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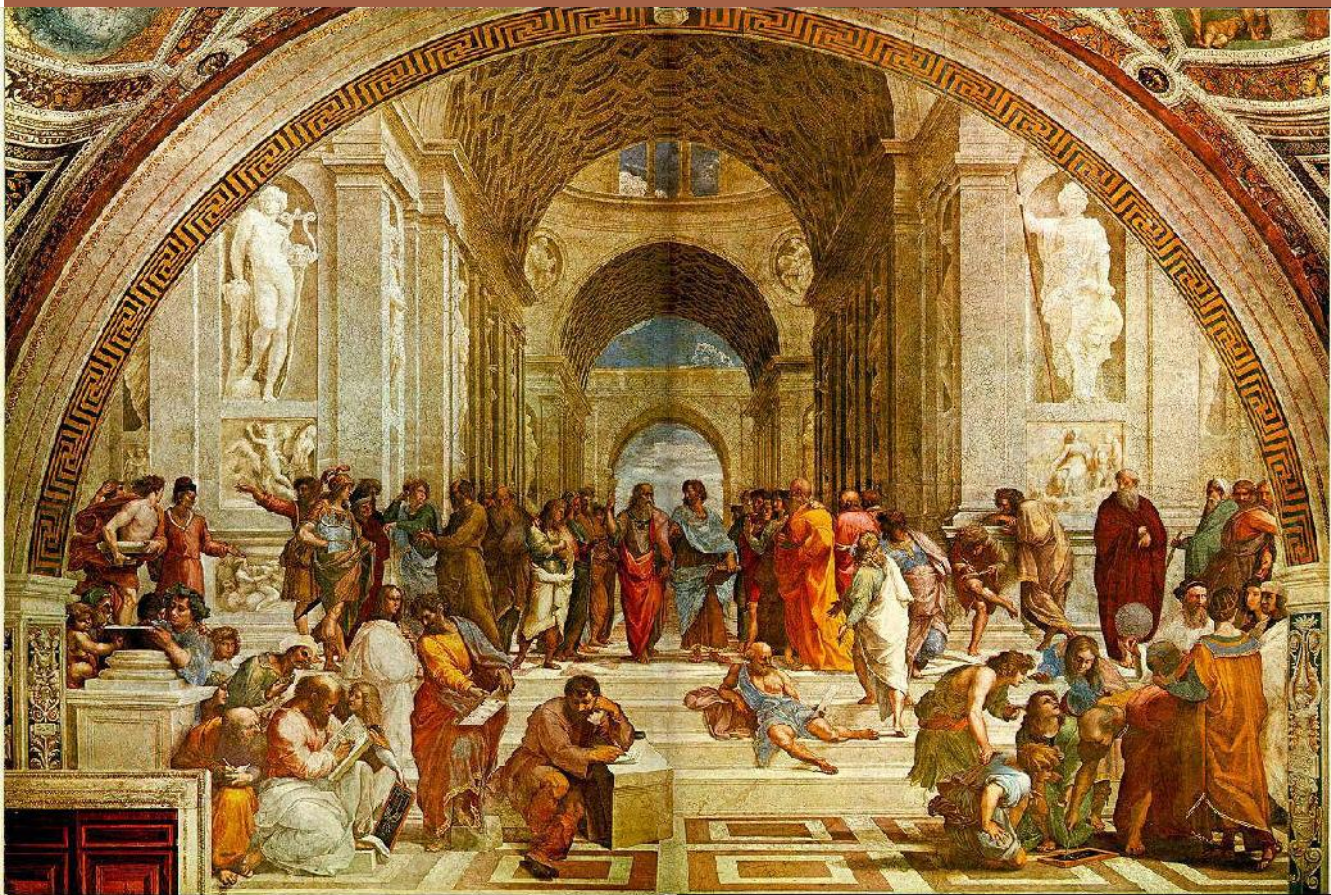
Philosophy, Social and Human Disciplines

2016

Volume II

TRANSLATING EUROPE

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Annals of "Ştefan cel Mare" University of Suceava

PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL AND HUMAN DISCIPLINES SERIES

2016

VOLUME II

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ANNALS
of
Philosophy, Social and Human Disciplines

(Annals of "Ştefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL AND HUMAN DISCIPLINES SERIES)

ANNALS
of
University "Ştefan cel Mare" of Suceava

PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL AND HUMAN DISCIPLINES SERIES

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Contents

RESEARCH PAPERS

Tension and Contention in the Translation of the Literary Text: The Real Dilemma

Salah BOUREGBI

Department of English, Badji MokhtarUniversity,
Annaba, Algeria
salihbourg@yahoo.fr

Abstract

Does translation of the literary text really need a theory? If yes which one among so many, which complicate more than simplify the matter? Which strategy do we adopt to at least communicate something of the original to a target reader, who does not know anything of the source language? The key problem is the meaning. Is it really grasped? If yes, is it of the text, or of the author, or of the reader? Meaning is not restricted to linguistic parameters; it is more cognitive and essentially based on the interpreter's own world knowledge. The text is not only a product but essentially an on-going process of meaning. Though it has precise time and space when produced, it is, nonetheless, timeless and spaceless. When we animate it, through reading, it becomes a text within the scope of a new space and a new time. That is, the meaning in the process of translation becomes anew. The text is autonomous and its autonomy makes it have its own specificity and existence. And so, the meaning in/of the text is ever-changing: there is no one meaning in/of the text, as there is no one reader of the text.

Keywords: *rendering, interpretation, literary meaning, translation, rubaiyyat.*

Introduction

Does translation really need a theory? If yes which one among so many, which complicate more than simplify the matter? Which strategy do we adopt to, at least, communicate something of the original to a target reader, who does not know anything of the source language? In any case, the crux of the matter is meaning: how can we get it? Is it really grasped? If yes, is it of the text, or the author, or the reader? Are understanding and meaning interchangeable? Is understanding a diagnostic process of meaning?

Meaning(s) and the Literary Text

Meaning of/in the literary text is problematic: it is not only restricted to linguistic parameters; it is rather more intentional, hermeneutic, cognitive and essentially based on the interpreter's own world knowledge. In *Critical Discourse Analysis*, Terry Locke maintains that: "Not only do different types of text require different ways of reading, but the same text can also be read in different ways to generate different meanings. Textual meaning becomes multiple and therefore indeterminate."[1] The text is not only a product but essentially an on-going process of meaning. Though it has precise time and space when produced, it is, nonetheless, timeless and spaceless. That is, its space and time are dialogically related to its act of reading: its now. When we read and animate it, we make it exist within a new space and time.It constructs its being through the process of reading. In other words, meaning is an interactive event between the text and the reader. The critic Norman Fairclough points that: "[The text] whose primary semiotic form is language increasingly combine language with other semiotic forms. The implicit content of a text is a sort of halfway house between presence and absence."[2] Fairclough believes that any meaning in a literary text is pre-constructed. This preconception of meaning paves the way for the reader to get within the text and finds out what he has already constructed. Fairclough maintains that: "The concept of «pre-constructed» has been used to give an intertextual understanding of implicit content (presupposition); the unsaid of a text, what it takes as given, is taken as the already-said-elsewhere, the form in which a text is shaped and penetrated by (ideological) elements from domains of prior textual practice."[3]

In the same vein, the critic H.G. Widdowson points out the instability of meaning in creative writing, mainly fiction and poetry. He writes:

The text is there at first hand, stable, continuous, well-ordered, fixed on a page, or on a screen. But these very features of the textual record can mislead us into thinking that its relationship with the discourse that gave rise to it is relatively unproblematic, and we are drawn into the delusion that meaning is inscribed in the text itself, and that what the writer intended to mean can be discovered, inferred, directly from textual evidence.

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[1] Terry Locke, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 14.

[2] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 4.

[3] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 6.

[….] The orderliness and apparent completeness of written text disguises the fact that it too is only a partial record of intended meaning.[4]

The Literary text poses a great problem of interpretation: it holds many stances of interpretations. Its process of meaning is multiple and based on the interpreter's intention(s). Widdowson states that: "The writer enacts a discourse with a projected reader who may be very different from the actual readers who derive their own discourse from the text. [….] And unlike spoken conversation, there can be no on-line negotiation to enable the two parties to converge on a common understanding. In this respect, the stability of the text conceals an intrinsic instability of meaning."[5]

So, what we get as meaning from the text is only a meaning of one's own assumption. Even, the same reader could find a series of meanings through his different diverse readings of the same text. In other words, your own intentions will, subsequently, chase the author out of the context of his own reality.

The text is not only a linguistic matter: a system of codes, sentences and expressions dissociated from contexts and insights. It is a whole, and its interdependent relationship between form and content weave its own texture. Bettina Fischer-Starcke points out that: the meaning is not a linguistic phenomenon, which could be found out through linguistic analyses. Rather, it is text-internal analysis that "gives a new perspective on the data, so that the researcher can detect new meanings even in a widely discussed text. The detailed linguistic analysis allows to find meanings, which are virtually invisible in an intuitive approach to the data as in literary studies."[6] James Paul Gee maintains that there are two major elements that affect the text's meaning(s): the "who" and the "what". He writes:

> *If I have no idea who you are and what you are doing, then I cannot make sense of what you have said, written, or done.[….] What I mean by a "who" is a* socially-situated identity. *What I mean by a "what" is a socially-situated* activity *that the utterance helps to constitute. Finally, we can point out that* whos *and* whats *are not really discrete and separable. You are* who *you are partly through* what *you are doing and* what *you are doing is partly recognized for* what *it is by* who *is doing it.*[7]

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[4] H. G. Widdowson, *Text, Context, Pretext: Critical Issues in Discourse Analysis* (New York: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 10.

[5] Widdowson, *Text, Context, Pretext,* 11.

[6] Bettina Fischer-Starcke, *Corpus Linguistics in Literary Analysis Jane Austen and her Contemporaries* (New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 6.

[7] James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (London: The Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001), 13/14.

In the same context, Ernest Leopore and Kirk Ludwig acknowledge the "ingraspability" of the literary text. Words on their own — separately — are significant, and they cause no difficulty in their comprehension. But being within a sentence, the sentence within a paragraph, and the paragraph within a text, the meaning is no longer the sum of the meanings of each word, but it steps beyond such significances. This sum, as a whole, gets a new sense dictated by the intentionality of the reader(s). Leopore and Ludwig point out:

> *The meaningful complexes in a language obviously are understood on the basis of their parts and mode of combination. The illusion of understanding is increased when we realize that this makes available to us the apparatus of quantification theory in giving a systematic account of the meanings of complex expressions on the basis of the meanings of their parts and mode of combination.*[8]

If the text resists to its reader, or if the reader builds up its significance on his own intention, then: how can we translate the text? Or put forward: what do we exactly portrait? Anthony Pym claims that: "Meaning transfer is thus an assumption — certainly a social illusion — operative in the use of translations as translations. Yet it is not ubiquitous. Inasmuch as there are users for whom the source text is unavailable, this assumption of meaning transfer is specifically external to actual translation processes. No translator or translation critic need believe that translation is the transfer of stable meaning. Indeed, inasmuch as there is a plurality of translators for whom source-text meanings differ."[9]

In his article "Theories of Translation," Eugene A. Nida points out that: "The basic problem of formulating an adequate theory of translation is the fact that translation actually takes place in our brains, and we do not know precisely what actually happens. There are no complete synonyms within a language or between different languages, but such a statement seems evidently incorrect because almost all dictionaries have extensive lists of synonyms, for example, sets such as rich/wealthy and run/race. But such sets of synonyms are normally limited to a restricted set of contexts."[10]

And so, the problem of translation is within the text at the first degree, and the text and the reader at a second degree. Commenting on Nida's definition of translation, Shiyang Ran writes:"If there is an absolute correct translation, then we have to face the question that «who can identify the absolute correct translation?»

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[8] Ernest Lepore and Kirk Ludwig, "Ontology in the Theory of Meaning," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 14, 3 (2006), 327

[9] Anthony Pym, "Doubts about Deconstruction as a General Theory of Translation," *In TradTerm*, 2 (1995), 18.

[10] Eugene A. Nida, "Theories of Translation," *Pliegos de Yuste* I, 4 (2006), 12.

