Postolea puts it, loanwords "which are used with the least possible amount of adaptation to and integration into the phonological, spelling or grammatical systems of Romanian (...) may be defined as pure or full borrowings." (2017: 169)

A common feature of all full loans introduced into Romanian is the fact that they are used as invariable forms, their transfer involving a transference of meaning, of structural-morphological and grammatical features. Therefore, for instance, although Romanian adjectives are variable and agree in gender, number and case with the nouns they determine, the IT adjectival forms borrowed from English are invariable, regardless of the form of the nouns they determine: *wireless*, *online*, *wi-fi*, *multimedia*, *flash*, *smart*.

In their turn, full loans are divided into: full words, acronyms and appellations.

In the subcategory of full loans, one may mention terms such as: *browser*, *web*, *server*, *applet*, *hyperlink*, *hypertext*, *click*, *enter*, *link*, *cookie*, *website*, *tag*, *bit*, *byte*, *mouse*, *laptop*, *pixel*, *router*, *cache*, *modem*, *switch*, *hub*, *blu-ray (disk)*, *hotspot*, *online*, *scroll*, *gadget*, *bluetooth*, *hardware*, *drive*, *script*, *bitcoin*, *caps lock*, *desktop*, *drag and drop*, *font*, (*memory*) *stick*, *hacker*, *driver*, *firewall*, *software*, *hard disk*, *spam*, *joystick*, *trackball*, *touch pad*, *phishing*, *podcast*, *buffer*, *cloud*, *e-mail*, *bug*, *plotter*, *card*, *template*, *host*, *backspace*, *blog*, *bold*, *shift*, *zoom*, *tutorial*, *glitch*, *widget*, *scanner*, *mainframe*, *chip*, *proxy*. An idiosyncrasy of this category is that some terms are exclusively used in the ICT domain, while others are taken from general English and transferred into computerese, but with a totally different meaning (*cloud*, *bug*, *script*, *host*, *cookie*, *tag*, *stick* etc.). *Cloud* is a term used in computing to describe services provided over a network by a collection of remote servers, providing massive, distributed storage and processing power, which can be accessed by any Internet-connected device running a web browser, *bug* denotes an error in a software program, *script* is a computer language with a series of commands within a file that is capable of being executed without being compiled, *host* is a computer or other device that communicates with other hosts on a network and it includes clients and servers that send or receive

data, services or applications. Furthermore, *cookie* denotes, in computer science, a small amount of data generated by a website and saved by a web browser, its purpose being to remember information about the user, similar to a preference file created by a software application, a *tag* indicates what should be displayed on the screen when the page loads, being the basic formatting tool used in HTML and other mark-up language, whereas a (*memory*) *stick* is a type of flash memory used to store data for digital cameras, camcorders and other kinds of electronics.

Full loans also include examples of acronyms or initialisms such as: *CPU* (*Central Processing Unit*), *GPU* (*Graphics Processing Unit*), *USB* (*Universal Serial Bus*), *IT&C* (*Information Technology and Communications*), *HD* (*High Definition*), *ASCII* (*American Standard Code for Information Interchange*), *SMS* (*Short Messaging Service*), *BIOS* (*Basic Input Output System*), *TCP/IP* (*Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol*), *JPEG* (*Joint Photographic Experts Group*), *HDMI* (*High Definition Multimedia Interface*), *SD* (*card*) (*Secure Digital*), *SSD* (*Solid State Drive*), *LAN* (*Local Area Network*), *MAN* (*Metropolitan Area Network*), *MPEG* (*Motion Picture Experts Group*), *3D* (*three dimensional*), *2D* (*two dimensional*), *CC* (*carbon copy*), *ISDN* (*Integrated Services Digital Network*), *POS* (*Point-of-sale*), *HTML* (*Hypertext Mark-up Language*), *http* (*hypertext transfer protocol*), *URL* (*Uniform Resource Locator*), *CD* (*Compact Disk*), *DVD* (*Digital Versatile Disk*), *PC* (*Personal Computer*), *RAM* (*Random Access Memory*), *ROM* (*Read-Only-Memory*), *www* (*worldwide web*), *HDD* (*Hard Disk Drive*), *LED* (*Light Emitting Diode*), *LCD* (*Liquid crystal Display*), *PIN* (*personal identification number*), *DBMS* (*Database Management System*), *PHP* (*Hypertext Pre-processor*), *SQL* (*Structured Query Language*), *FORTRAN* (*Formula Translator*), *ALGOL* (*Algorithmic Language*), *COBOL* (*Common Business-Oriented Language*), *XML* (*Extensible Mark-up Language*), *LISP* (*List Processing*), *MATLAB* (*Matrix Laboratory*), *BASIC* (*Beginners' Symbolic All-Purpose Instruction Code*), *IBM* (*International Business Machines*), *CPI* (*characters per inch*), *DPI* (*dots per inch*), *CRT* (*cathode ray tube*), *MIT* (*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*), *API* (*application programming interface*), *DNS* (*Domain Name Server*), *ORB* (*Object Request Broker*), *ISA* (*Instruction Set Architecture*), *IC* (*integrated circuit*), *ALU* (*Arithmetic and Logic Unit*), *SLI* (*Scalable Link Interface*).

The pronunciation of these acronyms or initialisms varies, some being pronounced as acronyms according to the Romanian phonology rules (*BIOS*, *LED*), others being pronounced according to the Romanian alphabet (*LCD*, *SSD*, *URL*, *PHP*, *HDMI* or *HDD*), others oscillating between the English and the Romanian pronunciation (*CPU*, *GPU*) and, finally, some others tending to keep their English pronunciation in Romanian, even in the case in which they receive Romanian inflectional marks: *PC*, *CD*, *DVD*, *IP*.

Appellations also represent a consistent share of the foreign lexical stock present in the Romanian language of IT. Among them, the most well-known are: *Mozilla*, *Chrome*, *Linux*, *Intel*, *AMD*, *ATI*, *NVIDIA*, *ASUS*, *Android*, *Facebook*, *Google*, *Microsoft*, *Borland*, *Apple*, *Oracle*, *Verbatim*, *Adobe*, *Yahoo*, *eBay*, *Hewlett Packard*, *Xerox*, *Dell*, *Adobe*, *Macintosh*, *Unix*.

## 2.2. ACCLIMATISED LOANS

Some of the above-mentioned full loans have also become acclimatised to Romanian, i.e. they received some of the phonological, spelling and/or grammatical features of their hosting language. According to Ciobanu (1996), the process of morphological adaptation of English loans precedes the phonological and graphemic one. Consequently, this type of loans keep their structural features as English words, but they also receive some enclitic determiners: *software-ul*, *disk-ul*, *hardware-ul*, *notebook-ul*, *display-ul*, *desktop-ul*, *site-ul*, *device-ul* etc.

Another type of terms which are introduced into Romanian as acclimatised loans are initialisms or acronyms such as: *HDD-ul*, *CPU-ul*, *LED-ul*, *USB-ul*, *PC-ul*, *CD-ul*, *DVD-ul*, *IP-ul*, *PIN-ul*.

## 2.3. ASSIMILATED LOANS

Assimilated loans show the highest degree of adaptation to the particularities of the Romanian language, suffering modifications in their spelling and grammatical features which make them resemble the Romanian words to a greater extent.

The largest category of assimilated loans is represented by common nouns. Assimilated loans are different from acclimatised loans. If in the former category the Romanian enclitic definite articles are

separated from the borrowed English word by a hyphen, in the latter one, they are usually spelt as a Romanian lexeme. Some examples of assimilated loans, using enclitic determiners are: *faxul, serverul, formatul, cardul, tonerul, tunerul, scannerul, clipul, cursorul, laserul, printerul*. Mention should be made that certain assimilated loans can exhibit plural morphemes like *-e* or *-uri*: *servere, foldere, tonere, laptopuri, carduri, clipuri* or proclitic determiners: *un/niște plotter(e), un/niște foldere, un/niște printere* etc.

Moreover, there are some orthographically unadapted English verbs (*to browse, to upload, to download, to upgrade, to update*), which conjugate observing the Romanian morphological rules. In addition, numerous verbs are often created from English verbs or nouns using derivative suffixes such as *-a*: *a boota, a formata, a se loga, a printa, a se mapa, a downloada, a uploada, a blura, a reseta, a updata, a upgrada, a customiza* or *-ui*: *a zipui, a chatui, a șerui*.

## 2.4. CALQUES

An accurate description of calques is provided by the *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. (p. 182) Unlike loans, which are imported from English through direct transfer, calques are the result of a process of translation. Humbley and Gomez Capuz divide calques into three main categories: homologues, analogues and homophones.

In the case of the first category, i.e. homologues, both words are similar in meaning, while the form is different. Here, one may talk of a translation proper. Some examples of homologues, which are usually semantic ones, include pairs such as: *bandwidth – lățime de bandă; computation – calcul; background – fundal; board – placă; to download – a descărca; tray – tavă; network – rețea; file – fișier; to surf – a naviga; screen – ecran; core – nucleu; frame – cadru; to debug – a depana; to emulate – a imita*. These semantic calques imply the transfer of a sememe or unity of meaning with the conditions that the word in the TL should be at least bi-semantic and that at least one of its meanings should correspond to the meaning of the loanword.

As far as analogues are concerned, they may be considered to have a much higher degree of literalness, which is illustrated by examples such as: *peripheral – periferic; application – aplicație; system – sistem; virus – virus; version – versiune; to operate – a opera; to install – a instala; port – port; memory – memorie; tablet – tabletă; menu – meniu; channel – canal; partition – partiție; to increment – a incrementa; redundant – redundant, to operate – a opera*.

In the third category, that of homophones, word pairs, according to Gomez-Capuz (1997: 86), are established “when both words only share the form, but without any similarity in meaning.” As a consequence, most TL terms are mistranslations of their SL correspondents, but they are nevertheless used as such in Romanian IT texts. Some examples of homophonic pairs include: *to capture* (to save the information currently displayed on the computer screen) – *a captura* (to seize an enemy, to catch a criminal, to loot or to entrap a wild animal); *resolution* (the number of pixels contained on a display monitor, expressed in terms of the number of pixels on the horizontal axis and the number on the vertical axis) – *rezoluție* (in Romanian, the term is used only in legal environments); *to support* (in IT, support refers either to functionality that is provided between or among products, programs, devices, modes or accessories or the personal assistance vendors provide to technicians and end users concerning hardware, operating systems and programs) – *a suporta* (the Romanian term is mainly used with the meaning of to bear, to endure, to suffer, to tolerate); *attachment* (a file – an image, video or text document – sent with an e-mail message) – *atașament* (a feeling of strong affection towards someone or something).

## 3. CONCLUSION

Computer science is an extremely dynamic field where new words appear on a daily basis. As a consequence, the number of Anglicisms retaining the English form in IT is continuously rising, English terms being chosen for their conciseness and conceptual accuracy. The above presentation of IT Anglicisms displays the Romanian language hospitality and openness towards foreign loans, the assimilation of Anglicisms illustrating a process of acceptance of Romanian inflections for gender, number, case or of definite and indefinite articles.

Borrowings and calques represent the first-line procedure when dealing with the translation of IT terminology and, although most of them are intended to fill a lexical gap in the domain, some other, such



as homophones, are questionably, if not incorrectly, translated into Romanian. One may also notice that in many instances in which an English IT term can be translated into Romanian, as there is a Romanian correspondent, the use of the English term is preferred, a few examples being: *printer (imprimantă)*, *device/gadget (dispozitiv)*, *login (autentificare)*, *bug (eroare)*, *background (fundal)*, *template (șablon)*, *delay (decalaj)*, *computer (calculator)*, *user (utilizator)*, *cancel (a anula)*, *gamer (jucător)*.

To conclude, one may assert that borrowings represent a normal phenomenon in the evolution of any language as they enrich it. IT&C Anglicisms as originated from English, which is definitely the dominant language of international business and global communication, help speakers and professionals in the domain keep up with the progress in information technology and communications. Thus, it is of an utmost importance to understand and accept this as a natural and irreversible process in the development of the Romanian language.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Ciobanu, G., *Anglicisme în limba română*, Timișoara: Amphora; 1996.
- [2] Fawcett P., *Translation and Language*, Manchester: St. Jerome; 1997.
- [3] Fedorov, A.V., *Vvedenie v teoriiu perevoda [Introduction to the Theory of Translation]*, Moscow: Literaturi na inostrannix iazikax; 1953.
- [4] Gomez Capuz J., *Towards a Typological Classification of Linguistic Borrowing*, *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*:81-94; 1997.
- [5] Humbley, J., Kubler, N., *Néologie d'origine, néologie de transfert: à la recherche d'une complémentarité [Neology of origin, neology of transfer: in search of complementarity]*, *Neology and specialised translation*, Brussels: 4<sup>th</sup> joint seminar organised by CVC and Termisti; 29 April 2011.
- [6] Postolea, S., *Translation Patterns at Term Level – A corpus-based analysis in the specialized language of ICT*, Iași: Institutul European; 2017.
- [7] Vinay, J.P., Darbelnet, J., *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais. Méthode de traduction [Comparative stylistics of French and English. A translation method]*, Paris: Didier; 1958.

## CORPUS

- [8] Brookes, M., Lagoutte, F., *Engleza pentru informatică*, București: Teora; 2001.
- [9] Cocu, I., *English for Information Technology (E4IT)*, Saarbrücken: Lambert; 2016.
- [10] Lagoutte, F., *1000 de cuvinte-cheie în informatică*, Iași: Compania; 2003.
- [11] Miu, C., *Engleza în informatica tehnică*, București: Editura Paralela 45; 2004.

## INTERNET SOURCES

- [12] <http://dexonline.ro>, last visited on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at 5:12 p.m.
- [13] [https://www.e-reading.club/bookreader.php/142124/Routledge\\_Dictionary\\_of\\_Language\\_and\\_Linguistics.pdf](https://www.e-reading.club/bookreader.php/142124/Routledge_Dictionary_of_Language_and_Linguistics.pdf), visited on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, at 5:15 p.m.
- [14] <http://oxforddictionaries.com>, visited on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, at 5:15 p.m.
- [15] [www.techterms.com](http://www.techterms.com), last visited on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at 10:10 p.m.
- [16] [www.techopedia.com](http://www.techopedia.com), last visited on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at 11:30 p.m.