An expert or an ordinary reader? Are their opinions the same? [....] As every estimator is characteristic of his/her personal class, any valuation is characteristic of relative class feature. Readers decide to accept or reject translations, and different types of reader will require different types of translation. A closest natural translation for highly qualified intellectuals may not be the closest natural one for common people or ordinary citizens."[11]

What Ran wants to transmit is that all meanings are contextual, and all contexts are dialogically related to the reader through his intention and the 'what' to discover. In the process of translation, the operation becomes doubly complicated since, by definition, two languages and, thus, two cultures and two societies are involved.[12]

The literary text is an iceberg: What it hides is more than what it shows. Like mercury, it slips from your hands whenever you try to grasp its meaning(s). Furthermore, involvement within the choice of words and expressions makes the translator/interpreter reconstruct a context proper to his own strategy and, thus, makes another text out of the relics of the original. The critic Maria Tymoczko maintains that: "Translations themselves form subsystems of textual systems — notably literary systems — and collectively can be grouped by parameters such as function, audience, text type, formal effects, and patronage."[13]

One should not forget that the duty of the translator is to transfer for us a source text and to enable us to read the text as if it was written in the target language. But, is he able to do it? The embodiment of the source text is not made in a vacuum: its texture both formal and contextual is trailered to a degree that we cannot take even a fibre of its oneness — its constitution. We can dislocate or relocate its style and content and make it foreign to its source — original: there is a great risk of transformation because any act of translation is an act of omission and addition. Laurence Venuti speaks of illusory translation. The text you read seems to be a foreign text that you accept as such because of the ingenuity of the translator, who recreates it in a way that makes you appreciate both the form (his from) and the style (his style) and you claim its originality. Venuti points out:

> *The illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translator's effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning. What is so remarkable here is that this illusory effect conceals*

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[11] Shiyang Ran, "Philosophical Interpretation on E.A. Nida's Definition of Translation," *Asian Social Science* 5, 10 (2009), 45.

[12] Ran, "Philosophical Interpretation," 45.

[13] Maria Tymoczko, "General Considerations About Theory," in *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics. (1-10).* ed. Carol A. Chapelle (London, and New York: Publishing Ltd. 2013), 5.

the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention in the foreign text.[14]

But this invisibility Venuti is talking about can in no way be possible: the more the translator is invisible, the more the text becomes his own — the more he possesses it. He becomes his author — his creator. In other words, invisibility excludes the author and corrupts the text.

There is no adequate, equivalent style and expression in/between languages, even those of the same roots. And no meaning is ever possible without these expressions and stylistic patterns. Even equivalences pose a problem. Meaning we derive, or deduce from equivalence, is not the meaning of the text, but the meaning of a text suggested by the reading of the translator. Equivalence is, then, what is intended to be a meaning. In this context, the critic Mona Baker states that:

> *The notion of equivalent effect is also linked to the idea of reproducing the "intention" of the source author, i.e., emphasizing the equivalence of intended meaning. This is also highly problematic because it assumes that the translator "understands" rather than "interprets" the source text – that somehow he or she has direct access to the communicative intentions of the original author. But translators cannot know with any certainty what the source author intended to convey, especially where there is a large temporal gap between the source and target texts. All they can do is try to interpret it, so that any theory or model based on some notion of equivalence of intention would be impossible to verify.[15]*

The text seems for us, as readers of the target, as if it was an original one because of the effect the translator uses in his formulaic and imitating narrative. This illusory artefact makes us believe him and accept the text as a good translation and what we read must be the original, but, unfortunately, it is not.

In his article "Translation Theory and the Problem of Equivalence,"Mariano Garcia-Landa raises such problem of equivalence and its inadequacy with meaning transfer. He thinks that equivalence exists, but the matter is what/how do we transfer? He writes: "The problem with equivalence is this. We know that equivalence is the real thing in translation, that there is no translation if there is no equivalence between the original text and the translated text. And we know of course that equivalence exists, that is not the real problem."[16] He maintains that translating is another way of speaking of conveying messages through signs, and

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[14] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London, and New York: Palgrave, 1995), 8.

[15] Mona Baker, "The Status of Equivalence in Translation Studies: An Appraisal," in *Centre for Translation & Intercultural Studies* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 2004), 3.

[16] Mariano Garcia-Landa, "Translation Theory and the Problem of Equivalence," *Hermēneus Revista de Traduccion e Interpretacion* 2 (2000), 1.

through theses signs we produce perceptions."But the problem is that these perceptions, which are produced through these sign chains, are different from these sign chains. This means that translation is the reproduction of the same perceptions which are produced with another sign system of another language."[17] This is somehow a mirage!

And so; what about poetry whose problem is double-edged: problem of form (meter, rhyme, rhythm) and content (context, in-text, intention). Poetry is, then, a real challenge for translators!

Poetry and the Problem of Meaning Transfer in Translation:

Form and content cannot be separate in poetry. It is like a coin whose value is based on its both faces. James Paul Gee states that: "Content is highly language-bound and this is what makes translation of poetry more difficult than the other types of translations. Poetry makes possessing components such as rhythm, rhyme, tone, deviation from the institutionalized linguistic code, musicality expressed through meters and cadence, etc., arouses pessimistic statements on the scope of its translatability that exceeds those affirmative ones."[18]

O. Khayyam's Rubaiyyat and the Contentious Versions of E. Fitzgerald and J. Pasha

Two translations of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* into English seem to be very problematic: Edward Fitzgerald's (1857-59) and John Pasha's (1913) versions are very disparate to be authentic and faithful translations to the original. What do we read? Who is nearest to Khayyam: Edward Fitzgerald or John Pasha? Why do we have such diversities in form and content? The problem seems to be a question of meaning and how does the translator render the quatrains' expressions and words into English. In his comments on Fitzgerald's translation, the critic C. Eliot Norton assumes that:

> *He [*Fitzgerald*] is to be called "translator" only in default of a better word, one which should express the poetic transfusion of a poetic spirit from one language to another, and the representation of the ideas and images of the original in a form not altogether diverse from their own, but perfectly adopted to the new conditions of time, place, custom, and the habit of the mind in which they appear.[19]*

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[17] Garcia-Landa, "Translation Theory," 2.

[18] James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (London: The Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001), 159.

[19] Charles Eliot Norton, "Comments on Fitzgerald's Poem," *Norton American Review* CIX (1869), 575-76.

The critic reviewer of *Lippincott's Magazine*, Edward Hall, praised the poem and wrote: "He [Fitzgerald] has gone far to prove that the acceptableness among us of Oriental poetry may depend very largely on the skill with which it is transplanted into our language."[20]

So many critics glorify Fitzgerald's version. But can we really acknowledge its originality? Are all these grandiloquent words adequate and ever-inciting? Does the poem hold the spirit of Omar Khayyam or Edward Fitzgerald's? Is it a mediator of both souls and philosophies? Or just has a total autonomy: It is from both, yet negates both? It just becomes another text for another reader of another understanding?

But before embarking on such contentious questions, it is of paramount importance to have a closer look on the nature of the meter in Persian poetry then draw a kind of similarity between the English and the Persian meters, and how did Fitzgerald deal with all these in his translation?

What is a *Rubai* in Persian literature? The critic, Alfred Mckinley Terhume, explains for us the *rubai* and its equivalence in English meters as follows: "It is simply for convenience that the Persian term *rubai* is translated into English «quatrain». Actually, the *rubai* is a two-lined stanza which breaks naturally into four lines of the English quatrain. In every variety of Persian poetry, the unit is the **bayt**, a line which consists of six or eight feet. Each **bayt** in a *rubai* is divided into two symmetrical halves called **misra**. Usually, the first, second and fourth **misra**, rhyme, resulting in the *aa b a* pattern used in English translations. In other words, a *rubai* consists of two lines divided into hemistichs with the first, second, and fourth hemistichs rhyming."[21]

In this translation, Fitzgerald adopted the rhyme pattern (a a b a) which predominates in the original, but he simplified the rhyme itself. Many critics contend that Fitzgerald has translated his personal outlook of the spirit/philosophy of Omar Khayyam rather than the quatrains of The *Rubaiyat*. Edward Hemon-Allen claims that Fitzgerald has not faithfully restricted himself to the quatrains of Khayyam; the first stanza, for example, is entirely his own.[22] Hemon-Allen spent around twelve years surveying the entire range of Fitzgerald's Persian studies and tracing his quatrains to their sources. His object was: "to set at rest, once or

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[20] Edward Hall, "Our Monthly Gossip," *In Lippincott's Magazine* XV (1875), 261.

[21] Alfred McKinley Terhume, *The Life of Edward Fitzgerald: Translator of The Rubaiyatof Omar Khayyam* (London, and New Haven: Oxford University Press, and Yale University Press, 1947), 220.

[22] Edward Heron-Allen, *Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1899), 5.

forever, the vexed quatrain of how Edward Fitzgerald's incomparable poem may be regarded far as an adaptation, and how far an original work."[23] His observations are astonishingly remarkable:

- *Forty Nine* (49) quatrains are faithful and beautiful paraphrases of *single quatrains* to be found in the Onsley or Calcutta or both.
- *Forty Four* (44) quatrains are more than **one** quatrain and may be termed "composite" quatrains.
- *Two* (2) quatrains are inspired by Fitzgerald only in Nicolas' text.
- *Two* (2) quatrains reflecting the whole spirit of the original poem.
- *Two* (2) quatrains are exclusively due to the influence of the Mantik Uttair of Ferid Id di Attar.
- *Two* (2) quatrains primarily inspired by Omar were influenced by the Odes of Hafiz.

The total accounts for 101 stanzas make up the poem in its final form.[24]

Furthermore, Hemon-Allen claims that Fitzgerald's poem is not wholly adapted from the original but various translated and non-translated references, besides some quatrains of Khayyam that are not of his *Rubaiyat*:

*Quatrains *forty six* (46) and *ninety eight* (98) are inspired by J. B. Nicolas.

*Quatrains *thirty three* (33) and *thirty four* (34) are Atter's.

*Quatrains *two* (2) and *three* (3) are Hafiz's.

*Quatrains *five* (5) and *eighty-six* (86) hold no reference to any quotation in the original,

but refer to Omar's philosophy.[25]

Fitzgerald had studied three different collections of Omar's quatrains before his poem reached its final form: The Onsley Manuscript at the Boldean Library, Nicolas's translation, and the Calcutta Manuscript of Bengal Society. *The Boldean contains* 158 *stanzas; Calcutta Manuscript counts* 516 *stanzas, and J. B. Nicolas's translation of 1867 contains* 464 *Stanzas. Fitzgerald's contains* 101 *stanzas.* His version seems to be a distillation of Omar Khayyam's thoughts and philosophy.

Fitzgerald is skilled in the reproduction of the sense of the original. Quatrain *eighty one* (81) has been much discussed. In his 1903 edition, Aldus Wright quotes the following from a letter written to him by Cowell: "There is no original for the line about the *snake*: I have looked for it in vain in Nicolas; but I have always

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[23] Heron-Allen, *Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 5-6.

[24] Heron-Allen, "The Preface," at *Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, xi-xii.

[25] *Ibidem.*

supposed that the last line is Fitzgerald's mistake version of quatrain 236 in Nicolas's edition."[26]

> Stanza 81:
> *Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,*
> *And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:*
> *For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man*
> *Is blacken'd — Man's forgiveness give — and take!*

In a letter to Mrs Cowell, December 17, 1867, Fitzgerald acknowledged that: "You know I have translated none literally, and have generally mashed up two-or-more-into one."[27]

The second version of *Rubaiyat* in English is that of Johnson Pasha. This version does not in any way lack dexterity to that of Fitzgerald. His translation was published in 1913, years after that of Fitzgerald. In his preface to such translation, he wrote underlining the difficulties he faced in the course of translation:

> *I have, however, subject it [*The Rubaiyat*] to some revision, and hope that the more important errors have been corrected, and that it now presents a fairly accurate idea of the original meaning. I think that the great majority of the quatrains are, if not a literal, at least a fairly close rendering of the original text, but I have not hesitated to add expressions not to be found in the original where it seemed to me clear that anything like a simple translation of the original words not convey the same ideas as the Persian.[28]*

He even claimed that the word "*khish*" in the quatrain **sixty seven** (67) was wrongly translated as "*spear*" not "*brick*" as usually rendered. "There is, of course, much (sic) repetition, but though this greatly increases the difficulty of any attempt to render into verse without contact repetition of the same phrases. [….] There is generally something new to be found".[29] About the feet he has chosen for the meter, he said: "I have feet justified in serving the needs of rhyme by speaking of the flower's thanks for new born-life." He adds "I have departed from the ten-syllable line in many instances, and have even exceeded the limits of the rubai, but I can only urge in externation that I have found the endeavour to turn seven

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[26] Aldous Wright, "Literary Remains", VII, 18, in Alfred McKinley Terhume, *The Life of Edward Fitzgerald: Translator of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (London, New Haven: Oxford University Press, and Yale University Press, 1947), 229.

[27] Fitzgerald qtd Alfred McKinley Terhume, *The Life of Edward Fitzgerald: Translator of The Rubaiyatof Omar Khayyam* (London, and New Haven: Oxford University Press, and Yale University Press, 1947), 229.

[28] Johnson Pasha, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, trans. Johnson Pasha (London: Kegan Paul & Trench, Trubner & Co, 1913), 5.

[29] Johnson Pasha, "The Preface," in *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, trans. Johnson Pasha (London: Kegan Paul & Trench, Trubner & Co, 1913), vi.

hundred sixty two (762) quatrains of Persian into seven hundred sixty-two (762) quatrains of English a task of great difficulty, and I hope for the indulgence of those who may care to read."[30]

Conclusion

Rendering seems to be the only solution to literary translation mainly in poetry. But rendering, itself, is dialogically related to the moment of reading and of transfer! But this transfer is in no way of the text, or the author or the reader; yet, it is from the text and the author and the reader.

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[30] *Ibidem*, vi.

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Displacement of Myths in *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Krishna Key*: A Comparative Study

M. JAYABHARATHI

The English and Foreign Languages University,
Hyderabad, India
basanthi1992@gmail.com

Abstract

This comparative analysis of The Da Vinci Code and The Krishna Key by Ashwin Sanghi attempts to scrutinize the portrayal of institutionalized religions in the novels. The paper endeavours to trace the process of demythologization in relation to organized religion and gods of Hinduism and Christianity. The study also focuses on the exploitation of faith and religious beliefs as presented in the novels.

The works are different in terms of social, economic and cultural factors, but can be gathered under theological thrillers. The influence of Dan Brown upon Ashwin Sanghi is evident in terms of theme, style and narration. But the works divulge in the methodology used for the dislocation of myths. Christianity, Jesus Christ and Holy Grail are reinterpreted by Dan Brown by denouncing early Christian Church. The Krishna Key states and glorifies the technological supremacy of Indus valley civilization thereby suggesting that Krishna might have been a historical character. Dan Brown foregrounds rational understanding of religion by accusing early Church but Sanghi propagates the same by means of glorifying the past.

Keywords: *demythologization, religion, faith, belief, exploitation, denounce, glorification.*

The Da Vinci Code authored by Dan Brown subverts the divine origin of Christianity accompanied by the symbolic reinterpretation of the Holy Grail. *The Krishna Key* deciphers Syamantaka not as a jewel of Krishna but as a nuclear isotope capable of nuclear transmutation. The reconstruction of Syamantaka in the novel endorses the scientific pre-eminence of the Indus valley civilization and implies the historical nature of Krishna. The novels depict the inhuman exploitation of human beings in the name of religion.

The dislocation of propagated myths in detective novels is accomplished by means of quest initiated by murders as the novels begin. Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* begins with the murder of Sophie's grandfather. One clue leads onto another and it is revealed that Sophie's grandfather was an important member of the Priory of Sion, a secret society which nurtured people like Leonardo Da Vinci and Isaac Newton. Robert Langdon and Sophie get hold of the Cryptex, the main key to the Holy Grail and seek help from Teabing, a Holy Grail expert. At the end of the novel, Sophie turns out to be the living descendant of Jesus Christ.

In *The Krishna Key* by Ashwin Sanghi, the central character Ravi Mohan Saini is accused of having murdered his best friend Anil Varshney. To vindicate himself he tries to get hold of the four seals found in Dwarka, Kalibangan, Kurukshetra and Mathura. The four seals along with a base plate constitute the Krishna Key which can unlock the true nature of Krishna to future generations. Saini dashes breathlessly from the submerged remains of Dwarka to the Somnath temple and revelation of mystery takes place in Agra. Pursuit is to find the murderer and to discover the secret location of Krishna's most prized possession. Eventually, Syamantaka is conjectured to be placed in between the two layers of the Taj Mahal doom.

Religion is necessarily an outcome of human fear of the unknown and failure.[1] Bertrand Russell believes religion to be a consequence of fear in his work *Why I am not a Christian.* Contemporary world includes many religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism which throw light on an ideal, and turn it into a role model. Each religion developed unique rituals to be performed, thus paving the way for many superstitious beliefs later on. The human beings, instead of seeking religion for solace, started losing comfort by forcing themselves to perform various religious rites and rituals.

Religion is definitely a source of solace for many people but undeniable is the fact that religion has been misused by many people throughout history. Radical writers and thinkers are against abuse in the name of religion. According to Marx, religion intoxicates human beings like opium, a drug capable of knocking down the consciousness of consumers. Marx views religion as a means of oppression.[2] The definition of religion by J. Krishnamurti, a writer and philosopher, religion is a generic aspect of human beings, "religion is something that includes everything,

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[1] Bertrand Russell, *Why I am Not a Christian* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2010), 12.
[2] Fisher Pat Mary, *Religions Today: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), 17.

it is not exclusive. A religious mind has no nationality. It is not provincial; it does not belong to any particular organized group."[3]

The writer Dan Brown voices against organized church and negative influence of papal power upon people through his novel *The Da Vinci Code.* The conversation between Teabing, Sophie and Langdon is very crucial to the story line because it is Teabing, a Holy Grail expert who explains the evolution of Christianity through time.

According to historical records, Christianity came into being only after the death of Jesus. Constantine, the emperor of Rome, established Christianity as a state religion in the fourth century and proclaimed Christ as the saviour. Mary Magdalene was a potential threat to early church because she carried the bloodline of Jesus in her womb and it was she to whom Jesus had assigned the task of founding the church. So, the church propagated Mary Magdalene's image as a whore. The evidences of her marriage with Christ were buried, thus transforming a mortal prophet into an immortal messiah.

The Early Church annihilated all obstacles on its way to attain absolute power. In the name of witch hunts, hundreds of radical women were burnt alive and thus, the supremacy of the sacred feminine was wept away. Teabing goes on to explain how institutionalized religion has wrecked havoc upon innocent lives. Dan Brown also talks of the *San Greal* documents probably might have been written by Christ himself and "Q" Documents, which can falsify the foundation of Christianity.[4]

Opus Dei society is an extreme form of religious exploitation. The society believes in corporal punishments and practices it vehemently. At times of desperation human beings tend to surrender themselves for exploitation. Bishop Manuel Aringarosa takes advantage of the vulnerability of Silas. Silas undergoes frustration and pain willingly in the name of God as per the norms of Opus Dei. He is made to believe that Jesus propagated self - inflicted punishments. Therefore as a devout Christian, Silas convinces himself that it is his duty to inflict pain on himself for his own mistakes. The defenceless position of Silas in the society is used by exploiters like Sir Teabing and Bishop Aringarosa. According to J. Krishnamurti, religion conditions the human mind. If a person proclaims himself to be a Hindu or a Muslim, he or she is conditioned by the religious experiences of others. In short, the person is burdened by faith and indeed compelled by his belief

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[3] J. Krishnamurti, *The Religious Mind* (Chennai: Krishnamurti Foundation, 2009), 3.
[4] Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (London: Corgi Books, 2009), 335-345.

to accept things without enquiry. Religion propagates conformity and makes us live in an illusionary world.[5]

Silas is compelled to murder in order to fight against people who are against Christ and his teachings. He turns out to be a serial killer and eventually dies for the sake of misplaced gratitude and faith. Similarly in *The Krishna Key,* religious dependence is utilized for capital benefits. Priya, student of murdered Anil Varshney under the leadership of Sir Khan trains Taarak to be the next Kalki avatar. Sir Khan misuses Priya and Taarak to attain the Syamantaka, the Philosopher's stone which is capable of nuclear transmutation.

Teabing and Langdon explain to Sophie the symbolic interpretation of the Holy Grail. The root word *San Greal* means the royal bloodline. Holy Grail also symbolizes someone who perpetrated the bloodline of Jesus. Teabing states that Mary Magdalene carried the royal bloodline of Jesus. Mary Magdalene was wronged because the Church hushed up all the proofs which portray Jesus Christ as a human being. So Mary Magdalene from the House of Benjamin who married Jesus Christ was perpetrated as a whore by the early Christian Church. As per the Priory of Sion, a secret society which guards the Holy Grail and nurtures the living descendants of Jesus, pregnant Mary Magdalene fled to France when Jesus was crucified. She gave birth to a girl named Sarah and their lives are chronicled by the Jewish people who protected them.

The real meaning of the Holy Grail is explained to the world through many symbols. The paintings of Leonardo Da Vinci, one of the grandmasters of the Priory of Sion, namely *The Last Supper* and *Madonna of the Rocks* explain the true nature of the Holy Grail. *The Last Supper* is considered to be a painting consisting of thirteen men - Jesus himself and his twelve disciples. Teabing explains the ambiguity within the painting to Sophie. After keen inspection, Sophie finds that the person who occupied the place of honour, at the right hand side of Jesus possessed flowing red hair and delicate features of a woman. Teabing goes on to explain how Mary Magdalene was entrusted the establishment of Church by Jesus himself and Peter, an important disciple of Jesus was envious of Mary Magdalene. Women were revered by ancient religions but Christianity demolished the idea of sacred feminine by portraying Eve as an offshoot of Adam and by recasting Mary Magdalene as a harlot in *The Bible*. Many symbols like the five pointed star and rose which were used to signify femininity lost their significance as Christian Church demonized the idea of sacred feminine.[6]

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[5] Krishnamurti, *The Religious Mind*, 8.
[6] Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, 319.

The quest for the Holy Grail is simply a quest for the tomb of Mary Magdalene along with the *San Greal* documents which explain the other side of Christ story and other documents which can explicate Mary Magdalene's rightful claim to power.[7] Hence through repeated explanations by Langdon and Sir Leigh Teabing the novel *The Da Vinci Code* demytholigizes or replaces the idea of the Holy Grail being an object. The quest for the Holy Grail ends in a prayer at the feet of Mary Magdalene, the wronged queen and lost sacred feminine. The demythologization of the Holy Grail effectively can be extended to demythologization of Jesus.

According to the *Bible*, Jesus was a messiah of God, the Son of God who has come to the world to redeem people of their impending sins. Jesus performed many miracles, preached and gave away his own life for the people on earth. After three days of the crucifixion he resurrected from the grave and ascended to heaven. As per *The Da Vinci Code*, Jesus belongs to the lineage of King Solomon and King David. Jesus can be called a feminist because he handed over the significant work of establishing the Church to his wife Mary Magadalene. Dan Brown acknowledges the importance and impact of Jesus Christ on human beings through the words of Teabing in the novel.[8] Unquestionably, Jesus is an important influencing figure in history of mankind but his divine origin as claimed by the Church is to be challenged.

Three centuries after the period of Jesus, Christianity gained popularity among people of Rome while pagan rituals were being practiced. Emperor Constantine decided to merge the doctrines of paganism and Christian beliefs in order to gain the support of people. Teabing explains how Constantine himself was baptized in his death bed too weak to protest. Hence Christianity as religion emerged as a hybrid religion to begin with. Dan Brown deftly disintegrates the nature of the Holy Grail and explains how Christianity is a consequence of transmogrification. Dan Brown directly voices against the organized religion by accusing the early Church of transforming a human being into a messiah and subordinating women in the society.

Ashwin Sanghi, in his novel *The Krishna Key,* establishes the scientific superiority of Indus valley civilization rather than dislocating the foundations of religion like Dan Brown. By talking about Mahabharatha war as about a nuclear war, Sanghi suggests the existence of vast repository of scientific knowledge. The novel portrays Dwarka as a real city created by Krishna for his people, the remains

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[7] *Ibidem,* 341.
[8] *Ibidem,* 313.

of which are present even today under the sea. *The Krishna key* indulges in reinterpretation of Krishna, but the act of demythologization is passive and implied in comparison with *The Da Vinci Code*. The demythologization of Krishna is attained by means of various historical explanations given by Saini regarding Krishna and through the researches of four people murdered in the novel - Nikhil Bhojaraj, Anil Varshney, Chhedi and Rajaram Kurkude.

Sanghi explains the scientific supremacy of Indus valley civilization in disciplines such as medicine, astronomy and architecture. Through the words of Chhedi, the author delineates how ancient civilisations possessed knowledge about stem cells, cloning and in vitro fertilization.[9] The hypothesis of Dr. Nikhil Bhojaraj is that if Dwarka the city of Krishna exists, then Krishna must have existed for real. Through the explanations of Dr. Nikhil Bhojaraj's assistant Sanghi, he puts forward the idea that in those days people were skilled enough to build a city like Dwarka. One of the students of Professor Rajaram Kurkude states how the archaeological investigation at Mohenjodaro revealed traces of nuclear blast. Moreover, skeletons were found lying or seated as if people were dead in the midst of daily work, which serves as proof for instantaneous arrival of death without prior knowledge.

The Krishna Key makes use of an effective narrative strategy to establish the historical nature of Krishna. Each chapter of the novel begins with Krishna's narration of his own life. Sanghi juxtaposes the mythical story of Krishna with the contemporary story involving Ravi Mohan Saini. The juxtaposition of the fictional past with the present enables readers to compare propagated stories of Krishna and rational explanations provided by the novel. In the guise of religion, the human nature of Krishna is veiled and mystified. Krishna is portrayed as a fictional character, as a person with divine powers who saved Draupadi, a king maker, a strategist who helped Pandavas in the stories. In the process of mystification, historical truths are lost and ignored as fables. Hence apposing past and present narrative results in effective demythologization.

Sanghi does not attack the basic foundations of Hinduism like Dan Brown. Instead, he glorifies the knowledge possessed by the ancestors. Dan Brown deconstructs the divine origin of Christianity, in order to establish a rational understanding of religion. Sanghi instead of deconstruction, indulges in glorification of the past to bring about radical understanding of religion.