## MCDSARE: 2019

### International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

#### STYLISTIC LANDMARKS IN THE OPERETTA THE LAND OF SMILE BY FRANZ LEHÁR. STAGE DIRECTING CONCEPT

Adrian Mărginean (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Professor, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania, [adelina.adrian.opera@gmail.com](mailto:adelina.adrian.opera@gmail.com),

#### *Abstract*

Austro-Hungarian composer and conductor, a leading personality in the genre of the 20th century operetta, giving this genre a new vitality, Lehár remained one of the best-known composers of the time, alongside Jacques Offenbach and Johann Strauss II. His most successful operetta - The Merry Widow - has earned a prominent place in the operetta repertoire over time. The romantic operetta in 3 acts The Land of Smile premiered on October 10, 1929, at the Metropol Theater in Berlin, with tenor Richard Tauber as Sou-Chong. This performance provided a revised version of the older version of the operetta, entitled The yellow jacket, presented in 1923 in Vienna. Operetta The Land of Smile by Franz Lehár is an exceptional musical work with a rich oriental coloring with melodies and orchestras rich in meaning, breathing a very modern air with well-crafted characters, both musical and dramaturgic, being the only operetta from musical literature with a sad ending (according to my personal knowledge). In my directorial approach, I thought that the most important thing for being able to stage a show, so as to excite the audience and bring it closer to the fascinating world of the musical theater, is to listen to the music, to understand what it express, then to pass the information through the filter of your sensitivity and reason, putting the show on stage and being in your turn a creator, who translates the language of the composer and the librettist in your original way.

**Keywords:** Operetta; Lehár; Romanticism; tenor; performing;

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Vienna, at the end of the 19th century, or fine of siècle, was the ideal environment for the emergence of a new musical genre - the Viennese operetta. At this time, art, architecture, philosophy, literature have developed remarkably, an important influence having an influx of people of different cultures who came to Vienna at that time (from almost half a million people, the population of the city increased to 2 million). Industrialization came late in Austria as a result of Biedermeier conservatism (1815-1848) and neo-absolutism since the 1848 revolution.

By the 1860s, social, political and technological progress emerged in Vienna. The modernization of Vienna has increased the purchasing power of the middle class, requiring facilities, such as the presence of servants. And immigrants arriving from the Habsburg provinces to occupy such posts have created a more diverse population from an ethnic point of view. This growing diversity among the

population meant a change in the musical and theatrical setting. Although the immigrants were poor and therefore did not afford to pay the ticket to the theater, these people had an effect on the Viennese cultural climate. The comedies that were played in the Viennese dialect were now open to influences throughout the Empire and beyond. The new Viennese genre will bring together elements of the successful operetta by Jacques Offenbach (who had been touring outside of France for a few years), the Viennese Waltz and the local satirical comedy, in which overture and song were ingredients always present. By the mid-1850s, Offenbach was admired in Vienna, thanks to Johann Nestroy, director of Carltheater. Because he could not afford Offenbach to come to Vienna, Nestroy presented pirated versions of his works. Later, actor Karl Treumann took the directorate and invited the composer to direct his own creations. By the 1870s, the French had already visited Vienna. Composers such as Franz von Suppé and Carl Millöcker have already contributed to some dramatic works with occasional scuffles and incidental music. Inspired by Offenbach, they became the leading composers of the Viennese operetta, "clinging" to the taste of the Viennese. Instead of the French can-can, they wrote waltzes and poles. The Viennese operetta was more sentimental and romantic than the French one, and there was a greater appreciation for comedy and parody, whether written by a librettist or composer, or added by actors. After Offenbach, an operetta was actually a comic piece in one act. In Vienna, it was developed on a much wider scale. Any operetta from the 1860s, such as *Das Pensionat* (1860), *Supreme Flotte Bursche* (1863) and *Die Schöne Galathee* (1865) still borrowed aspects of Offenbach's tradition. In 1871, Johann Strauss's *Indigo und die Vierzig Räuber* was the first complete Viennese operetta. The subject is placed in an exotic utopia, and other operettas from the early 1870s follow suit. By the end of the 1870s, the operetta focused on Vienna, the start of which was the enormous success of the *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II in 1874. The audience wanted an imitation of the work that was easily accessible and a form of release from the pressures social and financial interests of a continually industrialized society. Though more people and more ideas came to the city, there were also more and more poor people who desperately wanted to work in Vienna. The more unfriendly the climate, the more the public going to the theater sought refuge in a surgical fantasy. Thus, the genre of the operetta became very popular with the audience.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Austro-Hungarian composer and conductor, a leading personality in the genre of the 20th century operetta, giving the genre a new vitality, Lehár remained one of the best-known composers of the time, alongside Jacques Offenbach and Johann Strauss II. His most successful operetta - *The merry widow* - has earned a prominent place in the operetta repertoire over time.

Lehár's father (1838-1898) received the musical education in Sternberg, playing the horn in the Vienna Theater Orchestra and for almost 40 years he was conductor of a military fanfare and a composer of dances and marches. At the age of 12, his son, young Franz joined the Conservatory in Prague, where he studied violin with Antonín Bennewitz, also receiving advice from Antonin Dvorak. In the fall of 1888, Lehár became a violinist in the Barmen-Elberfeld Theater, then called to the army, joined the 50th Infantry Regiment with his father as a conductor, and Leo Fall, the future composer of operettas. Upon the withdrawal of his father, Franz took over as conductor, which brought him to Vienna. There he got success with *Asklepios* (1901) and *Gold und Silber* (1902), composed for Princess Pauline von Metternich.

After completing his military service, his operettas *Wiener Frauen* and *Der Rastelbinder* were staged at Theater an der Wien, the second one enjoying great success. After the failure of the following operettas, *Der Göttergatte* and *Die Juxheirat* (1904), Lehár was summoned to write *Die lustige Witwe*, a libretto for the first time to Richard Heuberger. The success of this work in Vienna and abroad was great, marking the beginning of a new era of the Viennese operetta, through the works of Lehár, Strauss, Fall and later Kálmán. Then followed a failure, *Der Mann mit den drei Frauen* (1908), but in 1909-1910, three works were composed in just three months, works of which *Der Graf von Luxemburg* and *Zigeunerliebe* have gained popularity also internationally. Lehár already composed ambitious works, both from the point of view of the chosen subject and the compositional style. After the war, the arrival of new styles of music from America seemed to fade Lehár's popularity, but a new period of success followed, with the association with tenor Richard Tauber, who sang in *Zigeunerliebe* in Salzburg in 1921 and then *Der Zarewitsch* (1927) and *Friederike* (1928, where he played Goethe), followed by the famous *Das Land des*

*Lächelns* (1929). The latter, which was first produced in Berlin, was a revision of an earlier work, called *Die gelbe Jacke* (1923), in which the composer introduced specifically for tenor the aria *Dein ist mein ganzes herz*.

The development of the compositional style was special for an operetta composer, and Franz Lehár's works can be divided into two creative periods: the first before the First World War and the second, which contains the works created by Tauber. The works of the first period show a true melodic wealth. Like Johann Strauss, Lehár has the talent to make songs with a special turn, full of substance, melodic rhythms and contrasting motifs, the focus of attention, of course, waltz. He used the counterpoint for melodic, rhythmic but also dramatic purposes. Another particular aspect is that they orchestrate their own scores (inherited skill and experience with the military fanfare), learning from Dvořák, Puccini and Richard Strauss. It had a special attraction in painting the local national atmosphere - for example: Slav in *Der Rastelbinder*, Balkan in *Die lustige Witwe*, Spanish in *Frasquita*, Polish in *Die blaue Mazur*, Russian in *Der Zarewitsch* and Chinese in *Das Land des Lächelns*. Being a very good violinist, he has introduced many solo violin solos to accompany the lovers of love. The prosperity of his innovations feels best in *The merry widow*, where the operetta's templates have so far been rarely used. The main characters, Hanna and Danilo, have stage effects. The weather conjuncture was a favorite because the operetta did not give up anything again after the death of Suppé, Johann Strauss II, Millöcker and Zeller. Above all, Lehár took advantage of a good text for this operetta; wigs fit perfectly into action, and the prose is balanced between reality and fantasy, with little romance and an interesting combination of situations.

In his latest creations, Lehár developed his own operetta style, destroying the barriers between the genre of the opera and the operetta: Lehár, who for many years aspired to expand the operetta to a suitable form for opera theaters, managed to fulfill this desire with his last operetta - *Giuditta* (1934). In the last years of the composer's creation, due to the growing influence of the musical theater, the genre of the operetta will lose its prominent position in the world of musical drama.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The romantic operetta in 3 acts *Das Land des Lächelns* premiered on October 10, 1929, at the Metropol Theater in Berlin, with tenor Richard Tauber as Sou-Chong. This performance provided a revised version of the older version of the operetta, entitled *Die gelbe Jacke*, presented in 1923 in Vienna.

In my directorial approach, I thought that the most important thing to be able to stage a show so as to excite the public and bring it closer to the fascinating world of the musical theater is to listen to the music, to understand what they express, then to pass the information through the filter of your sensitivity and reason, putting the show on stage and being in turn a creator who translates the language of the composer and the librettist in the original way.

### 4. FINDINGS

Thus, during the Overture, on Mi's theme, to bring the audience into the atmosphere of Asia, I created an exciting projection with a yellow dragon flying over scenic Chinese landscapes - the dragon will become a visual leitmotiv of the show, which is painted on the back of Sou-Chong's yellow coat, and will also appear at the end of the operetta as a projection. Upon completion of the Overture, the curtain opens for a moment of ballet, deployed in the Lichtenfels Marshal Hall. The choir will stand on two sides, forming a V with the tip leading to the main entrance to the salon, and Lichtenfels, the General and Mrs. Hardeg are centrally disposed to watch the choreographic moment. I sprinkled the three of them with comic moments in which the General is slapped by a young man and the Marshal praises his own qualities, laughing at the General. After Gustav's entry, followed by four soldiers, Lisa's entrance would be held, dressed in a vintage horse-riding suit, an entry that would be emphasized by diminishing proscenium light and activating a "follow-up" light on the protagonist. After the soloist's first sentence, two soldiers lift her on their shoulders and carry her on the celebration in front of the guests, then leave her down, continue to emphatically. Another comic element appears through the presence of the cocked servant who will have several entries: the first one is the one in which Lisa brings to her a golden statuette representing the Buddha, received in gift from the Prince of Sou-Chong. While Gustav and Lichtenfels discuss the exotic gift received by Lisa, she places the statue on the piano.

The servant who called on the guests to drink a cup of champagne in the adjoining salon appears again. At this moment, I made a projection on one of the side walls of the stage, where the servant awaits the blue saloon in the invitations that enter in turn, realizing a beautiful continuity of action on the stage with the one in the salon, would not be visible to the public. Lisa stays alone on the stage with a single spot of light on her and starts singing the piano and her voice with an inspirational Asian song. When it's over, the light turns on suddenly. Gustav, who in the dark approaches the piano and listens to the song of Lisa, when the light comes on stage, nudes in with the Buddha statuette. The following dialogue begins with a tense moment in which Lisa rejects Gustav's marriage request, but the atmosphere then turns into a warm, friendly one that persists in the duet of the two. For the action not to be static, the two characters use the whole scene, including the stairs in the center, where the entrance to the drawing room is.

The Sou-Chong character was also crafted with proper makeup and hairstyle, the interpreter having a long-haired brunette wig in the queue. On the introduction of the aria, Sou-Chong stares in the salon, and when he sees the Buddha's statue, he kisses affectionately. I preferred for this first aria not to suggest too many movements to the performer. Lisa will come to an end, dressed in a golden prom dress, with growing emotions at the sight of the Prince. At the duet of tea, I created an atmosphere close to the Prince's world - the two sit down, on two cushions brought by the mourning servant. The two serve the tea in an intimate blue light. To push the action that tends to be static, Lisa sheds the hot tea on Sou-Chong's hand, then bandages his hand with great care. At the end, the two get up and want to kiss, but they are interrupted by the background noise and retreating to another room. Lichtenfels enters, followed by four very noisy faces and Mrs. Hardeg. In order to get what they want, that is, the encounter with the Prince, the girls assail the Marshal with "sacrifices," meaning kisses. The prince enters the salon and makes furrows among the excited faces, then explains, through an area, how love is to him in the country. She gives a treat to each one, giving her a blooming branch of apple, taken from an orchestral instructor, another makes statements or the other admiring her lips, her face failing to hear his words.

But the prince is thinking about Lisa and does not pay attention to the girls who, at the end of the area, are fighting. Another element that colors the action is the Chinese servant of Sou-Chong, a bold man, dressed in a black kimono, who makes long prayers to the Prince and tells him that he has been appointed prime minister and must return to China. Towards the end of the act, Sou Chong and Lisa remain lonely and sing one of the most beautiful duets in the operetta. The composer highlighted dramatically the action and the intensity of the feelings of the two through a modern-day music with a quasi-parallel vocal, with chromatic motifs and themes that express the difference between the two worlds and also the destiny that will finally separate. After the theme of destiny, I chose to move the action closer to the audience, to the extrapuntin of the stage and to the "language" of the audience. The two lovers carry a dialogue ending with a hug on a musical piece that reaches the climax, and then, when Sou-Chong resumes the theme of apple blossoms, the two return to the stage, watched by a light spot, each on a different side of the extrapuntin, then meet in the middle of the stage. On this background, I designed images of blooming apple trees, bathed by the sun's rays. The circle that the two do, starting from the base of the proscenio up to the middle of the scene, can signify the desire to approach the two lovers, despite the differences between their worlds, and the yin and yang circles, black and white, the symbol of the contrasts that attract. At the end of the duet, the room is bathed by starlight, projected across the stage mirror and side walls.