Demythologization and re-mystification are brought out in the novels for better rational comprehension of faith and not to destroy faith. It is the duty of the

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[9] Ashwin Sanghi, *The Krishna Key* (Manipal: Westland Ltd., 2012), 189.

believers to fully understand the nature of their faith before acknowledging it. As Langdon says in *The Da Vinci Code*, "Those who truly understand their faiths understand the stories are metaphorical."[10] Human beings have mixed up faith in divine power and faith in institutionalized religion. Robert Langdon in *The Da Vinci Code* locates the Holy Grail and Ravi Mohan Saini of *The Krishna Key* finds out the Syamantaka. In both novels, the search ends but the treasure is never accessed. On account of the future faith crisis, Langdon never reveals the location of the Holy Grail. Saini is not interested in destroying a historical monument like Taj Mahal, so truth about Krishna and Syamantaka remains eternally sealed for the future generations.

The Da Vinci Code* and *The Krishna Key* are set in two opposing cultures and spatial and temporal fields, but the nature of crime and the consequences are comparable. Institutionalised religions are misused by people like Sir Khan, Teabing and other respected authorities of religious institutions. Dan Brown and Ashwin Sanghi stir the intellect of the readers through their works. Faith is necessary to live a happy life but blind faith placed upon man-made organized religions and gods may prove fatal. Religion should promote love, peace and the motive of any religion should be to create better human beings. Mary Pat Fisher in her book *Religions Today: An Introduction* says, "tragically, religions have often split rather than unified humanity, have oppressed rather than freed, have terrified rather than inspired".[11]

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[10] Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, 450.
[11] Fisher, *Religions Today*, 23.

Grigore T. Popa – Promoter of Medical Ethics in Romania

Ana-Maria DUMITRESCU
"Grigore T. Popa" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iaşi
anna.dumitrescu91@gmail.com
Andreas NILSEN MYHRE
"Grigore T. Popa" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iaşi
sanandreasnm@gmail.com
Thorvald NILSEN MYHRE
Medical University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
thorvald_nm@hotmail.com
Rodica GHIURU
Apollonia University of Iasi, Romania, Iasi, Romania
rodicaghiuru@yahoo.com

Abstract

Our paper reveals Professor Grigore T. Popa's view on medical ethics of anatomical teaching as he was bringing in Romania the experience of the Anglo-Saxon education from both England and the United States. We analysed his lecture: "What Anatomy is or is not?" *where he introduced some ideas of medical ethics. Professor Popa considered that medical ethics and deontology are required whenever someone studies the anatomy of the human body. Anatomy teaches us the lesson of respect towards human body, and so it can never be reduced to a useless science, since it expresses the spiritual nature of mankind.*

Keywords: *medical ethics, Anatomy teaching, creative education.*

Grigore T. Popa is one of the personalities of the Romanian academic field who strongly supported the idea that those training in the noble field of medicine have to be able to become exceptional professionals, valuable scientists and true human beings.

The Encyclopedic Character of Grigore T. Popa's Personality

Professor Grigore T. Popa formed his complex personality in the first decades of the XXth century in the extremely generous academic and cultural environment of Iaşi, but also of Bucharest. He attended The Faculty of Medicine

of Iaşi and dedicated himself to the study of Anatomy. Francisc Rainer appointed him junior teaching assistant of the Department of Descriptive Anatomy of the Faculty of Medicine in Iaşi while he was still a third year student and he became assistant lecturer after graduation. After obtaining his Ph.D in 1920, he was relocated to the same Department in Bucharest, following his mentor, Professor Rainer, and after a few months, he was promoted assistant professor.[1] The creative energy of his personality was enhanced by further professional studies and rigorous documentation in excellence centers in the United States and Great Britain. He was deeply impressed by the Anglo-Saxon scientific environment from USA and United Kingdom where he arrived because of a Rockefeller 3-year scholarship he had received in 1928.

In Chicago and London he was marked by precision, accuracy and value conferred to scientific research. During its first year he took part in the research activity of the Chicago University with Professor Franck Lillie. For the next two years he is to be found at the University College of London conducting researches in the fields of Anatomy and Anthropology with Professors Elliot-Smith and J.P. Hill.[2] Guided by his mentors' model, especially by Franck R. Lillie and, above all, by Grafton Elliot Smith, whose "*intellectual son*" he considered himself to be,[3] Grigore T. Popa manifested an endless curiosity, acquiring solid knowledges and abilities, both in the scientific field and in other cultural fields, considering that his creative force can be fully developed only by mixing together all spiritual values.

On the other hand, his personality completed its coordinates as he worked in a team with Una Fielding, an Australian researcher, at the University of London. In 1930, they discovered the hypothalamo-pituitary port system to whom they gave a functional role in transferring hormones between hypothalamus and pituitary and so they opened the way to further research by neuro-endocrinology. In fact, this remarkable discovery wouldn't have been possible without the extraordinary capabilities of Grigore T. Popa and Una Fielding: namely loyalty, reliability, communication, trust and mutual respect. Helped to form his

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[1] I. Petrovanu, "Evocare", in *În memoria lui Gr. T. Popa. Studii, documente, mărturii* (Iaşi: Omnia, 1999), 74-78.

[2] C. Romanescu, Gr. T. Popa in "Istoria medicinii contemporane universale şi în memoria şcolii ieşene de medicină", in *În memoria lui Gr. T. Popa. Studii, documente, mărturii* (Iaşi: Omnia, 1999), 87-90.

[3] Gr. T. Popa, "Evoluţia unui om şi evoluţia unei ştiinţe (Un fel de curriculum vitae)," in Gr. T. Popa, *Conştiinţă şi cunoaştere, vol. II. Publicistică* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii « Al. I. Cuza », 2010), 269-307.

personality by all these masters, Professor Grigore T. Popa discovered the deeper meanings of science and medicine in general.

Grigore T. Popa's Dynamic View of Anatomy as the Theme of Medical Ethics

Grigore T. Popa is recognized as a physician, researcher and teacher, but also as a philosopher, essayist, journalist, and writer. At the Faculty of Medicine of Iași he continued the work of his master, Francisc Rainer, and taught anatomy associated with humanist ideas. He was convinced that only when the medical student will have solid knowledge in Humanities he will become a true doctor and will be able to respond easier to the challenges of this profession and to the expectations of the society. Through his lectures, Professor Grigore T. Popa infused the ideas of medical ethics to his medical students since their first year of study. It can be possible that these ideas were triggered by his medical research activity in the USA and England. He certainly had to follow the rules of medical ethics and probably, as we all know his passion for reading, he surely may have been in contact with the works of John Gregory and Thomas Percival, who reformed medicine into a profession in its proper intellectual and moral sense.

When Grigore T. Popa arrived in United States, there was still in use the *Code of Institutes and Precepts adapted to the Professional Conduct of Physicians and Surgeons,* namely Thomas Percival's *Medical Ethics* which was the first English book with that title, which enormously influenced the medical activity. Percival's *Medical Ethics* was a prospectus for the style of professional medical ethics, self regulating, paternalistic, which typically prevailed until around the middle of the 20th century.[4]

On the other hand, as we all know the Professor's great desire for reading and knowledge, it is possible that, once in England, the Romanian physician and scientist have come into contact with *Lectures on the Duties and Qualifications of the Physician* written by John Gregory from Edinburgh because as we will see many of the ideas presented by Percival and Gregory can be found in Grigore T. Popa's subsequent lectures. In his book, Gregory wrote that a physician had a positive moral duty to be *"ready to acknowledge and rectify his mistakes"* as *"no profession requires so comprehensive a mind as medicine"*.[5] Gregory's contribution was to reform medicine into a profession scientifically and ethically

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[4] K. M. Boyd, "Medical ethics: principles, persons, and perspectives: from controversy to conversation," *J Med Ethics*, 31 (2005): 481-486.
[5] Boyd, "Medical ethics."

worthy of the name. He established the foundations for his medical ethics on the Scottish Enlightenment moral sense philosophy of Francis Bacon and David Hume. Following Francis Bacon, Gregory appealed to the human capacity to be "*open to conviction.*" This is the capacity of disciplined thought and judgment that requires one to be open to evidence from whatever source it comes and, when the evidence is reliable, to conform one's knowledge and judgment to it. Gregory wrote:

I come now to mention the moral qualities peculiarly required in the character of a physician. The chief of these is humanity; ...If the physician possesses gentleness of manners, and a compassionate heart, ...the patient feels his approach like that of a guardian angel ministering to his relief: while every visit of a physician who is unfeeling, and rough in his manners, makes his heart sink within him, as at the presence of one, who comes to pronounce his doom.

Gregory invented two components of the concept of the physician as a professional. In his vision, physicians should commit to practicing medicine and conducting research to standards of intellectual and moral excellence.[6]

At the end of the Rockefeller scholarship, Professor Grigore T. Popa returned to Romania in 1928 and was appointed full professor at the Department of Anatomy and Embryology of the Faculty of Medicine in Iaşi. As he was bringing back the experience of Anglo-Saxon education both from England and the United States, he was opening his Anatomy course that year with the speech called *"What Anatomy is or is not?"* where he introduced some ideas of medical ethics. He considered Anatomy as a modality of thinking. Anatomy deals with the structure of the human body, and it is the human body that is central in medical research and clinical practice. Professor Grigore T. Popa developed and perfected the conception of his magister, Francisc Rainer, on Anatomy as *the science of living forms*. Based on a qualitative vision of anatomical knowledge (instead of a mechanicistic, quantitative one), he stated that the purpose of studying this important medical science was the knowledge, the comprehension, the understanding of the living body, otherwise *"Anatomy reduced to a dead body science, a dissection science, ...is as useless and even more dangerous than the bookish Anatomy"*.[7] So, he promoted proper respect for cadavers used for medical research and education as he emphasized the idea that the main aim of teaching

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[6] LB McCullough, "John Gregory's medical ethics and the reform of medical practice in eighteenth-century Edinburgh," *J R Coll Physicians Edinb* 36 (2006):86-92.

[7] Gr. T. Popa, "Ce este şi ce nu este Anatomie ?" in Gr. T. Popa, *Conştiinţă şi cunoaştere, vol. II. Publicistică* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii «Al. I. Cuza», 2010), 252-268.

anatomy is to improve the quality of pacients' care as the corpse was the first pacient of the medical student.

The Creative Education – Essential Characteristics of Medical Ethics

Gr. T. Popa proved to be a harsh critic of the ancient static conception of Anatomy as a mere inventory, and, on the contrary, he imagined a dynamical Anatomy, capable of explaining living forms. The student must understand that to a certain anatomical structure corresponds a certain function, as a result of evolutionary adaptation. Anatomy must be acquired or studied so as to shift the doctor's interest from the dead body to the living active being. In this respect, Gr. T. Popa is extremely clear and categorical when asserting that the student must acquire, by means of studying Anatomy, a full understanding of the mechanisms of life explained in anatomical forms. The student

> *have to understand (anatomical) structures as living, active elements being placed at their place in the intact and healthy body. Only sustained by such a skill he will be able to submit further in the study of normal and pathological processes that are at the basis of medical science and art.*[8]

In the same lecture, Professor Gr. T. Popa punctuated the idea that Anatomy could develop the personality of the medical students. For this purpose, the philosophical premises of medical ethics should be taken into account not only from Kant and Fichte, but also from Socrates.

> *But the anatomy has a more important role and, even a more exciting one: an educational role. It has more power than other sciences to turn on a man who learns it. This power comes from the circumstance that it enhances the human consciousness of himself. The key was the Socratic philosophy «know yourself!». And no other science doesnt respond better to this motto. ... The future physician will need to be above all a good observer, a good interventionist, a man with precise and resolute thinking who can manage fast and decided in every complicated circumstances. But besides the undeniable technical education that Anatomy teaches us, she turns on in the highest degree the human thinking. The thirst for knowledge is infinitely more stimulated when it comes to know your own body.*[9]

The creative education, cultivated by the great Romanian scientist is not supposed to assert the individual, but the Stranger, the Other, as there is inside of us something deeper than ourselves, whose mark is the transcendental order and, finally, universal transcendence. It is because of our participation to the spiritual

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[8] Popa, "Ce este şi ce nu este Anatomie ?"
[9] Popa, "Ce este şi ce nu este Anatomie ?".

world that we are what we are and that we have the ability to offer sense and signification to the material, physical world.

Gr. T. Popa guessed the importance of the transcendental order and, consequently, that of the transcendence in achieving the higher knowledge act, sealed by the indelible mark of the spirit. As a source of spiritual life, the higher education contributes, by means of its valences, to the continuous development of society. To him, an educational system that closes the individual, that reduces him to himself, that does not open the Universe to him, makes him selfish and barbarian. The world of excellence he obstinately cultivated is that opened towards the Universe, is the world transfigured and marked by the creative force of man.

Demands of Medical Ethics in Terms of Anatomical Teaching

For the Romanian scientist, Anatomy is the fundamental medical science, as it contains *in nuce*, all other medical sciences (Physiology, Embryology, Histology, Surgery, Morphology, etc.) Anatomy is considered a convergence point for other medical branches. The perspective of seeing Anatomy in a systemic vision led to the cardinal idea of the understanding of man as an active living being and of revealing the huge potential of this discipline in the field of formation, research and higher education, which enables or allows the training of authentic, true doctors. Anatomy develops the creative spirit, indispensable for every medical research or practice, as in front of any sick person the doctor must act as a live, inquisitive agent, for, as we know, *there are no diseases, there are only diseased people.*

Medical ethics and deontology are required whenever studying the human body anatomically. Anatomy teaches us the lesson of respect towards the human body, and so it can never be reduced to a useless science, but expresses the spiritual nature of mankind. Medical school is perceived by Grigore T. Popa as an institution of reason imposing to determine the student in medicine to understand the spiritual purpose of what he knows, studies, researches, applies and helps him reach an understanding of the notion of humanity. Grigore T. Popa considered Anatomy to be an instrument of personality formation.