The second act opens with a brief prelude that has suggested a sunrise, so I designed a sun rising from the left on the curtain and set it to the right throughout the music. At the opening of the curtain, we are in the throne room of Sou Chong Palace. Thondup, his uncle, is seated on the right side of the throne, the choirs come two behind the scenes and worship the throne, and the choirs come out of the room, all of them in the V, open to the public. Sou-Chong's entry is made from the back of the room, on the tongue, with a large pump: the interpreter is preceded by two Chinese lanterns and lights the way, while two others wear a yellow coat. The Prince stops in front of Thondup, with his back to the audience and kneeling, to receive the high distinction. After the choir withdraws through the hall, the Prince and Thondup remain alone and have a quiet conversation, but after being interrupted by little Mi dressed in a European tennis suit, Thondup remembers the old traditions that the Prince is obliged to have four wives. But Eunuc, a very colorful masqued character who will have many comic moments, announces the arrival of Lisa. For the two main interpreters, I opted for the existing costumes to be restored from scratch, and in Sou-Chong I added the yellow ceremonial coat with the head of the dragon on my back, whose design

totally belongs to me. At this point, Lisa wears a red velvet dress with a train in the 1900s style, and as an accessory she has a real-life picture medal that she gives to Sou-Chong. There is a love duet built on the waltz rhythm, for which we have chosen as a light design for red shades that fit very well in color with the decor, but also with the costumes of the performers, made on yellow-golden shades and red. The two lovers are doubled by a pair of dancers dressed and styled in the same way as the soloists, who at one point interact with them, exchanging partners. The two couples are watched with two spots of light, and the projection with the stars and the full moon creates a night-life enchanting.

Little Mi resumes traditional clothing and will sing a first aria, accompanied by ballet dancers, who will present a traditional fan dance. Gustav will make his entrance from behind the auditorium on the audience podium, making a very comical moment with Eunucus. For these three characters, we have benefited from experienced interpreters, to whom I have given more freedom in shaping characters. Thus, the young little Mi - Gustav managed to capture the attention of the public through the delicacy and gentleness of the spoken dialogues, but also of the ones played, helped by the highly expressive and exotic music of the composer.

The difference of age and mentality was highlighted in the dialogue that followed the duet between Gustav and Mi, a dialogue between the unbroken Thondup and Sou Chong. The Prince wants to change the old traditions, being motivated by the love for Lisa, which he expresses through the most famous page of this operetta - "You are my love". In all solo moments I tried to annoy little action so that the audience did not get bored, but managed to get in the best atmosphere of the love story. Thus, in order to create an atmosphere that best suits the text of the area, two ballet dancers will be introduced to the stage by a canopy bed, on which Lisa sleeps. Sou-Chong sings softly to his ear, and at the end of the area, he sits beside her, and the two dancers return, pulling the bed behind. The happiness of the two lovers will not last long. Lisa finds out from Gustav and then confirms to the Prince that he is forced to marry four women. The young woman will express her pain and longing for the country in a very short but convincing area. I chose to use only a light spot on the interpreter to focus public attention on the feelings expressed at that time.

The ceremony of the wedding will follow, to which I wanted to bring the originality notes through the pompous entrance of the brides in the hall, on the podium, covered by two long white veils, held by ballerinas and also by the traditional ceremony of tea, which is held at every wedding in China. Sou-Chong serves each bride with a cup of tea, unveiling at the same time its head covered by a small veil hat and putting on its arm a red veil, the imperial color. When all the brides received the cup of tea, I wanted a very dramatic moment in which Lisa would interrupt the ceremony. Thus, the performer will quickly enter the stage, and will throw her suitcase to the ground. Slowly, slowly, we move away from the world of the operetta. Sou-Chong makes everybody come out. Lisa asks the Prince to explain to her why he married 4 wives, but he tells that her husband has the right to kill her wife if she does not listen. At this point, Lisa falls on her knees on a grand cassa blow, and the light goes off suddenly, only two spots remain on the soloists, one red Lisa and one white Sou-Chong. The abyss between the two worlds deepens even more when Lisa revolts and ends the relationship. The music is very dramatic, and the vocalities of the two roles also turn. After leaving Lisa, Sou-Chong hits the gong on the stage, orders the young man not to leave the palace and then collapses to his knees, asking for the mercy of the gods on a very sad melody, which will also sing in the end operetta. After the words "it's over," I found in music the motivation of a feeling of rebellion that includes Sou-Chong, who will furiously take off his yellow coat and throw it to the ground. The prince, with tears in her eyes, notices the neck medallion with the face of the face, the musical motive of the orchestra that remembers the aria *You are my love* and at that moment falls on his knees and sings for the second time this aria .

The curtain will close on the last accords in the orchestra and will begin the prelude of the 3rd act, which I wanted a ballet, with the pair of dancers that doubled the two lovers at the beginning of the second act. The orchestra resumes the theme of love, and the ballet dancers dance on the gangway and on the proscenio, as close as possible to the audience, as a reminder of the beautiful moments spent between the two. During this time, behind the curtain, the sets will change for the third act. Marshal Lichtenfels will make his appearance again, and the moments of prose will prevail: little Mi and Gustav express love for each other, then the young Viennese and the marshal will have to do with Thondup, and Lisa asks Little Mi to help he could leave the palace, along with Gustl. But, after the cunning Thondup shows where he can run without being seen, Sou-Chong comes in his way. Here is the last dialogue between the

two lovers. Operetta *Land of smile* is full of contrasts, and comic moments alternate very quickly with tragic moments. It may be very difficult to maintain the seriousness of action on the stage and, at the same time, the public's attention to the two main characters and not to the other comic characters by their nature. In this dialogue, I felt that the public relaxed too much and did not react to the sadness of the two lovers, so at the following performances with this show, I decided to modify some of the replies in the text just to give a bigger gravity of the moment.

The lust of home contains Lisa's heart and makes her no longer impressed by Sou-Chong's last attempt to keep her near him. Gustav will be on the scene, and Sou-Chong asks him to take care of Lisa. The theme of love is repeated, and Gustav leads Lisa to the podium where a group of ballerinas, which I have placed in the shape of a ship where Lisa's father is already, will lead the three back to Europe. The boat moves away from the shore on the flute solo that echoes the theme of the apple blossom. Lisa once again looks back to Sou-Chong and disappears into the dark. The prince will stay on stage with her sister, urging her not to cry, but to smile, even if she feels a great pain in her soul. On the words - "*to know how to laugh and to look happy*" - a small screen from the canvas will unfold in front of the two screens, which I designed Sou-Chong, a prince who accepts his fate, a prince whom he his coat is swallowed, the coat is personified in the last scene, and the dragon will eventually appear on the character's coat, a symbol of tradition that encompasses Sou-Chong, a tradition that stood in the way of happiness.

Through this projection, I wanted to show the incompatibility between the two worlds, the impossibility of detachment from tradition, and, at the same time, the cyclical character of the operetta, because the last theme of the orchestra will be that of the smile, a theme with which the Overture, the theme of his destiny or the yellow coat - thus making a connection with the original title of the operetta at the premiere of 1923: *Die gelbe Jacke - Yellow Coat*.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Operetta *Land of smile* by Franz Lehár is an exceptional musical work with a rich oriental coloring with melodies and orchestras rich in meaning, breathing a very modern air with well-crafted characters, both musical and dramaturgic, being the only operetta from musical literature with sad ending (according to my personal knowledge). Also, the modernity of the subject has to be taken into consideration - the operetta premiered in 1923 under the name of *Yellow Coat* and in 1929 under the current name, and the operetta's action takes place in Vienna and China in 1912. The name of "operetta" improper, because this work goes beyond the boundaries of the genre, and is very close to the genre of the opera, the dramatic situation, the operatic vocalism of the two main characters - Lisa and Sou-Chong and the tragedy of the love story - the eternal incompatibility of the two worlds of which the two characters belong. But as we know, Franz Lehár wanted to make the classical genre of the operetta closer to that of the opera in the last period of creation, especially through *The Land of Smile* (1929) and *Giuditta* (1934).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Books:

- [1] CSÁKY, Moritz, *Ideologia operetei și modernitatea vieneză. Un eseu de istoria culturii*, [The ideology of operetta and the viennese modernity. An essay of culture history], Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza Iași, 2013
- [2] DELEANU, Horia, *Arta regiei teatrale*, [The art of theatre stage directing], Editura Litera, București, 1987
- [3] LOGHIN, Gheorghe Dem, *Manual de arta actorului*, [Treatise of acting], Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1970
- [4] POP, Sergiu-Dan, *Celula muzical-dramaturgică, unitate sintagmatică a teatrului muzical*, [The musical-dramaturgic cell, syntagmatic unity of Musical Theatre], Editura Muzicală, Colecția Speculum musicae, București, 2000
- [5] POPOVICI, Vasile, *Lumea personajului*, [The world of the character], Editura Echinox, Cluj-Napoca, 1997

- 
- [6] SBÂRCEA, George, *Opereta și lunga ei poveste*, [The operetta and its long story], Editura Muzicală, București, 1985
- [7] TERÉNYI, Eduard; Coca, Gabriela, *Interferența artelor, vol 1 – Gândirea dualistă*, [The interference of arts - the dual thinking], Editura Media Musica, Colecția Didactica, Cluj, 2007
- [8] UBERSFELD, Anne, *Termenii cheie ai analizei teatrului*, [The key terms of analysing the Theatre], Institutul European, 1999
- Musical scores:
- [9] LEHÁR, Franz, *Das Land des Lächelns*, [The land of smile], Editura W. Karczag, Leipzig, 1929, ediția voce-pian
- [10]\*\*\* Encyclopedia Britannica a dictionary of arts, sciences, literature and general informations, New York, 1911
- [11]\*\*\* Larousse, Mari compozitori, [Larousse, great composers], traducere și adaptare de Oltea Șerban – Pârâu, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2000
- [12]\*\*\* The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, New Grove, second edition, Macmillan Publishers Limited, Londra, 2001
- [13]\*\*\* Grove Music Online, Oxford University Press, Londra, 2001
- [14]\*\*\* Vancea, Zeno *Dicționar de termeni muzicali*, [Musical terms dictionary], Editura științifică și enciclopedică, București, 1984





<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.315-320>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

**Delia Oprea (a)\***

(a) Lecturer, Ph.D., Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [delia.oprea@ugal.ro](mailto:delia.oprea@ugal.ro)

### *Abstract*

Texts, language, communication should always be considered in their social context. Texts do not merely passively report upon the world, but they imbue it with meaning, shape perspectives and call the world into being. The relationship between text and ideology, and between the author and reader, appears to have changed because of the opportunities of public communication that have been extended by social media applications such as Twitter, Facebook, and blogs. It is also clear that new methods are required for data collection, as content takes new forms, and forms of design, images, and data has to be integrated with language much more in online than in offline. We use the term social media to refer to “Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0”, where Web 2.0 means that “content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The aim of our research is to take into discussion different ways of approaching discourse analysis in this new online environment. Despite the large variety of platforms, some characteristics are common to many of them. Even if processes and structures of the public are subjects to change, the forms of discourse may be one of common points. Whilst the perspective on the system is one important aspect, another aspect is the perspective on the users who create the content. So, the three steps of the discourse have to be considered: production, form and reception. We try to seek out new models that are required to address how the technologies themselves come to shape the nature of content and discourse.

**Keywords:** social media; discourse; Facebook, YouTube; critical discourse analysis;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Three decades of the World Wide Web, caused major changes to the communication paradigms. The swift, free of spatial and temporal barriers and ubiquitous manner in which information permeates all possible media, makes online consumption (media, social media) an easier and faster exchange, many times inculcating some sort of superficiality to certain communication forms. We are inevitably dealing with the fluidization of the boundaries between information and any circulation form in the public space.

Web 2.0 brought about functionalities unencountered before, from the viewpoint of interactions, the content created and broadcast online being, in many circumstances, co-created by both communication poles. The information transfer in the social networks features rapidity (which is extremely important in certain circumstances) as to its emergence and distribution, thus arriving with

more difficulty to the stability of the shape that information could recurrently take online. The complex interaction in the age of new technologies, the discursive writing forms and genres are major challenges to the language sciences.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The online native discourse, as discursive terminology, is a reproduced expression of the English *web native*, which represents any online created discourse, i.e. within a digital ecosystem (Paveau, 2015:3) connected to the Internet. The French linguist Marie-Anne Paveau proposes an integrative perspective when defining the online discourse analysis study object. Since the Web is viewed as a device made up of techniques, actors and statements, as well as of various practices whereby Internet recognition and resource utilization are learnt, while in the linguistic, discourse research field, Marie-Anne Paveau, proposes, for instance, new terms for naming the discursive realities and brings to the readers' attention the expression of *discursive technology*. "My definition of discourse genre shall be minimalist: an array of collective, pre-, extra- and intradiscursive frames, built by the elaboration-interpretation of statements" (Paveau, 2013 :7-30). Therefore, Paveau does not separate the intralinguistic manifestations from the extralinguistic constraints, as the French researcher sees an online "continuum" between the linguistic material, as intralinguistic manifestation and the extradiscursive that considers the discursive context, instead of a distinction or opposition between the two dimensions. Paveau's viewpoint is an integrative, non-dualist or post-dualist one. Thus, the Internet is viewed as a technolinguistic ecosystem. Taking the same direction proposed by the French researcher, we attempt at distinguishing a series a discourse technolinguistic features that must be considered when they intersect the online environment.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Discourse can be considered as an 'active relation to reality' (Fairclough, 1992, p. 41). Fairclough (2003, p.26) has delineated three features of discourse that describe its operation within social life, as 'part of the action.' These are: (a) genres (ways of acting), (b) discourses (ways of representing), (c) styles (ways of being). Discourses can be analysed by taking into consideration three steps: production, form and reception.

Beyond the steps we should consider when dealing with the new statement forms, the most frequent manner of analysing discourse seems to still reside in the old theories and methods. In linguistics, there aren't many theoretical innovations, so that, the analysis object, which keeps renewing itself, especially in the Internet age, is still viewed through the already existing theories. Native digital discourses question circumstances that haven't been encountered before, and, as such, would require new analysis methods.

« La nature technodiscursive de ce type d'énoncé, définie par une complète intégration de la technique à la matière langagière, impose de modifier nos regards et de prendre pour objet d'analyse, non plus les éléments langagiers dans une perspective logocentrée, mais l'ensemble de l'environnement technodiscursif dans la perspective écologique nécessaire à une analyse du discours numérique » (Paveau, 2015, p.2) (*The technodiscursive nature of this kind of statement, defined by a complete integration of the technique into the language matter, compels us to modify our view and to no longer consider language elements as analysis object from a logocentric perspective, but the overall technodiscursive environment in the ecologic perspective required to the digital discourse analysis*)

Consequently, Paveau (2012/2015) proposes the analysis of various aspects of the so-called "sensitivities" of online native discourses, because they require epistemological precautions and undoubtedly entail the preservation of data integrity/wholeness, impose the analysis of the subtle way in which producers and receptors (we might add) perceive the dimension of discourses in terms of public and private.

## 4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The statements produced in the networked environments are actually composite discursive technologies. We can no longer speak of mere language discourses but of a combination of language elements with the afferent technology. Even words could become techno-words, if we abide by the term proposed by the French researcher, as it happens with the hashtag in the social media or the hash sign (#)

that makes those names accessible by placing the hashtag in front of them. We could mention here the example of the indicator words such as *like*, *share*, *follow*, *unfollow* in the Facebook network, *retweeter* on Twitter or *pin* on Pinterest. If we would like to analyse these words just from the logocentric perspective, they would no longer have the same meaning; moreover, we could find ourselves in a serious interpretation error and disregard certain aspects pertaining to their structure and meanings. Their researchability and correlation would no longer be possible if we “extracted” them from the digital context they belong to and which they represent in all its manifestations.

What Marie-Anne Paveau proposes is a symmetrical linguistics, i.e. a perspective going beyond the existing separation between language and technique, between body and soul, between internal and external. Actually, we are dealing with hybrid objects embedding language and technique. Language can no longer be considered as such, in its pure state, but it must be viewed in its “natural” condition, natural in the web field meaning it infallibly bears the marks of the digital techniques. Technology no longer is a mere support (just like paper is to writing, the TV channel to the televised discourse or sound waves to the radio discourse), it is part of the production process, it has a certain form and interpreted through the digital options that the Internet offers. Thus, the plurisemiotic (social) networks such as Pinterest (even technical-iconic-discursive) can no longer be analysed outside the support they identify with. To continue in the same direction, it might not be that improper to speak of the separation of “real” life from the “virtual” one, but of our separate worlds, as we have a professional and personal life, parts of our life that cannot be entirely dissociated but treated as a continuum, as a mingling of “lives” taking place around the same life. The virtual actually became part of our reality. « Mais une plus grande familiarité avec les technologies numériques nous fait désormais comprendre que l’espace qu’elles produisent est un espace concret, réel et probablement aussi physique. Comme tout espace, l’espace numérique est l’agencement d’une série de relations entre des choses » (Rosati, 2012 : § 6) (*But a greater intimacy with the digital technologies makes us henceforth understand that the space they create is a concrete, real and probably physical one. As any other space, the digital space is the arrangement of a series of relationships between things*). A post-dualistic vision no longer distinguishes between linguistic and extralinguistic but views language elements only in the context they manifest themselves.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODS

The working corpora in the case of online discourse analysis consider the positioning of the one analysing them against the analysed object. Should the linguistic-extralinguistic delimitation be diluted, and the discursive element is made up of several composite aspects, the linguist must also adapt the working perspective. The technological dimension takes language out of its verbal purity and its independence from the technique.

This perspective, that we might call both post-dualistic, according to Marie-Anne Paveau’s terminology, and symmetrical, in order to put the language and technical elements on equal footing, and because both aspects are impossible to separate, is not recent. The materiality of the contexts has been highlighted before by researchers such as Michel Pêcheux (Pêcheux et al. 1971), who built a constitutive relationship between meaning and the social-historical circumstances of statement production. Robert Laffont substantiated the praxematics that brought reality into the sphere of verbal production analysis. Socio-linguistics treats as well the relational aspects between the socio-material and human constraints. Non-verbal aspects remain nevertheless in the field of receptors’ discourse utilization, of the role in interactions or as discourse topics. The relationship between objects, material and social anchoring of actions has been insisted upon, considering gestures besides the linguistic aspects, such as word manipulation. A post-dualistic vision, embedded in the online discourse analysis would no longer extract language from the context of its production, formulation and reception, the discourse being viewed in its wholeness and integrity.

The way the researcher positions him-/herself against his/her study object may differ. Departing from the exterior observation, participative objectivation, even immersion, the analysing eye should nevertheless practise that discursive form, at least in what concerns the online environment. Let us explain our position: an entirely exterior analysis could not foresee, prevent or even control the interpretation of the techno-language, as long as it does not know it. Because techno-language no longer offers itself to the specialist as it did on paper, but it is written and rewritten along with the presentation,

presence and “passage” through the online. An archiving is almost impossible, because the “text” is permanently subject to modifications (by the author or the receptor who, in turn, becomes writer-reader). We mention here the example of the news broadcast in the social media, news that almost always updates itself with clarifications that the readers of that material make. About the admiration forms (like), requesting friendship, sharing, we could specify the same aspects: the receptor and emitter always switch positions and one thing recorded online today might look different tomorrow.

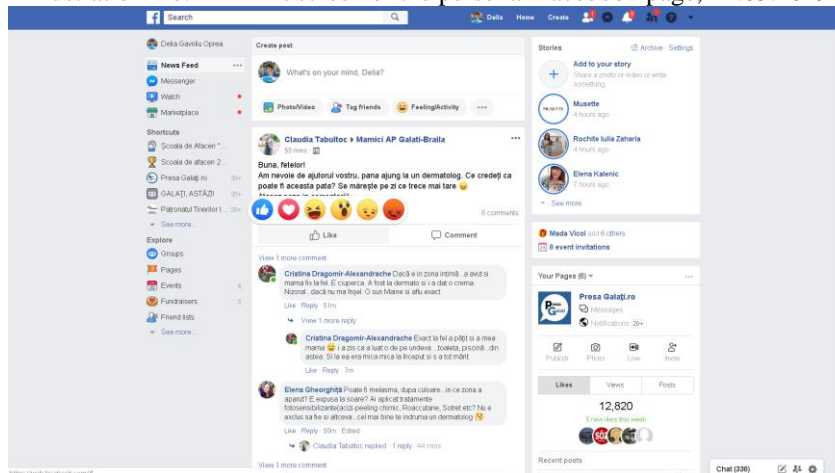
## 6. FINDINGS

### Data/information wholeness

When it comes to social media and online environment discursive analysis in general, the working corpora wholeness is an extremely important criterion to consider. A complete perspective cannot be spoken of as long as the language composed of written and spoken words (videos, lives) is simply “extracted” from the environment it was formulated in order to find meanings. Four techno-discursive features are worth considering, according to Marie-Anne Paveau (2012) when the analysis object is the online discourse, for instance the blog, social media, commercial, administrative or institutional websites discourse: (1) delinearization, (2) development or extension, (3) technogenericity and (4) plurisemiotics.

(1) Delinearization concerns the occurrence of hypertext links that sets out, starting from the initial text, the passage to another text, related to the contents of the source text, an operation presupposing a technique specific to the online environment. Thus, the reader is enabled to exit linear thread of the story, of the news or information and return to another piece of information on another page. Linearity is thus interrupted in social media by techno-words (hashtag, tag) or indicator words such as *like*, *love*, *haha*, *share*, *reply* etc. or *hyperlinks*. True codes develop the discourse and render words insufficient, although social media networks are mainly scriptural. Although it is considered that the image tends to replace writing in the online, words have remained the main transmission manner, percent-wise, of information (we are considering here not only Instagram, that imposed a culture of photography, but also blogs, commercial websites, institutional websites of the online versions of newspapers, for instance).

Illustration no. 1 – Print screen of the personal Facebook page, 21.05.2019



(2) Development or extension of declarative prerogatives. The speaker is no longer the sole communication source. The essential question we need to answer when analysing the online discourse is “Who is talking?”. In the social networks, discourse is permanently built through comments, sometimes more clarifying and more complete than the original information offered by the first emitter. It is actually a collaborative writing.

(3) Technogenericity refers to the plethora of discourse genres that developed, either natively digital (straight into the online environment), for instance the friendship request, sharing messages, posts, which gives birth to the so-called reported discourses within the social networks, or by transforming / “acclimation” of the genres from the traditional communication environments (log, private log, comment,

interview etc.). The oral code conversation has been transcribed in the social networks into the comments made to the emitters' posts, to the tickets posted on blogs for instance, or in the online discussion forums. Dominique Maingueneau (2013) brings into discussion the notion of hypergenre, quite a generalizing term encompassing several genres grouped around the same topic, the same subject. The notion of hypergenre is specific (maybe to a large extent) both to the digital environment and the written one, such as indicated in our PhD thesis about the "Typology of journalism texts in the current Romanian press", Institutul European Publishing House, 2018).

(4) Although the online discourse universe is marked by writing (writing underlies almost all our messages – on the wall), these many times the written message presents other signs as well – photography, symbols, smileys, applauses, gifs, drawings), has sound or graphics, follow certain templates.

Illustration no. 2, personal Facebook page, 22.05.2019



If, by now, the linguistic researches applied to the online environment have been based on offline discourse analysis notions, giving examples of corpora extracted as isolated segments or lists, the online discourse analysis must go beyond the technical elements regarded as an external factor conditioning the discourse production and should always contain the technodiscursive. A quantitative survey of a phenomenon such as the series of comments caused by a Facebook post must not omit the fact that those comments are made not only to the initial post but even as comments to comment or in addition to the initial comment or another made by the initiators of the discussions, their pseudonyms, page/post shares. The analysis validity could be seriously affected by the sine qua non technical aspects of the online environment.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The boundary between the producer of the communication/content and its user (to remain within the terminology of the social networks) is erased or reduced in terms of visibility/clarity, because, in the social networks, we are dealing with a mix between emitter and receptor, the writer becoming a writer-reader and the reader becoming in turn the writer. Both functions are interchanged and assumed, not by turns, but even simultaneously. Therefore, we are dealing with a hybrid agent (the expression belongs to Marie-Anne Paveau, 2012) that permanently modifies the existing contents, completes them with various forms of expression – like, love, wonder, disappointment etc.

“In collaborative communities the creation of shared content takes place in a networked, participatory environment which breaks down the boundaries between producers and consumers and instead enables all participants to be users as well as producers of information and knowledge – frequently in a hybrid role of producer where usage is necessarily also productive” (Bruns 2007).

Technology has gone over or should go over the support status and be valorised at its true potential when it comes to the online discourse analysis. The online statements enjoy a production-usage process,

in which “writers” negotiate even while using the discourse and the online presence. For instance, in the social networks, hashtags become connecting elements between the posts that dealt with the same topics, causing certain threads to become common and regroup under a name preceded by a technical sign (hash).

Contrary to the current representations, social networks are not a platform or a website that we access but a directory of links, with multiple inputs, just like a dictionary, but, unlike the dictionary, the entries are static, fixed and are modified only once in a given period of time, social networks “comprise” statements that are never fixed, their transmission, completion, correction and interpretation manner being under permanent modification, based on relations networks that nobody has an identical perception of the same statement. Each internaut may modify in multiple directions: like, share, love, comment, share with or without comment, sending in private message with or without the afferent comments.

The discourse found online, and especially in the social networks (the blog, for instance, resembles to a greater extent a journal, with borrowed discursive genres adapted to the digital environment) exists only in that context, so that one cannot consider the discourse by itself, such as unique, singular and definitive publications. Think only about a post on Instagram to which we add the text (obviously beside the pertaining photo): “watching the sky...”, we tag one or more people. How could this text be correctly interpreted/received outside the network in which it exists, outside the “support”? Our discussions can only be understood in the network of relations and signs, technosigns the discourse is inscribed into.

In the social networks, more than in any other discursive environments, there is no statement by itself that might be extracted and analysed by itself. From this perspective, the decontextualized statement could be a theoretical and methodological nonsense, because it does not correspond to the reality of a statement produced or interpreted within the reality of the sociodigital exchanges.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- [1] Bruns A. Prodosage: A Working Definition, PRODUSAGE.org From Production to Produsage: Research into User-Led Content Creation, Available from <http://produsage.org/node/9>.
- [2] Oprea, D. Tipologia textelor jurnalistice în presa românească actuală [Typology of journalism texts in the current Romanian press], Iași: Institutul European Publishing House, 2018.
- [3] Maingueneau D. Genre de discours et Web : existe-t-il des genres Web ? [Discourse genre and Web: is there a Web genre?], in Barats C. (editor.), Manuel d'analyse du web [Web analysis manual], Paris: Armand Colin, 74-93.
- [4] Paveau M.-A. L'intégrité des corpus natifs en ligne », Cahiers de praxématique [Internet] [Integrity of online native corpus, Praxematics books [Internet]], 01 January 2015, 59 | 2012, document 3, consulted on 20 May 2019. Available from: <http://journals.openedition.org/praxematique/3359>.
- [5] Paveau M.-A. Genre de discours et technologie discursive, Pratiques [Discourse genres and discursive technology], 157-158 /2013, 7-30.
- [6] Vitali Rosati M. Une éthique appliquée?, Éthique publique [An applied ethics? Public ethics] 14-2, 2013, Available from : <http://ethiquepublique.revues.org/995>, consulted on 20.05.2019.



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2019.3.321-325>

## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## BREXIT FRAMING IN BRITISH MEDIA

Oana Celia Gheorghiu (a)\*

(a) Lecturer PhD, “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galati, Romania,

E-mail: oana.gheorghiu@ugal.ro

### *Abstract*

2019 brings about fiery debates and endless questions about the United Kingdom's current and future relation to the European Union. An important aspect is whether the United Kingdom should or should not organise another national referendum regarding membership in the European Union. It is, nevertheless, equally important to identify the causes and reasons that led to the vote in favour of Leave in the 2016 referendum, widely known as Brexit. It is contended here that the British media played an important role in shaping the citizens' options, imposing themselves as actors in the construction of a sociological phenomenon with serious effects and consequences. Combining the linguistic and cultural perspectives, with scientific tools from the domain of Discourse Analysis, this paper will look into several relevant pro- and anti-Brexit views, as presented by important British newspapers to the wide public, tracing their arguments and the way in which manipulation was achieved on both Leave and Remain sides..