Anatomy is not just the substrate of medical personality, but it is still its skeleton, too; it is that frame-work or steel structure of modern buildings, which after being finished from the ground to the roof, are then filled up with bricks, mortar, ornaments and wirings and plumbings. But neither bricks nor ornaments or plumbings can be used if there is missing the frame-work. Well learned Anatomy means a thorough consolidation of the entire medicine and a rich development of the (student's) personality. Anatomical

data should connect into a exhaustive system of thought, which should make us to fully understand the human being.[10]

He proved that anatomy can become an inquisitive instead of imperative discipline.[11] By developing a conception of the education as a sanctuary of reason, Grigore T. Popa managed to shed light on the educational function of medical disciplines, and especially, of the most important of them, according to him, Anatomy – somehow perceived as a queen of medical sciences:

Anatomy is, by its setting at the beginning of the studies and by the type of its topics, one of the most important educational disciplines, an activity field by means of which the personality of the student itself is being developed, transformed and perfected.[12]

The great Professor considered that the physician, in order to exist and live with dignity, should look at the world from the bottom up, from Heaven to Earth, from the Others to himself. To see oneself through Another is the greatest conquest a physician can make in order to become a true human being. By means of authentic culture and education, realized by the highest spirits of mankind, the Earth becomes man's country, his house and home. The education required by learning Anatomy, through its complex openings, elevated the man to more than himself.

The Place and the Role of Christian Morality Values in the medical Ethics

Over nearly 20 years, even before his passing, great Professor Gr. T. Popa lectured the famous Conference *"Current times and Christian Morals. Is it possible today the faith in Jesus Christ?"*, at the Romanian Athenaeum on April 15, 1947, on the third day of Easter, in a country that dwelled the brutal fussiness of enthronement of *"popular democracy"* and *"scientific atheism"*. On this occasion, Professor Gr. T. Popa added new elements to the architecture of his own vision on medical ethics that he had conceived in the previous years. Clearly criticising Marxism, Racism, and institutionalized Christianity alike, the author argued upon the superiority of the genuine Christian moral ideals, and associated Jesus with the science of morality.

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[10] Gr. T. Popa, "Evoluţia unui om şi evoluţia unei ştiinţe (Un fel de curriculum vitae)," in Gr. T. Popa, *Conştiinţă şi cunoaştere, vol. II. Publicistică* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii «Al. I. Cuza», 2010), 269-307.

[11] R. G. Constantinescu, *Grigore T. Popa – medic scriitor şi publicist*, Phd Thesis (Iaşi, 2011), 76.

[12] Popa, "Ce este şi ce nu este Anatomie?".

Today mankind roams in the darkness of painful feelings and of life ruins. ... In this serious situation, it is time for everyone to ask his own one consciousness if it remained still pure: «Where shall I go?» and the answer is not difficult to be given: «Back to the Christian Morals!» This Morals heeds on the spirit needs, that aspires to the transcendent, but also on people cohabitation in the society. .... Jesus understood the structure of the human spirit and man's value ... He asks the man to be modest, and do not think to rival the divinity whose attributes does not possess nor may have.[13]

Christian morals was the basis of Grigore T. Popa's completion as a physician and as a true man. He believed in the purity of the Christic message of love towards his neighbor and by this lecture he wanted that those who listen to him should change their beliefs if those were of a different kind. The victory of Good and helping the neighbor were the most important things for the scientist:

but the essence of Christian morals ... is the idea of tolerance, reconciliation, and love between people. Only on these base can be build human society and can be reach a peaceful and secure coexistence.[14]

But those days were unfriendly with him and, just as a Christian martyr, these ideas have sealed his fate as he died sooner in disastrous conditions. Although for Grigore T. Popa all these concepts and ways of living were a source of spiritual, moral, and ethical life, contributing to the ongoing development of the society, they led him in the end to its own collapse. This Conference, followed shortly by the other one entitled *Reform of the spirit* influenced in a tragic way the Professor's destiny, because a year later he passed away, deeply marked by the persecution made upon him by the new social order.

Conclusion

Integrated into the ideas of that time, into the major ideological conceptual patterns, the great teacher Grigore T. Popa has evolved under the influences of Anglo-Saxon values, which he then submitted to medical education from University of Medicine in Iaşi. The eternal modernity of Grigore T. Popa's ideas consists in the revealing of the place and role of Anatomy in forming a complete doctor, an elite healer, without failure, a valuable researcher by means of new ideas and new working hypothesis, capable of elaborating an substantiating them, and finally marked by the aura of excellence, capable of modeling his life in accordance with an ideal rooted in the spiritual world, in the noosphere.

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[13] Gr. T. Popa, "Morala creştină şi timpurile actuale. Mai este posibilă astăzi credinţa în Isus Hristos?" in Gr. T. Popa, *Conştiinţă şi cunoaştere, vol. II. Publicistică* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii «Al. I. Cuza», 2010), 450-473.

[14] Popa, "Morala creştină şi timpurile actuale".

To conclude, we can say that the main axis that has guided his profound and rich activity has been Rabelais' quotation: *Science sans conscience c'est la ruine de l'âme*. He wanted Anatomy to be seen as a constant adventure and research by those willing to discover and understand its mysteries. As to quote Grigore T. Popa: "*Believe that the adventure spirit can still be discovered and preserved in our hearts!*" These means that the creative spirit can be permanently cultivated because once it loses vitality, it fades away.

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Specific Dysfunctions of the Stepfamily

Maria-Rodica IACOBESCU
Ştefan cel Mare University of Suceava
rodi_iacobescu@yahoo.ro

Abstract

Made up from parents and children from a previous union or marriage, often completed by children of the new couple, the recomposed or reconstituted family is problematic under the aspect of family-specific functions, relationships and roles. Being exposed to numerous sources of conflict, it is marked by many functional difficulties, which can lead to rupture and failure. For this unit in diversity to stand the test of time, it is necessary for all the members to engage in an active and flexible involvement.

Keywords: *stepfamily, step parents, step children, biological parents, parental roles.*

Introduction

In the constellation of contemporary family types, the stepfamily, also known as the *varied family*[1] or the *mixed family*[2] is an option for those who have experienced life in the universe of a nuclear family which was disbanded, have went through the specific difficulties of a single-parent family, and wish to rebuild their lives. The foundation of this new family configuration is the new couple, often constructed by following feelings rather than rational decisions. Even if the attachment of the two partners is strong, they will face problems to which personal experience does not hold any answers, not because every family is unique but because the stepfamily often faces challenges not usually met in other forms of family life. Many a time, the expectations and dreams of the two partners will not be fulfilled, the obstacles met may seem insurmountable sometimes, and the price paid for the creation of unity in diversity might be considered too high. Sometimes, the inevitable happens: a stepfamily can also decompose, at other times is it assumed and life within it continues.

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[1] Elisabeta Stănciulescu, *Sociologia educaţiei familiale* (Iaşi: Polirom, 1997).
[2] Iolanda Mitrofan and Cristian Ciupercă, *Psihologia vieţii de cuplu* (Bucharest: Sper, 2002).

Differences between the nuclear and stepfamily

A main difference is related to the structure of these two family types. The nuclear, conventional family is made up of two adults and their children who live and function together. A stepfamily contains an adult couple which is either married or cohabiting, in which one or both members of the couple might have children from a previous relationship and often children from the current relationship. This family can be formed after a divorce or the decease of one of the parents of a nuclear family or when a single parent marries or chooses a long-term partner. Depending on the way in which the children, following a divorce, have been given in custody to the biological parents, they can live with one of the natural parents and a step-parent, with his step-siblings, if that is the case, or they can live with a biological parent and occasionally with the other parent and his/her partner and, eventually, their child or children. If both parents have remarried or live inconsensual unions, children can often be part of two recomposed families at the same time.

These structural differences lead to the existence of other differences related to the fulfillment of its functions, the exercise of marital and parental roles, relationships between biological and step parents, as well as those between step-siblings. When a man and a woman start a family for the first time, the apparition of one or more children is something normal, something that gives purpose to the couple's life. The procreative function of the family is fulfilled and the two parents take care of the children and observe their education. Therefore, this family is focused on the fulfillment, more or less satisfactory, of the biological and sanitary, economic, moral/judicial and social functions. In the case of recomposed families, each of these functions dilates or contracts, with their fulfillment being determined by diverse variables. Because it is the outcome of the marriage between two adults, of which at least one has been through another marriage and is the parent of one or more children, the stepfamily is not primarily based on the reproductive function. The presence of children from the former marriage specifically nuances the fulfillment of the other family functions. It usually happens that the re-married parent offers more attention and material, financial and emotional resources to the hygiene, alimentation, health and education of his or her own children rather than the children of the partner, which affects the solidarity of the stepfamily. The functionality of the stepfamily also suffers from the fact that the new partner has no judicial status regarding the other partner's children and the step-child has no right to the inheritance of the step-parent, which legally, is not his parent.

Another big difference between the nuclear and the stepfamily is the way it has formed and developed regarding the family life cycle. According to the model developed by the therapists Carter and McGoldrick,[3] the stages of the family life cycle are the following: experience in the family of origin, the detachment of the young adult from the family of origin, the premarital stage, the formation of a family through marriage, the couple without children, the family with small children, families with teenagers, the children leaving home and the family in the late life stage.

In comparison with the formation of a family for the first time, in which all the aforementioned stages are present, if it does not dissolve due to divorce or the premature death of one of the partners, the formation of the stepfamily does not have the detachment of the children from the family of origin as a starting point, but their detachment from a life stage which follows a failed marriage. In the conventional family, the first child usually appears after a period of courting, falling in love, after the formation of the conjugal couple. Things are different in the case of the stepfamily, because at least one of the two partners already has children, with the parent-child unity therefore existing long before the conjugal partner. This fact completely changes the love story of the partners, as well as their family life. Because, most of the time, one of the two partners enters a family which used to be single-parent until the moment, he/she would have to integrate in an already formed family which has a certain history, specific functional rules, family myths and, by taking someone else's place, not everybody might agree.

When it comes to exercising conjugal and parental roles, there are a few similarities with the nuclear family but also major differences, because in the complicated equation of the new family there are either physical or symbolic presences such as biological parents, step-parents, children from previous marriages, common children, as well as members of the extended family such as grandparents and other relatives from each side. Because of the fact that at least one of the two partners has been married before, he/she carries experience from the previous relationship, experience which he applies in the new marriage. This fact implies both benefits and risks, because the current situation implies a new conjugal configuration, which requires its own recipe for success, not a model which has already led to failure. Unlike in the nuclear family, in the stepfamily, parental roles do not exclusively belong to the new couple, but to the old spouses as well.

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[3] Betty Carter and Monica McGoldrick, *The Expanded Family Life Cycle. Individual, Familyand Social Perspectives* (Boston: Allyn&Bacon, 1999), 2-5.

Most second marriages are not as romantic as the first one, a reason being the solitude the spouses have gone through, with all the frustrations it implies, economic hardships, the wish to have a mother or father for the child, and all of them stem from the loss suffered by the ex-spouses, as well as their children, which often implies the formation of a new family nucleus of a profound intimacy. People that often take part in a stepfamily are not psycho-emotionally healed, the trauma still being present in their thoughts and feelings. Unrealistic expectations regarding the new family, seen as a life-buoy, can intensify the feelings of loss even harder, therefore being a risk-factor for the new family's cohesion.

Specific difficulties. The step-parent/step-children relationship

Although every family is confronted with diverse challenges which may affect the family climate or even its integrity, in the stepfamily there are often specific difficulties which cannot be solved by the same model used in a conventional family, constituted for the first time. Without having a catastrophic view regarding this type of family, we believe that relationships which are established between its members are much more complex, more unusual and more difficult than those in a conventional family, mainly because the starting point is usually made up of unrealistic expectations which end up as unfulfilled expectations which cause great suffering to the respective family.

In the case of the stepfamily, we do not talk about a *real* decomposition of the previous family, because even if it has broken up, the biological bonds between mother, father and child never truly disappear. The fact that divorced parents live a new couple life, it does not mean the end of the first family, because between the two ex-spouses there are still some common links which hold as purpose the raising and education of the children who are affected by their break up. The child keeps on having two biological parents, even if in some cases the relations with one of them does not exist anymore, but he is forced by the remarriage of one or both parents to enter a new family where there is no lineage between the child and the step-parent.

Life in a stepfamily implies the adaptation to numerous changes in a short time span, moving in a new home and a new residential area, the integration of everyone in the new family, financial arrangements, the labor of adopting suffered by the new partner, the interference of the ex-spouse and the creation of new habits and rules of life. Some families manage to defeat all the crises, becoming stronger and more united while others lose themselves on this tedious road.

One of the most important experts in the field of stepfamily problems, Patricia Papernow,[4] considers that this type of family goes through three great development stages: the *early* stage, the *middle* stage and the *late* stage.

In the first stage we have a *fantasy* period because both have their own wishes and expectations regarding the new family, followed by a stage described as a confrontation with reality, the *immersion* stage, which creates shock and confusion, and finally, the *awareness* stage where an understanding of family rules and roles takes place.

The *middle* stage contains two sub-stages, one regarding the *mobilization* of all family members to solve the major misunderstandings, and the *action* stage, characterized by the practice of what each one has taken up.

The third stage contains two sub-stages as well, the *contact* stage, which implies action in order to solve household problems, clarifying the role of the step-parent, and a sub-stage of *resolution*, of a consolidated family where security has been established.

The stepfamily is not a homogenous reality. Therefore, some children have never had contact with their biological parents, while others keep strong bonds with them; some step-parents play the role of the parent, while others only the role of the spouse; some children appreciate the presence and implication of the step-parent, while others are rebellious. For some, the step-parent is the first paternal figure in their whole life, while others were to participate to the succession of more partners of their parents'[5].

The presence of children from a previous relationship, or even more, causes tension and conflicts which threaten the stability of the remarried couple. The step-parent's relationship with the child is a problematic one and it depends on the evolution of the newly-formed family. The great difficulty is caused by the fact that his roles and behavioral patterns *are quite confusing and ambiguously defined. Should he be authoritarian or understanding? Nobody knows well what they should do. That is why, many step-parents try more roles and conduit patterns until they find the just position.*[6]

The most common form of stepfamily is made up of a mother and a step-father, mostly because, after a divorce, the child is given in custody to the mother, but also because divorced fathers form new couples more often. The mother in this

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[4] Patricia Parernow, in Elena Bonchiş, eds., *Familia şi rolul ei în educarea copilului* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2011), 28.

[5] Denyse Côté and Marie-Blanche Tahon, *Familleet Fragmentation* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Universitéd'Ottawa, 2000), 80.

[6] PetruIluţ, *Sociopsihologia şi antropologia familiei* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2005), 189.

couple is also a step-parent to the children of her new partner, whether they have been given in the custody of his ex-wife. She has direct and indirect parental responsibilities, even if she is a *long distance step-mother*,[7] assuming her motherly role when the children visit her, during weekends or holiday, emotionally involving herself and contributing financially to their care.

The apparition of a new masculine figure, a pseudo-paternal one, the step-father, which is neither *parent nor friend*,[8] in a previous single-parent family, creates an unclear lineage and is perceived by the children as an intruder who has no right to discipline them because he is not their real father. Usually, this father has his own children who remained with their mother, a situation which causes him confusing feelings and moral dilemmas. His children can also have a step-father. Caught in the middle between his biological and step-children, between the requirements of the current and ex-spouse, competing with the step-father of his own children, he faces hardships that he could have not foreseen. The mother also struggles physically and psychologically to create harmony between her current husband and her children, between herself and his children, between her ex-husband and their children. The children also find it hard to face these complicated family structures created by adults who fight for authority, manifest subjectivity, talk badly about one another, have contradictory beliefs regarding what is good or not regarding their education, and "there is no surprise that many abandon the family or get significant psycho-emotional scars".[9]

Regarding the recomposed families in which a woman joins a man with children, often motherless or with a mother that did not gain custody because of severe physical or mental health problems, addictions or imprisonment, studies show that women are more inclined to compromise for the benefit of the husband's children.[10]

If fairytales such as Snow White and Cinderella managed to consolidate the social stereotype of the step-mother: devious, rough, ruthless, merciless, that rejects, mistreats, neglects or abandons her step-children but not her biological ones, if she has any, reality is much more complex. A big number of step-mothers try to substitute biological mothers, being willing to ensure the physical and psychological wellbeing of their step-children, with their discipline, thinking they will be loved and appreciated by them. This conduit brings them great disappointments, studies showing that "the phenomenon according to which the

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[7] Martine Segalen, *Sociologia familiei* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2011), 176.
[8] *Ibidem.*
[9] Iluţ, *Sociopsihologia şi antropologia familiei*, 193.
[10] Côté and Tahon, *Familleet Fragmentation*, 56.

harder the mother tries to be more amiable, understanding and warm towards her stepchildren, the more they treat her with greater suspicion and even hostility, judging that everything she does is for the sole purpose of giving the impression that she successfully replaces their real mother."[11] Other stepmothers play the role of a different kind of mother compared to their biological one, therefore imposing another maternal model, another family life philosophy. Their behavior generates frustration and defensive reactions from her children, conflicts with their biological mother, having the father put in a referee position and the deterioration of the conjugal relationship. Mothers who do not want to take up the position of the biological mother try to act as some sort of friends to the children, wanting to win their affection, not to instill discipline in them. Neither this behavior, a confident and advisory-like type, marked by indulgence and absence of discipline is beneficial to the evolution of the new family, the step-mother being an adult who must be respected. On the other hand, there are situations in which the stepmother can be as young as some stepchildren, her position and role being a source of suspicion and conflict for them and not of respect. Everything gets more complicated when the father and his young wife have children the age of his grandchildren, a fact that can activate oedipal complexes.

The relationship between the stepchildren of both partners is a lot more complex than that between their own children because the difficulties come from both directions. It is possible for them to not be aggressive towards one another, children can be impolite, can manifest hostility, they are afraid of a change of rules within the family, the step-parent may manifest a tough authority based on punishment and the only authority that the child may recognize is that of the natural parent. Children can suffer as a result of the parents' divorce or after the decease of a natural parent, they do not want to share the remaining parent with another person because they lose the exclusive relationship they had in the single-parent family, they can be loyal to the parent who is not with them anymore, they might compete with the step-parent for the attention and love of their mother or father. They can be impolite because they "do not know how to talk to an adult who is not their parent nor their relative because they had not been taught how to do it."[12] The step-parent may also feel threatened by these children, he/she may consider them spoiled and difficult and might even be jealous of them, not understanding the difference between parental and conjugal love. If he or she

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[11] Iluţ, *Sociopsihologia şi antropologia familiei*, 191.
[12] Christie Hartman, *Bărbatul divorţat. Cum să afli dacă e bun pentru tine* (Bucharest: Trei, 2008), 168.

complains to the partner, this fact may intensify hostility of the child, who is not ready to enter a new parental relationship. The parent may feel continuously bothered by the educational attempts of the step-parent and may react through critical remarks and the child will feel the ambivalence. The child might even ally himself / herself with the biological parent against the step-parent, fighting for power and authority within the family. When building the stepparent-child relationship, the child's age has an important role. The younger ones, under the age of 9, are more likely to adapt, because their emotional needs are not that complex as those of the grown-up children, being more easily conquered by an adult who plays with them, taking them for a walk, offering them attention. These strategies, though, do not bear fruit when applied to preteens or teenagers, who deal with identity crises and have other needs, often engaging in conflicts with the stepparent. To the typical adolescence problems, adding the day by day inherent stress within the stepfamily, results that teenagers within a stepfamily are more likely to pass scarcely through this period of their evolution, compared with the teenagers from intact families. Their rebellious and independent manifestations could interfere with the step-parent's authoritarian inclination, especially if, in the previous single-parent family, the teenager retrieved and assumed a parental role, replacing the absent parent in what concerns raising the younger brothers, also fulfilling some household tasks, even bringing income. Some studies show that the young members from recomposed families tend to manifest modern attitudes regarding family life. They engage earlier their in their sexual lives, leave the parental house, are more open to new ways of living together with another person, but they hesitate to procreate.[13]

One delicate issue is naming the step-parent; the child does not know how to address him/her, often encountering difficulties in calling the step-parents "mother" or "father", so he prefers to call them by their name. Of course, the situations are diverse, and in one of them the children grow feelings of love regarding their step-parents, calling them "mother" or "father", because the step-parent showed responsibility to the child and care and affection while growing up and during their education, especially if the biological parents were careless or even absent from their lives. Other children prefer to call the step-parent by their names, but this ambiguous practice does not set clear limits between the child and adult, because their relationship is not a friendly one, but an "equal-to-equal" sort.

Despite all the problems that occur within the step-parent-child relationship, some psychoanalysis-oriented authors consider that it is much better for a child to

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[13] Côté and Tahon, *Familleet Fragmentation*, 92.

have more "mothers" and "fathers" than none.[14] They must know they have but a single biological mother or father, known or unknown to them, but after the age of 3, they need more than a single-gendered adult to take care of them. "For the child's unconscious mind, the presence of an adult is necessary in order to prevent a total intimate relationship with his parent." This new partner allows him to go through the Oedipus complex, in case the child did not experience it with his biological parents, or to revive a new alternative of this complex, together with its well-known "love-hate" affective conflicts, contradicting and referring differently to the two adults who are, at the same time, role models and rivals for him.[15]

In the case in which the new family has been recomposed after a divorce, numerous problems can occur in the case of the parent who won the custody of the child. In the case in which the father remarried, first of all, the mother may grow jealous feelings regarding the current wife and her child's affection, "blood of her blood", for the new woman of the family/in the father's life. Second, the new wife can feel eclipsed by the biological mother of the child, when her husband and his family bring the biological mother in the spotlight precisely for this reason. Sometimes the husband's parents maintain a good relationship with the biological mother of their grandchild and their father, as though the current wife would not even exist and in some cases refusing to invite her to various activities, not giving her any attention and ignoring her children.[16] This loyalty towards the former wife, manifested as hostility regarding the actual wife, can exacerbate when the husband ignores family issues instead of solving them, and when he does not support his wife when it comes to conflicts with relatives.

In specialty literature[17] there are, mainly, 5 explicative models regarding children adaptation in recomposed families, focused on family composition, family processes, an ecological lecture of adaptation, family trajectoryand family resources. The first model emphasizes the biological and structural specificity of the blended family and considers that the intact bi-parental family is considered the best environment when it comes to the children's evolution. Thus, children from recomposed families are more likely to be disadvantaged, even if in the absence of a biological link, the child grew feelings of attachment. However, it is claimed that it is preferable for a child to grow with two parents, even if one of

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[14] Françoise Dolto and Inès Angelino, *Când părinții se despart. Cum să prevenim suferințele copiilor* (Bucharest: Trei, 2007), 76-85.

[15] *Ibidem*, 76.

[16] Hartman, *Bărbatul divorțat. Cum să afli dacă e bun pentru tine*, 214.

[17] Marie-Chirstine Sainte- Jacques, *Séparation, monoparentalité et recomposition familiale. Bilan d'une réalité complexe et pistes d'action* (Laval: Presses Université Laval, 2004), 72-77.

them is a step-parent. The second model focuses on the functions, relationships and roles within a family, on the children's interaction with the other members of the family, on the consequences of the conjugal conflicts between the current spouses regarding the ways of raising the children and their education and also on the influence of the ex-spouses. The ecologist model takes into account the child's individual characteristics, family and scholastic environment but also the larger context in which the child activates. The fourth model analyzes adaptability, starting with the separation from the biological parents, the transition through the single-parent episode, the engaging episode into the stepfamily, the way in which all these transitions developed and the difficulties that occurred in assuming all the changes mentioned above. The last model analyzes the family resources, the way in which these manage to be shared between the actual spouses and their biological children and step-children, drawing attention upon the step-children's limited financial resources and poverty risk.

Step-siblings

Many a time, in a stepfamily, both spouses have children from one or more than one previous marriages. One of the main difficulties that a stepfamily encounters, especially in its beginnings, is the brotherly feeling between individuals who do not share the same genes. But genes, even if they are important, they do not necessarily mean everything. Rivalry between step-brothers is normal, but through "daily means of communication, discussions, games, common activities, by together sharing experience, fraternal relationships can be cultivated."[18] Each family has its peculiarities, and of course "many children cannot stand their step-sibling's company and are not able to overcome the initial aversion. Others reach a sort of a cold amiable relationship, but never overcome it."[19] Rivalries within the new brotherly hierarchies arise from numerous sources: age differences between children, gender differences, the sharing of household responsibilities, of territory and of financial and material resources.

If the new couple expects attachment between these children, disappointment would immediately appear. You cannot ask, for example, a 3 years old girl to love the same age boy, who suddenly appeared in her and her father's life. Living with her mother and spending time with the father only during visits, she would feel abandoned and jealous of this intruder. She would never understand why her father

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[18] Jeffrey Kluger, *Frați și surori. Cum ne influențează viața legăturile fraterne* (Bucharest: Litera, 2013), 140.
[19] *Ibidem.*

raises another child he sees every day, and not her. She might think that her father abandoned her because she is a girl and he wanted a boy. Numerous adults believe that it is sufficient to tell children the truth to make everything normal. Children are in different stages of evolution and understanding and they need, depending on how the oedipal crisis is suffered, their own version of what happened and what happens in their families.

"The affinities that are born among step-brothers and step-sisters are far from being an easy thing. They cannot be considered as friends because they did not choose this situation and still they have to get along in many ways."[20] In order to grow the feelings of fraternity between step-siblings, partaking in the childhood crucial moments together is essential. This implies that they would grow together, receive the same education and share intimate events within the family.