**Keywords:** Brexit; media; manipulation, framing; immigration; discourse analysis;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of Europe as a united entity, which spans a little more than half a century, if one considers its beginning in 1957, with the Treaty of Rome and the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC), or over twenty-six years, if one chooses to regard the Maastricht Treaty, entering into force on November 1st, 1993 as the starting point, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has constantly displayed ambivalent sentiments and reactions to the concept, either named as such or just implied, of a 'European Union'. Their reaction could be ironic if one thinks that, in September 1946, just one year after the disaster of the World War II came to an end, it was Winston Churchill who advocated, in a speech delivered in Zurich, the imperative necessity of such a union:

*I wish to speak about the tragedy of Europe, this noble continent, the home of all the great parent races of the Western world, the foundation of Christian faith and ethics, the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern times. If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance there would be no limit to the happiness, prosperity and glory which its 300 million or 400 million people would enjoy. [...]*

The structure of the United States of Europe will be such as to make the material strength of a single State less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by a contribution to the common cause (Churchill, 1946, [winstonchurchill.org](http://winstonchurchill.org)).

However, the Brits' constant questioning of their membership, from their refusal to join the EEC in its incipient stage to the 2016 Brexit referendum (and beyond, when exiting seems to be finally taking place effectively) is to be sought for in the British mindset, in their insularity, imperialism, and bluntly put, in their barely concealed sense of superiority. Ironically enough, it was also Winston Churchill who, during the interwar years, had given the directions of a Pan-European Union that would NOT include Britain. In a chapter entitled 'Churchill and Europe - A Revision', published in the volume *European Integration and Disintegration: East and West*, edited by Bideleux and Taylor, Clive Ponting reassesses Churchill's position in relation to a possible unification of the European states, claiming that his advocacy of the so-called 'United States of Europe' has been misunderstood, critics and commenters having been constantly disregarding the British Prime Minister's imperialism. Born and raised in the Victorian Age, in office when Britain was still THE colonial power, Churchill was indeed advocating a form of European unification back in the 1930s, except for the fact that the respective union was not to include Britain whatsoever. Ponting cites a statement of Churchill published by *Saturday Evening Post*, which is relevant for the premise of this paper, which is why it is also quoted below: *We see nothing but good and hope in a richer, freer, more contented European commonality. But we have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe but not of it. We are linked but not compromised. We are interested and associated but not absorbed* (Churchill, 1930 qtd. in Ponting, 1996: 37-38).

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

After a long and complicated relationship between the UK and the European community, in which Charles de Gaulle's veto prevented the UK to join the EEC two times before its actual entering in 1973, and in which the British Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher, advocated their participation in the EEC, but without the formation of a federative Europe that would have affected national sovereignty, in her opinion, came the 'moderate Conservatism' years of 1990-1997, i.e. the premiership of John Major, marked by "tough challenges: the Gulf War, "Black Wednesday", a party split over the Maastricht Treaty, the rise of New Labour and the emergence of Eurosceptic single-issue parties, etc." (Haigron, 2009: 177). Euro-scepticism had actually manifested long before John Major's premiership years and was going to increase during the office of Tony Blair. The adoption of a single currency – to which the UK did not acquiesce, and the two enlargements of the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) and 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) generated new concerns regarding the influx of cheap labour.

Adding to such financial concerns, as well as to the immigration question, there is also the constant British discontent with not actually being among the leaders of the European Union. The contradictions between the UK and the EU began to intensify even more in 2010, with the coming to power of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition. Refusing to participate in the Eurozone summits and vetoing the new EU fiscal policy agreement, Prime Minister David Cameron opened both the path to an active Euro-sceptic opposition in the European Parliament and, ultimately, to the 2016 in-out national referendum dubbed Brexit.

The unequivocal question posited to the British citizens was "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" which should not have raised any problems of (mis)understanding. On June 23rd, 2016, ~52% of the voters chose to 'leave' and only 48% to 'remain', which is consistent with the opinion polling carried out since 2010, in which the options were evenly divided. In 2012, *The Guardian* stated that "56% of Britons would vote to quit EU in referendum, poll finds" and that "overall just 28% of likely voters think the EU is a 'good thing' while 45% think it is a 'bad thing'" (Boffey and Helm, 2012, online). It is contended further that the British media played an important role in shaping the citizens' options, imposing themselves as actors in the construction of a sociological phenomenon with serious effects and consequences. Just like the two campaigning groups, Britain Stronger in Europe, in favour of 'remain', on the one hand, and Leave.EU (supported by UKIP) and Vote Leave (supported by the Euro-sceptic faction of the Conservative Party), on the other, the British media divided their readership into supporters of the two options. The media in favour of leave went to unprecedented lengths to 'speak,' loudly, in a language that any voter could understand, of three major issues that should have determined the British citizen to want 'out': immigration (here including the imposed refugee quota and a labour market open to Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian workers),



financing the poorer EU states, thus disfavoured the local economy, and last but surely not least, the imposition of various policies by Brussels or, even worse, by Germany and France. Relying heavily on the British mindset and views on their relations with the continent, epitomized by Churchill's statement quoted above – we are with Europe but not of it -, and also on in-your-face arguments placing the Britons in a position of a 'self' undermined and threatened by the foreign (European) 'other', the 'Leave' newspapers contributed to a great extent to the shaping of the 2016 vote and, by way of consequence, to the situation the country finds itself in at this moment, when a hard, 'no deal' Brexit is just around the corner.

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Interestingly enough, the people of the United Kingdom seem to have awoken, in the meantime, to the prospects of what awaits the country after its self-imposed isolation from Europe. Resting on a significant number of arguments in favour of Remain, e.g. an online list of no less than "98 Reasons To Stay In The EU: Benefits Of Membership For The UK" (which had better been outlined before June 23rd, 2016), the Brits looked throughout 2018 and in the first months of 2019 (before Theresa May's stepping down from office) into ways of annulling the effects of their vote. Revoking unilaterally Article 50 ("Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements.") was an idea, a re-referendum was another, though quickly dismissed. Films were released to put on display the propaganda apparatus that divided Britain – an excellent example in this respect is playwright James Graham's production *Brexit: The Uncivil War* (HBO 2019). As Sarah Helm notes in her review published by *The Guardian* (a newspaper constantly in support of Remain),

*Graham, or his directors and producers, were right to stage this Brexit drama when they did. Just as it was broadcast, showing the leave campaign devising its winning slogan – Take Back Control – the political order collapsed further, our leaders never so out of control as they headed to the cliff edge. Nor has any piece of journalism bettered Graham's focus-group scene in portraying how the poison of Brexit has set ordinary people against each other, or exposed how easily our feeble leaders were led by opportunistic apparatchiks. (The Guardian, Jan. 10, 2019).*

Starting from the idea expressed by the same journalist in the article quoted above, that "the failure of journalists to present the truth about Europe and our relationship with it is much to blame for the mess we are in today", this study attempts to look into a corpus of newspaper articles on both sides, published before the referendum. Combining the linguistic and cultural perspectives, with scientific tools from the domain of Discourse Analysis, the paper will trace their main arguments and the way in which manipulation of the voters' views was better performed by the Leave side.

### 4. DISCUSSIONS

In social sciences, from which linguistics should not and cannot be divorced, framing refers to a set of means by which individuals, groups and entire societies come to perceive and understand reality. It is a communicative scheme that relies on rhetoric and sociolinguistics attributes such as interpretation, representation, stereotype, and conceptual metaphor, in order to convey and conceptualize information in such a way that the message receivers end up perceiving realities in a constructed, steered manner. Simply put, the media and other purveyors of language create frames and favour certain interpretations over others, thus acquiring mass consent over political, social, economic or cultural matters. "Frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience. The word salience itself needs to be defined: It means making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences" (Entman, 1993: 53). In the article cited, Robert M. Entman exemplifies media framing making use of a topical event at the time: the impending war in Iraq. Fed with only two options, the American public came to interiorize, via the media, what the elites wanted them to accept: that negotiations were off the table: *Reflecting the play of power and boundaries of discourse over an issue, many news texts exhibit homogeneous framing at one level of analysis, yet competing frames at another. Thus, in the pre-war debate over U.S. policy toward Iraq, there was a tacit consensus among U.S. elites not to argue for such options as negotiation between Iraq and Kuwait. The news frame included only two remedies, war now or sanctions now with war (likely) later, while problem definitions, causal analyses, and moral evaluations were homogeneous (1993: 55).*

Basically, it is not what is said but how, when, where, to whom is said. Because framing is also contextually and culturally dependant. And when the addressee is British, insularity and imperialism come into play. Not playing upon Britishness is probably the error committed by the 'Remain' media. (It is high time we mentioned that, owing to space constraints, only the written media is referred to here.). Among the British newspapers that advocated that the UK remain a part of the European Union, the most relevant were *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *Financial Times*, whilst on the Leave side one should list *Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Sunday Times*. If one notes in this 'great divide' a distinction between quality and tabloid press, one is not far from truth. Could it also be the discourse simplicity of the latter, as opposed to the (leftist) intellectualism displayed by the journalists of *The Guardian*, for instance, what better convinced the average readership? It may well be the case.

Brexit framing was at least threefold, as mentioned above: immigration, finances, and Brussels control over the internal affairs of the United Kingdom. While the political reasons of the elites might have been manifold, these three were most often circulated by the Leave press because they spoke most straightforwardly to every Tom, Dick and Harry. How could one not fear 'the Arab threat' induced by Merkel's imposition of a refugee quota in the circumstance of the Syrian crisis? How can Britons forget about what happened to their American cousin on 9/11 and to themselves on 7/7? "Increasingly the press constructed the image of an immigration system, and by extension, a nation manipulated, 'abused' and compromised by 'illegal' migrants who were prone to criminality and even terrorism", note Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore in an extended analysis on the press coverage of the refugee crisis (2015: 15). Another immediate threat to the average British citizen is the free circulation within the borders of the EU, which 'floods' the British Isles' shores with Romanians, Bulgarians and Polish willing to accept underpaid jobs. *Flood* is among the most frequently used metaphors to British media when it comes to Eastern European migrants, alongside *wave*, *surge*, *flow* and other conceptualisations of water as dangerous, note Neagu and Colipcă-Ciobanu in the chapter 'Metaphor and Self/Other Representations: A Study on British and Romanian Headlines on Migration' (2014). Just a few days before the referendum, on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, *The Sun* is playing this card again in an article entitled "A vote for Brexit is all it takes to set Britain free": "Scrapping the free movement of people — that sacred foundation stone of the EU — will finally give Britain some control over the numbers of migrants *flooding in* from Europe"; "full border controls will allow us to regulate *the flow*"; "it could be to relieve the pressure on the working-class communities that have been hit by *the surge* in their migrant population".

More important than the ability "to pick and choose the migrants with the skills [they] need", presumably possible only in the case of a leave vote, much more important than the possibility "to free up [their] net contribution to the EU — a *staggering* £250 million a week — to spend wherever it is most needed. That could be *the NHS*." (one should note the adjective *staggering* used to enhance the readers' reaction to the large amount of money mentioned, and also the reference to the health system, modalized by 'could' — as in, we cannot promise you this), is the appeal to the British pride (and prejudice). It sets out from the very headline: "to set Britain free". Needless to say that Britain WAS free but the tabloid keeps claiming that it was not: "we can follow in the footsteps of other major democracies *by gaining our independence*." (Ironically enough, the democracies they speak about are the American, Canadian and Australian ones, and it is far from being a historical secret from whom they gained their independence.). The EU is conceptualised as a *monster* that keeps Britain in a *stranglehold*, *engulfing* their democracy. In another article, published on June 13<sup>th</sup>, Brussels — used as a synecdoche for the entire EU — is *dictatorial*, and the UK must, again, become *free from* a European Union that is "greedy, wasteful, bullying and breathtakingly incompetent". By contrast, Britain would assess their sovereignty by leaving the EU, turning back into a "self-governing, powerful nation *envied* by all".

While *The Sun* and, by extension, all tabloid media push forward all these imagined dangers that await Britain should they remain in the EU, playing upon an inherited imperialist naivety of the Brits taught for centuries to regard themselves as superiorly isolated and at the same time, valiant and worthy conquerors of the world, quality newspapers play the (losing) card of explaining in complicated, almost academic terms, why Brexit is "a journey into the unknown" (*The Guardian*, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). They rather feebly debunk the leavers' arguments — feebly in the sense of the public appeal of their reasoning — instead of finding believable arguments for Remain. They are ironic in their pointing out that the Leave supporters manipulate figures, and they also commit the unpardonable error of appealing to authority

*(argumentum ab auctoritate): Brexiteers [...] have their own slew of figures to show how much money would be freed up by the return of Britain's £8bn a year contribution to EU funds, a figure much disputed and already spent many times over by the Leave campaign. Experts in every field from City giants and economists to university researchers and public health officials, are overwhelmingly for Remain. Barack Obama said it as clearly as he decently can. But who needs experts in a populist era? (White, 2016 in The Guardian)*

Equally ironic is their option to publish, just a few days before the referendum, whilst the Leavers crowd their press with all the arguments available at hand, as shown above, a lengthy article signed by an American political editor. Entitled “What is Brexit and why does it matter? The EU referendum guide for Americans” - cui prodest, anyway? – the article employs an elevated vocabulary – “Industrial unrest amid persistent economic malaise in Europe, the refugee crisis and terrorist attacks have all contributed to a deep and urgent sense of foreboding across the continent” – which is of course accessible to the readers of The Guardian but, at the same time, can serve as an extra argument for the small yet significant margin by which the Leavers won.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As White remarks, “the campaign for Brexit feeds on decades-old, home-grown resentments. Real or imagined, they include nostalgia for imperial certainties and for pre-globalised jobs for life, plus resentment of immigrants and of rules imposed by “unelected” courts and commissions in Brussels” (The Guardian 2016). The arguments of multiculturalism and globalization could not convince the majority of the self-centred British nation to stick with the others in a union, even though the political, social and economic effects of their choice are foreseeably catastrophic in the long run (an aspect that the British have already come to realise, a little too late). Just as the population is divided between urban and rural, young and old, elites and commoners – with the former in each pair in favour of Remain, and the latter, in favour of Leave, the media were split between intellectualism and populism, and as it usually happens, the latter prevailed.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [7] Berry, Mike, Garcia-Blanco, Inaki, Moore, Kerry. Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries. Report prepared for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (December 2015). Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. 2015.
- [8] Boffey, Daniel and Helm, Toby. ‘56% of Britons would vote to quit EU in referendum, poll finds’ The Guardian, November 17th, 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/nov/17/eu-referendum-poll>
- [9] Churchill, Winston. ‘United States of Europe’. September 19, 1946, Zurich. <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/united-states-of-europe/>
- [10] Entman, Robert M. ‘Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm’. Journal of Communication, Volume 43, Issue 4, December 1993, 51–58, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- [11] Haignon, David. “Caring” John Major: portrait of a Thatcherite as a One-Nation Tory. Observatoire de la société britannique, 7 | 2009, 177-196.
- [12] Helm, Sarah. ‘Brexit: The Uncivil War proves Hamlet right: the play's the thing’. The Guardian, January 10th, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/10/james-graham-drama-brexit-the-uncivil-war>



## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## CONSIDERATIONS ON THE HUMAN BODY

Liviu Nedelcu (a)\*

(a) Ph.D. Candidate, Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [liviu1962@yahoo.com](mailto:liviu1962@yahoo.com)

### *Abstract*

Texts, language, communication should always be considered in their social context. Texts do not merely The article starts from the premise that the human body is the most complex synthesis of our artistic culture. The iconography of the body reflects the philosophical and ideological development of cultures, whereas its history shows the extent to which aesthetic and legal motivations, emotions and institutions are connected. In order to prove this point I considered mandatory revisiting the main epochs in which significant changes were produced in the visual representation of the human body. The different manner of rendering the body in art depends on social, political and religious contributions which underpin not only a peculiar style in depicting the human body but also the production of a specific way of seeing, as art organizes and describes our perception field. This allows one to trace the shifts in representing the human body and to grasp the meaning behind them, in order to get a glimpse of the main historical periods. The research focuses on several epochs: Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance, neo-classical period, nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the changes the human body suffer in the manner it is depicted but also in the way it is perceived. The exhaustive attempt in addressing the representation of the human body throughout centuries is also motivated by the fragmentary relationship the contemporary individual has with the past, sustained by a here and now attitude, having its roots in the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century.

**Keywords:** human body; artistic culture; visual representation;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Being an artist who has constantly been exploring the possibilities of painting as an artistic medium of expression, I ended up addressing the human body as a motive in multiple series of my works. The investigations I have pursued in my studio have always been underpinned by theoretical research. I always thought that a contemporary artist has to be modern and, in order to stay modern one has to be up to date with the historical unfolding of art in order to understand the present artistic trends and to pursue innovation.

Some art movements, developed in the twentieth century, broke with the past and also with the art system (avant-garde movements) or chose to access it in a rather detached manner and ended up, in the opinion of some theoreticians (Jameson, 1991, p. 95), to create an art full of signifiers which lack meaning. Considering mandatory to be in touch with the past in order to meaningfully develop in the present, I embarked on a research which focuses on the close connection between art and the political,

social, technological fields, pinpointing the transformations the representation of the human body underwent along the centuries, in order to reveal the influences projected on art by outside entities. (Przyluski, 1942, p. 85)

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

The research makes use of key works in art history, sociology of art, anthropology of art and art theory. The references draw on Erwin Panofsky studies on iconology, Dan Hăulică lyrical approach of main art movements and prominent figures, the writings of Pierre Francastel which cover a wide range of subjects in both history of painting, sculpture and architecture, the work of Alfred Gell which analyses the dynamics of the relationship developed between individual and the surrounding objects, Fredric Jameson's harsh writings on postmodernism and the changes the art underwent in the last decades, Amelia Jones and RoseLee Goldberg exhaustive studies on body art and performance.

The article "Considerations on the Human Body in European Art" is different from the other similar ones for its focus on several historical periods, making accessible an overview of the changes which occurred in the representation of the human body. In spite of a fragmentary presentation, I pursued a complex approach of the topic.

## **3. ARGUMENT OF THE PAPER & ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE THESIS**

The article is, in fact, an investigation of the close relationship between political, social, religious and technological fields and art. The article tries to find answers to the following questions. Which is the most persistent motive in European art? What changes has it suffered along the times? What drove these shifts in representation? What entities were impacted by the unfolding of these changes? Who are the main actors that projected these influences on art? To find the answers to all of these questions one must look at art in the context it was produced in order to understand how it shaped the artwork belonging to that period. Art theorists for example Baxandall stated that there is a clear analogy between culture-specific aesthetics and period-specific aesthetics. The reception of art of peculiar periods in the history of Western art depended on how the art was seen at the time. (Baxandall quoted in Gell, 1998, p. 2-4) One will discover that the ways of seeing change over time.

Briefly revisiting the history of European art and its most persistent recurrent motive aims at proving that the variations on the iconography of the body mirror the philosophical debates, the social and technological changes and the current ideology. The main objectives of this article are to familiarize the reader with the major changes in depicting the human body, with the actors who produced them and the epochs which accommodated them in order to get a glimpse of the peculiarity of these historical periods and the way the socio-political and technological changes impacted on art.

Revisiting European art, both modern and contemporary, confirms the role model of Ancient Greece which imposes its interest in the human flesh. The Greeks were the first to impose the body's natural beauty, presenting nudity as symbol of human dignity, a democratic effigy of original equality. Initially reserved to the male body, nudes in Greek art idealized the triumphs of the athletes in the arena or the representations of the deities in the religious pantheon. Later on, female nudes reached art, hence the endurance to present times of Praxiteles's Aphrodite of Knidos or the famous Venus of Milo. Body harmony was synonymous to the supreme good for the old Greeks.

The pride of the beautiful body showed itself beyond aestheticism and the resorts of a mere sensation: it stood for a serious inalienable sign of civilisation". (Hăulică, 1984, p. 171) The difference between the Greeks and the barbarians, according to Thucydides, is marked in a civilising sense, from the moment nudity becomes rule at the Olympic Games.

The nude and image of the human flesh, along with the overcoming of prejudice in various époques, will display many cases of deformations. Christian art in the first centuries AD, then the art of the Middle Ages came with profound changes in the representation of the human body. Nudity almost disappeared from artistic themes and the concerns of the artists during the respective period; only the depiction of the Adam and Eve couple endured as symbol of the original sin or the Judgement Day scene when resurrected humanity awaits its verdict in the divine trial of the divorce of good from evil. In Christian art, the human body was not related directly to the real world and bore little resemblance to it,

circumscribing to a transcendent universe. The anatomical plot was subjected to mental schemes, and not anatomical guidelines.

Regarding art and figuration, the Middle Ages can be characterised by the succeeding of the two great systems of representation: the Byzantine and the Gothic one. As starting point for a formal stylisation, the Byzantine system draws on the fixed articulations of the human body, whilst the Gothic one dissociates qualitative representation of movement by the conventional structure of the bodies. Despite all these, not the entire art of the Middle Ages may be labelled as free of illusionist intentions with an intended dissociation of the representation of realistic bodily structures from movement.

Renaissance, which meant the spiritual rediscovery of man, reintroduced nude representation in fine arts as essential entity of the universe and not as element of sin. Although they aimed at resurrecting the spirit of ancient nudity, the Renaissance artists created a new vision on the human body. The analysis and the anatomical study following nature imposed an image of the nude which was closer and closer to reality. The science of the nude as a specific Italian discipline was brought to perfection by the creations of Renaissance titans such as Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo Buonarroti.

Nude becomes since 16th century, sort of an intellectual emblem, when the human body is imposed as one of the main elements of Western artistic education. This emblem is similar to the case of the perspective approach of composition. The artists in question approached ideal forms of the body and space, a result of a learned meditation taking into consideration the presence and the position of the viewer. The study of anatomy revealed to the artists the possibility to handle science, as well as a certain intellectual elevation, thus switching from the area of mechanical art to the field of liberal arts. Nude and the human body will triumph in the era of Renaissance as an expression of intellectual ambition.

Anatomy, in search of proportions on the study of form, proposed elements of geometric idealisation. The proportions of the human body were postulated as model for architects by Vitruvius and plenty of comparisons were made between architectural elements and the human body, revealing a condition imposed in relation to the great doctrine of macrocosm-microcosm. The image of man with his hands stretched and height that can be circumscribed to both circle and square, fundamental figures of the universe, is the product of the fusion between cosmological traditions.

The image of Leonardo's *ad quadratum* and *ad circulum* man is symmetrically represented. Symmetry was understood and applied differently in works of art throughout time. Despite the prevalence of symmetry in the architecture and sculpture of the great epochs, in the case of Egyptians' painting, "care for an exhaustive enumeration of the elements of information rules over absolute regularity in balancing elements within the limits of the figurative plan, hence implicit symmetry of the object rather than figuration". (Francastel, 1972, p. 242) Erwin Panofsky, in a study on Egyptian art showed that the artists of the period understood art as an objective transfer in raw matter of a spiritual, eternal reality susceptible to a double approach, namely sensitive and intellectual. (Panofsky, 1983, p. 130)

The 18th and 19th century come with profound changes in the representation of the human body. The court art of the 18th century created a new nude model, an exponent of an equally daring and refined eroticism. Artists such as François Boucher or Jean Honoré Fragonard painted compositions of mythological themes, portraying sensuous nudes at the edge of the licentious.

The neoclassical period at the beginning of the 19th century preferred the heroic nude, bearer of high moral virtues. Walking on the footsteps of their great forerunner, Nicolas Poussin, the French Jean Louis David and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres were the creators of the classical nude that idealised anatomical data to display perfect human prototypes. Although sometimes artificial, because of too learned seeking, these nudes mostly dominated the taste of the century.

Towards the end of the century, Edouard Manet breached this consecrated model, imposing, in compositions such as *Breakfast on the Grass* and *Olympia*, nudes without any mythological connotation simply inspired from real life with anatomical effects and disproportions inherent to a live model. Vehemently contested during their time, these paintings marked the onset of Impressionism, an artistic movement that revolutionised the art of the end of the century and decisively influenced the artistic creation from the beginning of the 20th century.

Nicolas Bourriaud in his latest book "The Exform" pinpoints the real reason of the scandals ignited by the famous works of Courbet (*The Origin of the World*) and Manet (*Lunch on the Grass*). In his opinion the works reveal the gap between real and the ideal, between matter and ideology. (Bourriaud, 2017, p. 80) „In turn – Edouard Manet – experienced the same rejection with his "Lunch on the Grass"

inasmuch as the ideological basis legitimating the painting had been removed, history and myth expelled, and the idea of the pastoral concerto banished, the public could no longer see anything but two students in the company of women of ill repute.” (ibidem, 2017, p. 81)

Despite belonging to the avant-garde group of the impressionists, Degas had been an admirer of Ingres since his youth. To the impressionism promoted by Monet or Renoir, he opposed a substantial objection: the exact sensation is in fact of the mind, before being a visual one; there cannot be another way to see without a new means to think. For Degas, the artist is not a receptor, a screen that projects “the immovable movement of Creation”; the painter is a being capable to capture reality, to bring space close to him. In his works, the space of life, the one beyond the painting is to be continued in it. (Argan, 1982, p. 320) For Degas, the human body cannot be an abstract entity, always the same one; its actions have physical and psychic causes that the individual sometimes is not aware of.

Modernity had to come for the deformed body and its breaking into pieces to stop being the place of symbolic or narrative organisation. Pablo Picasso was equally considered the greatest innovator and destroyer of 20th century art; he distorted and metamorphosized the human body until it stopped being nude and became an almost abstract symbol for the intensity of psychic feelings. It seemed it reached the threshold of non-figurative art and would disappear as artistic subject. New currents brought it back to the pipeline. Surrealism which was concerned with the richness of oneiric states and the mysteries of the unconscious drew on the theme of the nude as an essential subject. (De Micheli, 1968, p. 191) Artists such as Salvador Dali, René Magritte or Paul Delvaux prioritised the nude in their creation. Hyperrealism employed the nude to achieve images in which he presented as thoroughly as possible the motive in order to compete with photography.

The expressionist paintings depict the tragedy of the tough years for Germany and Austria. Otto Dix’s painting, “Three women” draws on the myth of the three graces. Stylisations, the rhythm of the drawing, the interest and curiosity for anatomy prove that taking on illustrious models reflects the perfect recall of art history while simulating its oblivion. (De Micheli, 1968, p. 262) Expressionist nudes propose a game of densities, of the pondered imbalance of forms, either too thick or too thin.

The creation of another great artist of the 20th century, Matisse, reflects the faith that art may still hold the supreme truths of existence, the infinite harmonies of the universe. For Matisse, the beauty cannot be a finite form, but a continuous and rhythmic one. Human bodies stretch and bend themselves in a rhythm that transforms them and their particular beauty, a physical, not cosmic one, which cannot be broken from its space of movement. (Argan, 1982, p. 93)

Frankness defines the contemporary attempts in question where the most important ones aim at reviving the language of the human body, often going as far as the casting (Segal or Kienholz). Body Art pushes frankness even further replacing the image of the body in fiction by the living body itself, as material, as readymade. (Landstrom, 2018, p. 61) Since Documenta 5, Rudolf Schwarzkogler proposed a sort of “narcissism of the ugly”, and Lucas Samaras’s demonstrations, dating from the same period, also proposed to us an “exasperating autobiography of the body”; an autobiography of meaningless events based on late Dadaist slogans. Some advocated that “Everything is art”.