Advantages of the stepfamily

Even if they are less bonded than nuclear families, because "they have incongruent individual and marital life cycles"[21] with a higher stress level, recomposed families are a better solution to loneliness or single-parent families. It is important for the spouses to consolidate their couple relationship and to be involved in raising their children as a team. It is also important for the biological parent to exercise the dominant role, to establish a set of internal rules within the household, including the distribution of domestic chores. Although life in a stepfamily is full of difficulties, it is a school of life with a complexity never seen in an ordinary family, and we can say, more or less seriously, that if it does not kill you, it makes you stronger. According to Carr,[22] involved adults can develop a solid relationship in time, a more pragmatic and less romantic one, focused on the optimal management of conflicts, on an equal distribution of household tasks and on the responsibilities regarding raising and educating children. Children belonging to a decomposed family go through experiences which make them more adaptable to difficult situations; they can relate with step-brothers and step-parents, learn about sharing their territory, their toys, their free time, sharing their holidays with persons with whom they do not share the same blood ties and who are yet a constant presence in their lives. Between step-brothers, a strong friendship relationship may occur, one which might continue later in adult life.

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[20] Marcel Rufo, Christine Schilte, *Fraţi şi surori sau Iubire şi rivalitate. Explicaţiile unui pedopsihiatru* (Bucharest: Philobia, 2015), 216.

[21] Bonchiş, *Familia şi rolul ei în educarea copilului*, 372.

[22] *Ibidem*, 379.

Conclusion

Usually, a stepfamily means a better couple relationship than the previous one, an improvement of the economic situation, a better education for children, new siblings, new rules, new values, new models of behaviour. If the involved members prove to be flexible, creative and tolerant, the stepfamily may turn out to be a viable solution for those who experience the suffering of a family breakdown, single-parent difficulties or loneliness.

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Descartes or the origins of modern thinking

Ion CORDONEANU
"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați
theosisro@yahoo.com

Abstract

Descartes is considered to be the founder of modern rationalism. This is a clear statement which, however, does not show the manner in which rationalism as such appeared in the history of science, taking into account the turmoil of the Renaissance centuries, the significance of the Reform and the birth of modern science. As a founder of a new metaphysics, Descartes, through his work, remains par excellence the case in which the scholastic and Renaissance aftermaths as well as the Reform mutations are mixed in a new synthesis that will be called modernity. This study focuses on reinterpreting Cartesianism from this perspective in the vast context of modernity's metaphysical significance – it is a hypothesis that will need to be developed not only by means of hermeneutical instruments but, especially, by means of those instruments belonging to the history of culture and anthropology.

Keywords: *scholastics, Renaissance, Reform, metaphysics, censorship of the imaginary, subjectum, world image.*

The context

"One cannot speak about Descartes' absolute independence from his predecessors and from his time", noted Constantin Noica in the first lines of *The Life and Philosophy of Rene Descartes.*[1] No thinker can be read ignoring the atmosphere he lived up in and without grasping the pattern and development of his thinking. On the other hand, one cannot talk about the "Descartes moment" within its historical framework without talking into account the very becoming and metamorphosis the Western thinking experienced. Therefore, who is Descartes and what is his place not only in the history of philosophy but, perhaps, especially in the history of science, literature, theology and other possible histories…?

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[1] Rene Descartes, *Two philosophical treaties* (Rules of guiding the mind, Meditations on first philosophy) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1992), 9.

Several important events had happened before Descartes (1596-1650), starting with Columbus' discovery of America (1492) and ending with Kepler (1571-1630) and his three laws of planetary motion. In 1543, Copernicus wrote his treaty *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, in which he substantiated the heliocentric theory. Giordano Bruno was burn at the stake in 1600, and in 1633, Galilei, the founder of the experimental method and of classical mechanics, uttered, though outside the inquisition court of law, the famous words "And yet it moves!" in the first half of the 17th century, on the basis of a catalogue of celestial bodies made by Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), the German astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) enounced the three laws that govern the planetary motions. It was still the first half of the 17th century when the bases of a new epistemology are laid through the cooperation, from that moment on, of mathematics with physics and through the transformation of physics into a science[2].

At the age of eight, Descartes starts attending La Flèche – a Jesuit college where, although he would never be a religious spirit, he started to respect the Church. In *Discourse on the method* the philosopher himself makes a confession about what he learnt there: letters, Latin and Greek, eloquence, poetry. "I especially liked mathematics for the certainty and obviousness of its reasons…"[3] However, according to his own sayings, Descartes felt for the educational system, one that was essentially scholastic, on the one hand, *dissatisfaction*: "… as soon as I had finished these studies, after which you are considered one of the learned ones, I changed my opinion entirely. I was so overwhelmed with doubts and mistakes that it seemed to me I had not benefited at all in my attempt to train myself; the only result was the discovery of my own ignorance. Yet, I was in one of the most famous schools in Europe where I thought the real scholars were, if there is such a thing"[4]; on the other hand, Descartes manifests *curiosity for* "strange sciences", those "sciences curieuses", known only to a few and which hide specific secrets: chemistry, a part of optics, several illusory sciences such as judiciary astrology, chiromancy, cabala, magic, etc. Descartes confesses in the same *Discourse*: "dissatisfied with the little that I was being taught, I also went through all studies regarding the strange and rare sciences that I could lay may

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[2] The Antiquity and The Middle Ages, starting from the Aristotelian philosophy, could not concieve, as Galilei did, to treat physical phenomen mathematically; there was clear distinction between mathematics and physics: mathematics studies ideal objects while physics studies the real ones.

[3] Alexandru Boboc, *Descartes şi spiritul ştiinţific modern* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1990), 116.

[4] *Ibidem*, 115.

hands on", sciences which the philosopher, a supporter of exactitude, frowns upon as they contradict the scientific rationality.

Heir of the Middle Ages...

In the preface of *Metaphysical Meditations*, Descartes addresses the *Dean and Doctors of the Sacred Faculty of Theology in Paris*, in which he submits this work to the judgment of theologists, wishing that they took it under their protection. The main reason for writing the *Meditations* was to supply the infidels, *by means of natural reasoning*, with evidence regarding two questions that are considered fundamental in metaphysics: the existence of God and the immortality of the Soul. When Descartes considers that the two questions, God and the Soul, are "the chief of those that ought to be demonstrated by philosophical rather than theological argument", he admits a separation between the two fields, like Thomas of Aquino in whose opinion the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are essentially philosophical questions. Both Thomas and Descartes philosophize in a Christian way. From this point of view, E. Gilson does not hesitate to consider that Descartes does the work of a theologist[7], because the *Meditations* abide by the requirements of a Council: "And as regards the soul, although many have considered that it is not easy to know its nature, and some have even dared to say that human reasons have convinced us that it would perish with the body, and that faith alone could believe the contrary, nevertheless, inasmuch as the Lateran Council held under Leo X (in the eighth session) condemns these tenets, and as Leo expressly ordains Christian philosophers to refute their arguments and to employ all their powers in making known the truth, I have ventured in this treatise to undertake the same task."[8]

The connection between Descartes and the spirit of the mediaeval philosophy can be seen more clearly in the very title of the *Meditations*: Meditations on *the first philosophy*, in which the existence of God and the real difference between the soul and the body are demonstrated – *Meditationes de prima philosophia*. This *prima philosophia* is the niece of Aristotle's metaphysics, of πρώτη φίλοσοφία. "Aristotle's theory was embraced in the Middle Ages in a totally determining manner. This «mediaeval» Aristotle was exposed during the late scholastics through the Spanish philosophical schools, especially through the Jesuit Suarez, to a comprehensive interpretation. Descartes receives his first and fundamental philosophical education with the Jesuits, in La Flèche. Both of these

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[7] Etienne Gilson, *Filosofia în Evul Mediu* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995), 701.
[8] Descartes, *Meditaţii metafizice* (Bucharest: Crater, 1997), 5.

facts are expressed in the title of his main work, i.e. the controversy with this tradition and the will of asking again the question regarding the *Sein* of *Seiendes*, the thingness of the thing, the substance."[9] According to Heidegger, Descartes is tributary to the mediaeval scholastics and uses its terminology.[10]

>   *... annoyed by the Renaissance...*

How did the modern paradigm appear in science? Or, more precisely, *when*? In order to re-contextualize the Cartesian philosophy, I take the perspective presented by Ioan Petru Culianu in *Eros şi magie în Renaştere* (Eros and magic in the Renaissance): "modern science steps in precisely when *there was no need for it.*"[11] According to Culianu, the appearance of modern science looks very much like the natural selection of species; it is the result of the complex interaction of the ideological forces. To put it differently, pure science does not exist. There is science that is dependent on people with interests in society; a science that reflects human history. The most suitable metaphor to describe the birth of modern science is, in Culianu's opinion, the condition of an insect – the aptera fly: "…our modern scientific spirit was born like an aptera fly which, amidst the historic turmoil of the 16th century, was lucky to go unnoticed and not be eliminated by the merciless natural selection. The latter hit the Renaissance sciences so hard that they lost all chances of ever getting back".[12]

The Renaissance sciences? Those that made Descartes curious – *les sciences curieuses*, the strange and rare sciences, the false doctrines about which Descartes says: "I already knew their worth to let myself deceived neither by the promises of an alchemist, nor the predictions of an astrologist, nor the imposture of a magician, nor the fireworks or boastfulness of those who claim that they know more than they do".[13] We are dealing here with what was called, using a formula belonging to Gaston Bachelard, "epistemological break". In defining science, Descartes stars from the premise that what has been done before him was, in fact, a *pseudo-*

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[9] Martin Heidegger, *Timpul imaginii lumii* (Bucharest: Paideea, 1998), 143.

[10] Martin Heidegger, *Fiinţă şi timp* (Bucharest: Jurnalul literar, 1994), 43. At the beginnig of the *Discourse about the method* we find găsim: "I follow the opinion shared by philosophers who claim that there are differences only between *accidents* and under no circumstances between the *forms or natures of individuals* belonging to the same *species*" (see Alexandru Boboc, *op. cit.*, 114) . Scholastically speaking, *nature* means realization, *accidents* are determinations that do are not related to the essence of the species; the "form" defines *species*, "accidents" are related to the *individual*. It is worth noticing the fact that, according to Gilson, by "philosophers" Descartes refers to scholastics.

[11] Ioan Petru Culianu, *Eros şi magie în Renaştere. 1484* (Bucharest: Nemira, 1994), 252.

[12] *Ibidem*, 253.

[13] Descartes, *Discurs despre metodă*, in Boboc, *Descartes şi spiritul ştiinţific modern*, 117.

science. The true science did not exist yet. Along this line of thoughts, defining science through the break with the past represents a positivist defining of science which consists of disqualifying the "non-science" before it.[14] This remark that is drawn from the factual-descriptive history of science is somehow imprecise because it stars from an unverifiable hypothesis, therefore purely speculative, an expression of the progressionist, rationalist, scientist prejudices – that of the existence of a special canon of scientificity, of certain vectors that express the interests of the *scientific* spirit. All these could be expressed like this: "…science always stands against the obstacle represented by the opinion, an obstacle defined by Bachelard as a quasi-anthropological datum. During the most lyrical moments, the fight between science and opinion becomes a confrontation between the *interests of life* (to which the opinion is subscribed) and the *interests of the spirit* (the vectors of science)"[15].

Here we have to revisit the question of *how* modern science appeared in history. Descartes already *knew* the value of pseudo-sciences "not to be deceived *anymore*" by their promises. The philosopher was, therefore, familiarized, back then and outside the official doctrine of the Catholic Church, with the scientific canon of the Renaissance – a society which displays only a few symptoms of decadence. What precisely determined Descartes to repudiate "les sciences curieuses"? Because, according to Culianu, "the hypothesis that the Renaissance sciences had no use value must be removed. It is nothing but an a posteriori explanation of the transformation of the scientific spirit and, as such, void of any verisimility".[16]

However, under the circumstances of the Counter-reform, no science of the Renaissance is tolerated anymore. The epistemological break appears by mutation, whose explanation resides in the censorship of the imaginary: the witch hunt unleashed in Western Europe; Giordano Bruno burned at stake as a result of a trial in which he had been accused of witchcraft; Galileo Galilei threatened just because he was a supporter of Pythagorean ideas; Newton, later on, had to silent his esoteric and occult research, becoming thus a coryphaeus of scientific rationalism. Descartes himself was suspected of sympathy for the Rosicrucian hoax.[17] He knew *pseudo*-sciences (*pseudo* only for the theologists' ears) and was not deceived by them *anymore*. This was only four years after Galilei had uttered "Eppur si

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[14] Isabelle Stengers, *Inventarea ştiinţelor moderne* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2001), 28-29.

[15] *Ibidem*, 29.

[16] Culianu, *Eros şi magie în Renaştere,* 252.