#### **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

As in the period prior to contemporaneity, the object materializes the behaviour of an epoch; it contains utility values and social ones from which some of its aesthetic qualities derive. Performance art and body art best mirror the relationship between art and the socio-political field, as it was developed against the logic of late capitalism and its harmful effects. Gina Pane, Chris Burden, Marina Abramović’s works aimed at restoring the capacity of empathy and blaming the violence of Vietnam War. (Goldberg, 1988, p. 181)

Drawing on their bodies as materials for art production, was an attitude opposing the limits of traditional mediums of expression but also a response to the way the capitalist system impacts the art market, transforming the artwork in a commodity. Employing the body made possible to elude the requests of the market, to create something quite difficult to be sold, as the only ephemera left were photographs / video footage and thus challenged the status and the material nature of the artwork. (Jones & Warr, 1998, p. 25)

## 5. CONCLUSION

Briefly revisiting the main developments in the history of art, the oldest communication of thought, one notices the presence of the human body as one of the recurrent motive which records the changes in depiction which took place during the centuries. (Francastel, 1970, p. 123) As nothing can be more direct, natural and present in our concrete experience, than the human body, its constant presence in the artists' explorations comes naturally. At a closer look one can discover that the relativity of conventions in rendering a peculiar subject is nowhere else more present than in the case of this motive, hence the particular interest in the topic. The changes in representation were driven by various factors: socio-political, religious, philosophical.

In order to engage in a deep understanding of the artwork behind one's eyes, is important to also analyse the artwork in the context it was produced, to move further from the detached contemplative experience. The artwork has a seminal role in communicating thought between people and acquiescence of aspirations and needs by every era. The artist does not only record sensations, but also a show of objects taken over from outside in his individual activity. The human eye is not an isolated sense, we only see what we know, and the retina does not show more than a gathering of immediately identifiable objects in a well-established framework. We perceive and distinguish only those things that correspond to determined demands by the levels of culture. In this case, the object seen depends on other forms of knowledge.

By means of what has been previously presented, we may argue that art facilitates the fixation of images that contemporary man forms in his mind or experience in society; artists are creators of forms that will then serve as language of the time in which they live.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Argan, C. G. *Modern Art*, Bucharest, Meridiane, 1982, pp. 93, 320;
- [2] Bourriaud, Nicolas. *The Exform*, New York, Verso, 2016, pp. 80, 81;
- [3] Cantor, Lou and Rochester, Katherine (ed). *Intersubjectivity vol. II*, Berlin, Sternberg Press, 2018, p. 61;
- [4] Francastel, Pierre. *Figurative Reality*, Bucharest, Meridiane, 1972, p. 242;
- [5] Francastel, Pierre. *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, published by: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970, p. 123;
- [6] Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 2-4;
- [7] Goldberg, RoseLee. *Performance art from futurism to present*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 1988, p. 181;
- [8] Hăulică, Dan. *Nostalgia of Synthesis*, Bucharest, Eminescu, 1984, p. 171;
- [9] Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* – Duke University Press, 1991, p. 95;
- [10] Jones, Amelia; Warr, Tracey. *The Artist's Body*, Phaidon, 1998, p. 25.;
- [11] De Micheli, Mario. *The Artistic Avant-Garde of the Twentieth Century*, Bucharest, Meridiane, 1968, pp. 191, 262;
- [12] Panofsky, Erwin. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, University of Chicago Press, 1983, p. 130;
- [13] Przuluski, Jean. *L'Evolution humaine*, published by: Presses Universitaires de France, Published by Puf, 1942, p. 85.





## MCDSARE: 2019

# International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

## A QUESTION OF METHOD: READING WAR POETRY AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

Isabela Merilă (a)\*

(a) Ph.D., Dunarea de Jos University from Galati, Romania,

E-mail: [imerila@ugal.ro](mailto:imerila@ugal.ro)

### *Abstract*

In the several years of leading a practice class on poetry at undergraduate level, I have noticed that, more often than not, students doubt their ability to understand and relate to a poem, even more than they do in regard to any other type of literary text. It goes beyond the natural reserve of someone who has not had sufficient practice in the field of critical analysis and the resulting reaction is equivalent to disqualifying oneself from the race before it has even started. The following pages are dedicated to one of the strategies which helped overcome this obstacle and which promotes close reading in a manner that the students may find engaging. It was employed in the discussion of war poetry with second-year students enrolled in the BA English Program at the Faculty of Letters, "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, Romania. Four texts were selected: *Grodek*, by Georg Trakl (in English by Michael Hamburger), *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, by Wilfred Owen, *Leaving for the Front*, by Alfred Lichtenstein (translated by Patrick Bridgwater) and *Gala*, by Guillaume Apollinaire (in Oliver Bernard's translation). These texts, as well as a short, relevant biographical note for each of the poets were the only aids employed in an exercise that constantly managed to result in constructive exchanges of ideas and a deeper understanding of how critical analysis can be employed without becoming tedious or overly stressful.

**Keywords:** teaching; poetry; war; philology; higher education;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the many years of conducting a practice class on poetry, one initial reaction from my students appeared almost constantly. It can be placed somewhere between weariness and apprehension, while being often expressed by means of something which can best be described as a groan. While the number of students voicing these feelings may differ, the frequency of the scene in question requires that they be taken into account when planning any class of this kind.

Behind the groan, there lies a series of reasons and aspects, such as: seeing poetry as something encrypted or something they have to dissect and which, therefore, has nothing to do with the pleasure of reading, on the one hand, and/or it requires a higher level of instruction than they feel they possess or more effort than they are willing to invest in reading and processing it, on the other hand; regarding poetry as something remote from daily reality; having a limited perception of the genre as including only

sentimental or lyrical forms and associating the latter with emotions or traits of character that make one feel vulnerable when discussed publicly, etc.

To a certain extent, this can be included under the umbrella of students' reaction to literary texts in general. Marius Nica (2011) remarks: "in the last ten years I have noticed a significant decline in students' interest in reading and also in learning literature. When discussing with literature teachers we all identified one specific problem: that students were less and less active as they became interested more in listening a lecture than taking part in a free discussion." (215) However, this seems to be even more the case with poetry, or "one of the most undesirable literary discourses that students come across in schools" as Nica describes it in the same article. The question is how to change that.

The most effective answer should probably start from a thorough analysis of the entire curriculum, from the early years and to the highest level of study, and it should continue with applications and "corrective action" at the level of teacher training programs, as well as philology ones. However, since it is not within the scope of this paper to discuss education policy, the example of various authors who tried to find answers appropriate for the context in which they activate and, most importantly, for the participants to their classes shall be followed instead. Some of their ideas will be referenced in this paper, in keeping with its main objective, that of presenting a practical example which has met with a considerable degree of success along the years.

## 2. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

For the past fifteen years I have been teaching a practice class on poetry to second-year students enrolled in the BA English Program at the Faculty of Letters, "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, Romania. The number of participants has varied greatly from one group to the next, not only from one year to another, ranging between as few as six and as many as twenty-five.

The questions that Tanya Agathocleous and Ann Dean (2003) ask in the opening of their book entitled *Teaching Literature. A Companion*, may well be the starting point of any lesson: "What do you want your students to learn? What do you want them to do in your class? What do they do instead? How do you respond?" (1) Therefore, they shall also be used as guidelines for the description of this class. To answer the first question, I wanted my students to learn about poetry as something alive, not as something to be left on a pedestal or between the dusty pages of a book that no one opens any more.

As such, they were exposed to the diversity and the playfulness of the genre, both at the textual level and the cultural one. The course explored the uses of poetry in myth and legend, in rituals, its combination to other arts, especially music and painting, some of its so-called culture-specific forms that have come to transgress such frontiers and some of poetry's uses in contexts that, at first glance, have nothing to do with the world of literature: political protest, social activism, and war.

Thus, another aim of the course was to underline the fact that literature in general, and poetry in particular, in the realms of this class, has a strong, although not always obvious or straightforward relation with the manifestations, desires, struggles of the 'real' world. Furthermore, although the course was organized on the areas enumerated above, the attempt was to emphasize connections, syncretism and interdisciplinarity, but with poetry at the core. Throughout, one of the main convictions behind this approach can be related to Wormser and Cappella's (2000) observation: "What does it mean to teach poetry? First of all, it means being comfortable with poetry." (334)

Which leads to the second question, i.e. "What do you want your students to do in your class?". The shortest answer would be: to communicate – with the teacher and among themselves, to become and remain involved, interested in the activities throughout, to read closely and to develop their critical skills, to use and improve their English and to have fun, to play. Which means that the focus was on the interactive methods, since, to quote Nica, the solution to students' apathy in literary matters is not "about changing students' focus or about 'summoning' them in libraries, but about displaying literature as being funny and attractive, easy to understand and easy to comment upon." (2011: 215)

The last two questions are more practice-oriented, therefore they will be considered in the next sections of the paper, which focus on a specific technique employed during these classes and which will also try to add to the answers already given to the first two.

### 3. WAR POETRY

War poetry is not a subject that the students have many chances to discuss and discover before attending the above-described practice class. And this is not necessarily a reflection of the current perspective on education. Some earlier generations' encounter with the genre was mostly under the form of patriotic, nationalistic verse, promoting heroic and exemplary figures of self-sacrifice for the good of the nation. The result was a rather one-sided perspective on this type of writing. As far as English literary studies at undergraduate level are concerned, the main texts from the curriculum which may be integrated in this category – without considering the epics – belong to the early medieval age and they are *The Battle of Maldon* and *The Battle of Brunanburh*. There, the main interest seems to be in contrasting exemplary with dishonourable behaviour on the battlefield and celebrating a crushing victory, respectively.

Under these circumstances, some of the texts by the First World War soldier-poets, with their often conflicting views and unanswered questions can come as a welcome departure from the model or as a possible basis for a contrastive study. And, although not in the curriculum, other texts than the two mentioned above can be used for the same purpose, e.g. Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*. The analysis can cover not only the textual level, but the cultural one as well, since "once at the front, the reality of war was perceived by most of those actively involved to be totally different [...] from what could have been expected from previous wars, especially after the introduction of tanks and gas warfare." (Puissant 2009: 2)

Therefore, one of the possible approaches to the selected texts would be an interdisciplinary one, connecting literature with history. For example, Jessie Pope's *The Call*, published in 1915, was sometimes used as an introduction to the poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, which led to a discussion about differences between texts produced by non-combatants and those by soldier-poets, as well as considering the use of literature for propaganda purposes. One aspect the teacher should keep under observation and address, if necessary, is the tendency to reduce the issue to a series of binary oppositions: home vs. front, male vs. female, pro-war vs. anti-war, etc. For instance, Kendall (2013) points out that: "the soldier-poets who were capable of seeing and writing are often credited with having been 'anti-war', and their works are routinely recruited for propaganda by campaigners opposed to later conflicts. In accounts of the War and the art that it inspired, futility has defeated glory as the appropriate response, and Wilfred Owen has become the antidote to Rupert Brooke (who, it is often argued, would have come round to the right way of thinking if he had lived long enough). This risks damaging the achievements of the soldier-poets, because it neglects the extent to which their writings struggle with contradictory reactions to the War. [...] Most soldier-poets – like most soldiers – believed the War to be necessary, but wanted the costs acknowledged and the truths told". (21-22)

One of the possible ways to counteract this tendency would be offering counter-examples. However, time constraints may dictate that they be addressed only briefly, which may reduce their impact. Another avenue to be explored when approaching the topic of First World War poetry is connected to literary history and it concerns its chronological and artistic placement between the Victorian age and modernism. Which, in terms of genre, means that "the huge amount of poetry that evolved out of this situation of horror can be situated in a central position between the decline of realistic and pastoral modes of writing at the beginning of the twentieth century and the rise of Modernism quickly gaining ground after the end of the First World War." (Puissant 2009: 4) Therefore, in terms of didactic aims, the selected texts can be used to activate the knowledge the students may already possess of poetic forms, while introducing new modes of expression and exposing them to the diversity and richness that comes with all the "isms" that go under the large heading of modernist art. Moreover, with certain texts, the connection between literature, music and painting can also be brought into focus, providing an almost syncretic experience.

With reference to experience, the teacher should also expect a certain degree of reticence on the part of the students, due to the nature of the topic. Even more than in other cases, this type of poetry promises to reference or elicit emotions that they may not wish to face. However, if the lesson is scheduled later in the semester, they will have had a chance to better understand the purposes of the course, they will have gained greater confidence in themselves and in the teacher, which will reduce the level of these emotions considerably. There is, usually, a distinguishable difference between their response when the topic is announced in the beginning of the semester and their attitude when its turn

comes. As for the students' reactions during the discussion, they are quite diverse and sometimes contradictory. For example, one of the appeal of the poems is their direct relation to actual events and "this experiential component is doubled for we read not only the recalled experience the poetry expresses but also the creator's response to such experience." (Silkin 1998: x) However, as mentioned above, this may also cause some of them to feel triggered and retreat, which, among other things, is counterproductive to critical analysis and close-reading. The nature of the exercise which constitutes the object of this study and the fact that, within it, students work in groups helped with this situation and with maintaining the focus on the given task.

#### 4. THE EXERCISE

The following exercise was designed so as to help overcome the reluctance students sometimes display when faced with the task of reading in the classroom, especially when the latter is correlated with literary analysis. It consists of dividing the students into groups, if possible, and presenting them with a challenge. They receive four poems into English, written by poets who fought in the First World War, as well as a handout with a short list of information on the author's life and, especially, style of writing. The exercise can be employed with the participants doing individual work, but many of them feel reluctant to talk afterwards and develop on their findings. Whereas, within a group, their insights have less chances of being overlooked, especially due to the nature of the established goal.

It is preferable for the poems to be placed on the same page, because they will be easier to compare. The name of the author is placed only above the corresponding bio-note, not alongside the poem they wrote as well. The challenge is for the students to determine who wrote what poem on the basis of the information provided.

One of the main risks that come with this exercise is that they might be tempted to simply "flip a coin" or rush through the texts and be done with it. Therefore, it is essential for the teacher to emphasize the fact that the "correct" answer is not what is going to matter in the subsequent conversation, but the arguments supporting their choices. It might be useful to ask for a number of arguments, as well. However, that may prove daunting for the students and it may shift undue focus on the number, rather than on the solidity of the arguments. Moreover, in the case of students who feel less comfortable with literary criticism and, therefore, do not usually take part in such activities, the discovery of one appropriate evaluation might be considered a success.

The initial spark of inspiration for this approach was provided by an online game as part of a tutorial by Stuart D. Lee (1996) on a site managed by the University of Oxford and which challenged the user to identify the nationality of the poets who wrote certain war poems presented in their English translation. When considering the objectives, the author mentions: "not only will [this tutorial] bring some other poets to the fore from non-British backgrounds, but it will also ask users to question their own inherent prejudices. To most people in English-speaking countries the German, Turkish, or Austrian soldier is an unknown quantity, vaguely referred to in some of the poems. Yet what sentiments were the poets from those countries attempting to express? Similarly, even though they were allies during the War, the poetry of the soldiers of France, Russia, or Italy are seldom read outside of their countries by the beginning student".

While the objectives of the class described in these pages are quite different, and the selection of the texts may change completely, depending on the aims of the lesson, the class under focus kept the idea of poems coming from four different literary traditions and decided upon the following: *Grodek*, by Georg Trakl (in English by Michael Hamburger), *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, by Wilfred Owen, *Leaving for the Front*, by Alfred Lichtenstein (translated by Patrick Bridgwater) and *Gala*, by Guillaume Apollinaire (in Oliver Bernard's translation). This allowed for a view of literature beyond conventional borders and provided perspectives from both sides of the conflict which reveal what Puissant (2009) remarks in connection to Isaac Rosenberg's poem, *Break of Day in the Trenches*: "the rat will 'do the same' to all enemies at the front, a fact which exposes the distinction between enemy and ally or between nationalities to be artificial. In the rat's eyes these differences do not exist and are therefore absurd." (36) In other words, this moves the focus from 'x' vs. 'y' onto the individual experience of a traumatic event.

Another aspect that can shift the focus of the conversation is the information provided for each author and which should be read aloud before the group work begins, with the teacher providing

clarifications where necessary. Besides minimal detail about birth and circumstances of death – which, in the case of these four poets are all related to the war – the lists should include enough clues to guide students in their readings, but not too many or too obvious ones, which would detract from the pleasure of discovery. An example of a possible process of selection is presented in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.1. GEORG TRAKL – GRODEK**

Since *Grodek* is more concerned with the aftermath of battle, one detail which may help students in their quest is the fact that Trakl was trained in medicine and he was on the front as part of the Medical Corps. Added to this is the mention of the “sister’s shadow” (l. 12), which, in this case, may also refer to the sisters of mercy who were involved in caring for the wounded during World War I, not only to the frequent presence of the sibling in Trakl’s poetic works. Although such details do not pertain to the area of stylistic analysis, they still require close reading and the ability to make connections, which are some of the aims of the exercise.

A clue that is closer to the practice of literary criticism and which may be included on the handout is the author’s connection to expressionism. In *Grodek*, “the opening lines of the poem are marked by a striking disparity between the visual and auditory perceptions of the speaker: the idyllic evening landscape of ‘autumnal forests,’ ‘golden plains’ and ‘blue lakes’ is offset by the violent sounds of battle emanating from it. [...] This incongruity of sight and sound underlines the alienation of man, here perceived aurally, from the cosmic harmony embodied in the natural environment, perceived visually.” (Millington 2012: 253) Therefore, a well-known painting such as Edvard Munch’s *The Scream* may be used as didactic aid when presenting expressionism and before the group activity takes place. The visual aid should also provide a hint on the use of colour, which is also conspicuous in the poem. As Stillmark (2005) notes: “they are employed not naturalistically but rather with emotive and connotative force, their significance changing according to context.” (xviii) However, since Trakl’s is the only poem out of the four chosen to use colour to that effect, it would perhaps be better to omit this clue from the handout, and allow the students to make the connection with expressionism on their own, or, if they do not, to comment upon it during the subsequent discussion. Additionally, the long sentences, the experiments with syntax, the lack of rhyme, the imagery and the mood of the poem, as well as the general theme, which are in keeping with Trakl’s literary works in general, may also be explored in this latter part of the exercise.

#### **4.2. WILFRED OWEN – ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH**

The English poet is the best example, out of the four, of someone who was not only painfully aware of the disparity between the representation of war at home and the reality on the battlefield, but who also wrote about it. Kendall (2013) remarks: “His own ambition, as expressed in the draft preface to a volume of poems that he would not live to publish, was to ‘warn’: ‘That is why the true Poets must be truthful.’” (253) Therefore, this is one of the aspect that should be included on the handout, although the manner in which the “dialogue” on this topic is carried out in *Anthem* is highly ambiguous at times.

Another mention can be made to his complicated relation with organized religion in general and Christianity in particular. At first glance, this inclusion may seem to make the students’ work too easy, due to the numerous references present in the text: “bells” (l. 1), “orisons” (l. 4), “prayers” (l. 5), “choirs” (l. 6, 7), “candles” (l. 9), “holy” (l. 11). However, they often get distracted by the inclusion of the “angry god” (l. 8), “altars” (l. 15), “spirit” (l. 16) in *Grodek*, which is placed first on the page, and they attribute this poem to Owen. However, this leads to an interesting conversation afterwards, when they realise that the above-mentioned elements can be associated with other religious beliefs, especially since the reference is to “a god”. Otherwise said, it becomes a type of cautionary tale for those who rush through.

Two more pieces of the puzzle that may be added to the inventory are the lack of self-pity in Owen’s poems and a particular characteristic of his style: “he sought new ways to use language, and his mastery of alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance, and dissonance have been often cited” (Canfield 2012: 140) It is particularly tempting since the students spent several hours during their first year at university studying Old English poetry, therefore, they would have to put to good use their previously acquired knowledge. The fact that the selected text is a sonnet can be exploited in a similar fashion during the discussion after group work, as the whole of their second semester during the same first year of study is dedicated to renaissance literature and, quite extensively, to this type of poem. Some additional suggestions for this part of the lesson may be found in R.C. Evans’s (2014) *Perspectives on World War I*

*Poetry*, where he adopts in turn formalist, Marxist, traditional historical and postmodernist views in reading *Anthem for Doomed Youth*.

#### **4.3. ALFRED LICHTENSTEIN – LEAVING FOR THE FRONT**

Although generally associated with German expressionism (Newton 1971; Beutin et al. 2005 (1993); Donahue 2005), Lichtenstein's poem included in this selection may not be the most relevant example of that. Therefore, the information handout did not include that connection, but rather a mention of his use of irony and grim wit. Besides providing the students with one more opportunity to use their prior knowledge, it also adds to the challenge, as the title of Owen's poem at least is based on the same trope.

Although to reveal that "his war poetry is honest, simple and totally unheroic" (Furness and Humble 1997: 200), might over-simplify the task, one may, alternatively, find inspiration in Ida Porena's (1984) description of Alfred Lichtenstein war poems as free of rhetorical masks, as the expression of an act of surrender, as a realization of helplessness. (182) After the exercise, this can also be correlated with the simplicity of the distiches employed, which almost remind one of children's songs.

As in the case of Georg Trakl, the bio-note may also provide a lead for detection, since *Leaving for the Front* is, as the title announces, a poem that presents a scene that occurs before reaching the battlefield and Lichtenstein perished in the early days of the conflict.

#### **4.4. GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE - GALA**

This is the only name that is usually familiar to some of the students. Which does not necessarily entail an easier journey towards identifying which poem belongs to him. However, there have been instances when that was the case.

With Apollinaire, the mention of surrealism and cubism is almost self-evident, which is another opportunity for the students to acquire new notions and widen their perspectives or to contribute to the lesson by using their own experience, at the same time, making connections with other arts or other texts. The observation that his poems are "a genuine attempt to extend poetic suggestiveness, to bring about a new kind of synthesis (either between disparate material or between the pictorial and verbal arts), and to move poetic appreciation on to a more relevant foundation" (Broome and Chesters 1999: 89) seems particularly relevant for *Gala*. Moreover, the emphasis on modernist techniques and means of expression is enough for some of the participants to notice the absence of punctuation and add it to their list.

On the other hand, the surprising mixture of erotic or festive imagery with the military terminology, of nature and mechanical devices, of life and death provides another worthy addition to the set of modern poetic representations of war, which should help emphasize the diversity of styles, modes and perspectives.

### **5. CONCERNING METHODOLOGY**

After the handout containing information about each of the poets is read aloud and the teacher makes sure the concepts pertaining to literary and cultural theory are discussed, the first reading of the poems is done aloud as well and it is followed by a basic disambiguation of the meaning expressed, which is also the moment where new vocabulary should be clarified. The disambiguation, more often than not, takes the form of an oral paraphrasing translation.

The next step is for the students to work in groups and decide upon the author of each piece, which they write on a slip of paper and hand in when ready. This way the nerves associated with "guessing" the correct answer are eliminated and the participants are free to focus on the discussion and on the persuasiveness of the arguments, theirs and their colleagues'.

It is recommended for the teacher to avoid dismissing any earnest contribution, but rather point out or ask about elements that may come to contradict it. An example was the case of references to religious practices and beliefs with Trakl and Owen. Even though the lists that they are given may seem short, they contain as many aspects to be taken into account when they read each of the texts. One of the main purposes of the exercise is for them to read the poems more carefully than if they had been given the text and asked to analyse it. An additional purpose is to keep them involved or at least interested throughout. Which, in the majority of cases, is achieved quite successfully. Even the students who tend to daydream

or try to use their time otherwise employed during literature classes are intrigued by the riddle. The fact that the reading is guided and that they are taking steps towards literary analysis is, naturally, of great importance to the teacher, but less daunting for the student when being presented under the form this game.

Moreover, the students often come with their own interpretation of the text and with surprising connections and insights even if sometimes while following the “wrong” lead. “No one ‘owns’ poetry. What the teacher offers is familiarity with the knowledge base and a willingness to investigate the uses of poetry.” (Wormser and Cappella 2000: 335) By the end of the exercise, many of the participants forget that they have not yet found out who wrote which poem and they are caught in the process of finding and following clues more than they are interested in the solution.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

While attitudes and habits can hardly be changed with one exercise or one lesson, the practice class described above may be used in such a manner so as to combine several positive aspects:

- encouraging students to make connections across the curriculum and activate their prior knowledge, while providing a glimpse into modernism, which is part of the curriculum in their third year of study;
- teaching them how to approach and read a text from the perspective of a literary critic;
- creating a situation in which the participants exchange views not only with the teacher, but among themselves as well, and in this way learn from one another and become aware of the possibility of multiple readings;
- allowing the students to practice and improve their reading, speaking, and listening skills;
- opening a discussion which is both competitive and analytical;
- setting a task that is deeply connected to their philological training, while at the same time it allows for a dynamic, interactive, playful manner of solving it, etc.

Throughout the lesson, the teacher plays several roles: provider of information, mediator, assessor, manager, etc. As mentioned previously, one of the most important aspects that the organizer of the class should take into account is the need for an open, encouraging attitude when the various readings and solutions are discussed, while at the same time helping the student become aware of contradictions, faulty assumptions or any other weaknesses in their arguments. However, there are many other aspects that should be considered and carefully managed, i.e. time, the manner in which groups work together, students’ reactions to the solutions presented by colleagues, etc.

With these thoughts in mind, the result and the experience itself may prove rewarding both for the teacher and the students, leaving them not only with an improved level of (self) awareness and knowledge, but also with pleasant memories. Perhaps an even more noteworthy development would be for the participants to consider and analyse the positive and negative aspects of the exercise and feel inspired and motivated to come up with their own approaches to teaching poetry when it is their turn to be the leaders of their classes. However, such matters would be quite difficult to quantify.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [1] Agathocleous T., Dean A.C. editors. *Teaching Literature. A Companion*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 2003
- [2] Beutin, W. et al. *A History of German Literature*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. translated by Clare Krojzl. London and New York: Routledge; 2005
- [3] Broome P., Chesters G. (editors) *An Anthology of Modern French Poetry (1850-1950)*. Cambridge: C.U.P.; 1999
- [4] Canfield Reisman, R.M. editor. *War Poets*. Ipswich: Salem Press; 2012
- [5] Donahue, N.H. editor. *A Companion to the Literature of German Expressionism*. New York: Camden House; 2005
- [6] Evans R.C. *Perspectives on World War I Poetry*. London: Bloomsbury; 2014

- [7] Furness R.; Humble M. *A Companion to Twentieth-Century German Literature*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London and New York: Routledge; 1997
- [8] Kendall T. editor. *Poetry of the First World War. An anthology*. Oxford: O.U.P.; 2013
- [9] Millington R. *Snow from Broken Eyes. Cocaine in the Lives and Works of Three Expressionist Poets* Bern: Peter Lang; 2012
- [10] Newton R.P. *Form in the Menschheitsdämmerung. A Study of Prosodic Elements and Style in German Expressionist Poetry*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton; 1971
- [11] Nica M. Teaching Poetry to Undergraduate Students. *Teachers for the Knowledge Society. Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences* 11 (2011): 215-219
- [12] Porena I. "Nota" in Lichtenstein A. *Storie di Kuno Kohn. Racconti e poesie [Tales of Kuno Kohn. Short Stories and Poetry]*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Milano: Adelphi Edizioni; 1984. 171-183
- [13] Puissant S.C. *Irony and the Poetry of the First World War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 2009
- [14] Silkin J. *Out of Battle. The Poetry of the Great War*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 1998
- [15] Stillmark A. *Introduction to Trakl, G. Poems and Prose. A Bilingual Edition*. Translated by Stillmark A. Evanston: Northwestern University Press; 2005. xi-xx
- [16] Wormser B., Cappella D. *Teaching the Art of Poetry*. Mahwah and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; 2000

## **CORPUS**

- [1] Apollinaire G. *Gala*. Translated by Oliver Bernard. [Internet] [cited 2019 July 10] available from <<http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk/poems/gala/>>
- [2] Lichtenstein A. *Leaving for the Front*. Translated by Patrick Bridgwater. In: Fox R. editor. *We Were There: An Eyewitness History of the Twentieth Century*. London: Profile Books. p. 45
- [3] Owen W. *Anthem for Doomed Youth*. In: *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Wordsworth; 2002. p. 56
- [4] Trakl G. *Grodek*, Translated by Hamburger M. In: Seymour-Smith M. editor. *Guide to Modern World Literature*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. London: Macmillan; 1985. p. 578

## **WEBLIOGRAPHY**

- [1] Lee S.D. *Comparing Literature. The First World War Poetry Digital Archive* [Internet] Original date of publication 1996 [cited 2019 July 10] available from <<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/compare>>