[17] The authors of the rosicrucian manifestos place the death of Christian Rosenkreunz in 1484, and the date of the descovery of his tomb, in 1604 – the interval between two conjunctions

muove!" The echo of these words was still hovering in the world of "scientists" and Descartes was able to hear it very clearly…

Nonetheless, resulting from the censorship of the imaginary, the faculty of imagining atrophies, and this phenomenon led to an increased interest in observing the material world in the most rigorous, quantitative terms; hence, the so precise, mathematic nature of the Cartesian method. Modern science is, therefore, the product of a mutation of the imaginary and not the result of an evolution from the irrational to the rational.

... and the creator of a new metaphysics

In this context, *ego cogito* is nothing more but a way of camouflaging or some remnant of the Renaissance wearing the coat of the new method, respectively, science. Therefore, what does *ego cogito* become from the perspective of the imaginary and its censorship? Although the books dedicated to the Reform mention, rather superficially, that this shift should have happened *within* the Catholic Church, this detail is too lightly ignored. Culianu – because he still is the starting point of our research – states that the Reform did not manifested as a liberal movement, but as a radical-conservatory one within the Church, aiming at re-establishing the *Christian order*. From this perspective, the Reform "*had reduced to the minimum the external forms, in order to concentrate upon the intimate religious experience*"[18] (With Descartes, in *Metaphysical meditations*, the place of mystical contemplation is taken by intellectual meditation). This attitude defines the iconoclastic nature of the movement which had as a major goal, among others, the removal of idol worshiping from the Church. Iconoclasm acts not only upon the external images, but perhaps primarily upon the internal ones, the phantasms which are in fact idols conceived by the internal sense. Unlike the culture of the Renaissance – a culture of the imaginary by excellence, the Reform manifests itself as an ideological movement whose main task is to implement the *radical censorship of the imaginary*. "Establishing the idolatrous, unlawful character of phantasms, the Reform instantly abolishes the culture of the Renaissance"[19]; that culture which believed that the phantasms had a power of their own and that the internal sense is, par excellence, the place where the trans-natural forces (gods and demons) manifest. If the Imaginary is "the great denominator that rallies all the procedures of human thought" or an "anthropological crossroads" (Gilbert Durand, *The anthropological structures of*

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[18] Culianu, *Eros și magie în Renaștere,* 265.
[19] *Ibidem*, 267.

the imaginary), then, with Descartes, the structures of this remnant imaginary are camouflaged: the divinities and imaginary beings are hidden in *ego cogito*, and out of the fantastic/phantasmal constructs we are left with the abstract images of the pure numbers governed by the universal science – mathematics.

What does the new metaphysics look like?

Martin Heidegger, in *Timpul imaginii lumii* (*Die Zeit des Weltbildes*) – a text which is as important for a re-interpretation of modern thinking as Culianu's research, reaches a number of very interesting theses for this attempt of re-interpreting an author who is considered the founder of modern philosophy.

Heidegger claims that for the first time, along with Descartes' metaphysics, the *Sein* is determined as objectification of representation and the truth as a certainty of representation. This is possible due to the transformation of man's essence in general: man becomes *subject*, i.e. *υποκειμενον*, which, as foundation, gathers everything in himself. This means that "man becomes that *Seiendes* which is the foundation of all *Seiendes* in his *Sein*'s manner and truth. Man becomes a way of relating to *Seiendes* as such",[20] while *Seiendes* in its entirety – the world – becomes image. Heidegger notices the fact that the age in which man becomes *subjectum* accomplishes an objectivism comparable with the change of paradigm; this happens, as we have seen, due to the censorship of the imaginary and the increased interest for the material world.

Censorship with Descartes is so drastic that the material things and the world in its complexity are reduced to surface and their mathematical expression.

What does it mean when one says that the world becomes an image? To have an image about the world means two things: (i) the world, *Seiendes* in its entirety, is represented and (ii) it is in front of us as a system. *The world is conceived as an image*: the image of the world does not express an image about the world, but the fact that *Seiendes* comes to be understood in as representation. In fact, the world understood as representation and man as *subjectum* represent the one and the same process. To represent means to place something in front of you, to produce the stable as such and to relate to it – this is *cogitans*, in which Descartes includes *voluntas, affectus, actiones*, *and passiones*. The certainty lies in the foundation of the *subjectum* which is *ego cogitans*, but it is not something subjective or selfish; it is for each ego, taken individually. "To be subjective becomes now the privilege of

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[20] Heidegger, *Timpul imaginii lumii* (Die Zeit des Weltbildes), 46.

man as a thinking-representing essence"[21] – this is Heidegger's translation of what Descartes expresses at the beginning of his *Discourse*:

Reason is the best organized thing: everyone believes he/she is so well endowed that even those who are hard to please in any concern do not wish to have more than they do. It is impossible for everybody to be wrong; this proves the ability to think clearly and to distinguish the truth form the false, i.e. what we call common sense or reason is normally the same in all people; the diversity of opinions is not due the fact that some are wiser than others, but to the fact that thinking takes different paths and we are not referring to the same things.[22]

Therefore, *if the world is an image*, *a representation*, we are dealing with a camouflage of what the Reform wanted to eliminate: the imaginary. The "Cartesian imaginary" lacks neither the Renaissance *demon* which makes its presence felt and cannot be ignored ("I will believe that the sky, the air, the earth, the colors, the shapes, the sounds and all the external things that we see are nothing but deceiving illusions which it uses to abuse my credulity"[23]), nor the *dream* ("I happened many times to dream at night that I am in this place, dressed, by the stove […] there are no conclusive clues, nor signs clear enough by means of which one could distinguish wake from sleep; I am completely amazed"[24]). We should notice, nevertheless, that these two are not taken here as they would have been in the Renaissance; here, they only constitute two methodological hypotheses used to discover *ego cogitum*. They are actually discredited, along with imagination itself, for being obstacles in the path of an authentic knowledge – the leitmotifs belong to the Renaissance while the interpretation belongs to the Reform.

The world is a phantasm of the subject, and the *cogito* is its *pneuma* (spirit). The camouflaging of imaginary in the Cartesian philosophy results in mutation. One can see here the reflection of Culianu's idea that modernity is "a secularized appendix of the reform".[25]

What does the world of Descartes look like? "From the closed world to the infinite universe"...

… is the title of Alexandre Koyre's book, which studies the fascinating history of the idea of universe in the 16th and 17th centuries, XVI-XVII, where

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[21] *Ibidem*, 67.

[22] *Discourse about the method*, 113-114.

[23] Descartes, *Metaphysical meditations*, 33.

[24] *Ibidem*, 29.

[25] Culianu, *Eros și magie în Renaștere,* 304.

Descartes is, along Kepler, Newton and Leibniz, one of the protagonists of a debate which led to the change of perspective: the journey that leads from the closed world of Antiquity to the open world of modernity was covered at a surprising speed: only one hundred years separate Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (1543) from Descartes' *Principia Philosophiae* (1644); and just 40 years separate these *Principles* from Newton's *Philosophae Naturalis Principia Matematica* (1687).

We did not mention Nicolaus Cusanus, the last philosopher of the Middle Ages and the first to reject the mediaeval conception on Cosmos. Descartes himself thought that Cusanus and many other scholars presupposed that the world was infinite, without ever being scolded by the Church for that; on the contrary, it is believed that conferring such greatness to God's work means to honor him in the most suitable way. Therefore, Cusanus, a forerunner of Copernicus and Kepler, is quoted by Descartes as defender of the world's infinity. However, against the objection that infinity may be attributed to God only – spiritual and non-corporeal being, both Cusanus and Descartes will avoid defining their worlds as "infinite", preferring the notions of "unfinished" or "indefinite".

Descartes' world is mathematic, rigorously uniform, the world of reified geometry which contains only matter and motion/movement. Due to identifying surface and space with matter, in Descartes' conception: 1) *vacuum is essentially impossible* and 2) *the finiteness and limitation of space and matter are rejected.*

For Koyré, the idea of *infinity* (Descartes prefers the term *indefinite*) is the basis of Cartesian philosophy: "God can be conceived only as an absolutely infinite being; his existence can be proven only as such and the human nature itself can be defined only through this idea – that being that is given the idea of infinity by God".[26]

... and the Cartesian God

Because he guarantees the truth of our clear and distinct ideas, Descrates' God is *Deus verax* – the epistemological principle. In accordance with the mediaeval tradition, Descartes believes that God, as pure spirit, is outside the material world. He will renew Anselm's demonstration, substituting the concept of infinite being with the Anselmian meaning of being, something in relation to which one cannot conceive anything bigger. For Descartes, God exists by virtue of "the superabundance of his essence" – this allows him to be his own cause (*causa*

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[26] Alexandre Koyre, *De la lumea închisă la universul infinit* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1997), 85.

sui) and to give existence by himself – infinity implies being and it cannot be attributed to the creature.

One of the forms of the Cartesian ontological argument is: 1. Anything we perceive clearly and distinctly about something is true; 2. We perceive clearly and distinctly that the conceiving of an absolutely perfect being requires the existence of that Being a) because it is impossible to conceive an absolutely perfect Being who is lacking something; b) but if the absolutely perfect Being does not exist, then he/she is lacking something: existence; c) it clearly results that the concept of an absolutely perfect Being requires his existence; 3. This is why it is true that an absolutely perfect Being cannot lack existence (i.e. he must exist). Descartes warns that this argument applies only to a necessary or an absolutely perfect Being. Only a necessary Being cannot be conceived as non-existing. It is necessary to conceive God as a necessary being because only God is the Being whose essence requires His existence.

The *Discourse about the method*, where the ontological argument is formulated, represents, according to theologian Christos Yannaras, "the ultimate experience of the West' attempt to confirm God's existence in a rational-demonstrative manner"[27]. God's existence is confirmed through conceiving the idea of God as perfect being; therefore, His existence will be included in the idea the same way the idea of triangle includes the truth that the sum of triangles is equal to two straight angles. In demonstrating God's existence, Descartes remains faithful to scholastics, whose concept about God is "a product of that cognitive *autarki* that is given to our subject by reason, ratio, beyond or outside any experience of the real or life, which is always a relational experience".[28]

What we inherit from Descartes

Beyond the Cartesian philosophy and its specific ideas, beyond problems and answers, modernity kept one *teaching* from Descartes' work: reason is the highest authority, not prejudices or tradition. Cartesian rationalism has an edifying dimension.[32] Starting from this, late modernity initiates the criticism of modern philosophy where the "Cartesian anxiety" – which refers to the epistemological variety of the existential anguish and whose main feature is the uncertainty regarding the legitimacy of our convictions – "is cured not by a rational foundation of the convictions that we embrace but by accepting human fallibility and the

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[27] Christos Yannaras, *Heidegger şi Areopagitul* (Bucharest: Anastasia, 1996), 11.

[28] *Ibidem*, 13.

[32] Radu Neculau, *Filosofii terapeutice ale modernităţii târzii* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2001), 12.

contingency of our projects".[33] The Cartesian anxiety can be overcome by adopting a practical philosophy which, implicitly, has therapeutic functions as well. From this perspective, Rorty, Gadamer and Habermas are those who suggest abandoning the theory of knowledge understood as representation (theory which originates in Cartesianism and reaches its peak in Kant's philosophy) in favor of hermeneutics, of a critical and pragmatic approach.

Why did Descartes die? An ironic closure

John Nash, the mad mathematician who believed he was a Russian agent in the movie "A Beautiful Mind', is a Cartesian … He solves mathematical problems but he cannot solve his own problem: he is haunted by phantasms, everything for him is as real as possible. The old Cartesian question resurfaces: how to distinguish wake from sleep, phantasms from reality. He accepts he is schizophrenic when he realizes that his phantasms do not grow old. Unlike Descartes, who does not find any difference between the two structures, the real one and the imaginary one, John Nash places time between them.

John Nash is a failed Cartesian: through temporality, he cannot be faithful to mathematics; the latter is ideal, not temporal. Nevertheless, he still does not understand his condition, his phantasms keep visiting him, talking to him and he still believes that he is facing a mathematical problem without solution. He cannot conceive the fact that there are problems which cannot be solved, that there are ideas which cannot be demonstrated. Before getting married, he asks his girlfriend for a *love* proof, some "verifiable data" but she asks him:

> *"How big is the universe?"*
> *"Infinite."*
> *"How do you know?"*
> *"I know because all the data indicate this evidence…"*
> *"… But they haven't proven yet."*
> *"No."*
> *"They haven't seen it yet."*
> *"No."*
> *"Then, how do you know for sure?"*
> *"I don't know, just believe it."*
> *"Hmmm, the same with love I guess…"*

Admitting he is mad, he believes he is facing a mathematical problem: "This is what I do, solve problems…all I need to do is to plan my mind." Doesn't it sound familiar? Descartes' entire method is meant to discipline the mind: accept as *evident*

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[33] Neculau, *Filosofii terapeutice*, 13.

only *clear* and *distinct* things. But, Professor Nash, things are not just *clear* and *distinct* at all, the truth is not always *manifest*. The psychiatrist tells him he has no way out because he is caught in the trap of his own mind – the latter is the problem without solution. Man thinks he can get out of this immense trap by making the mind work. By what means? Of course, the means of the mind – this is how we are back in the trap…it is true that man needs *time* but not to fix the mechanism, which is the mind, but to make his phantasms bearable. Eventually, he understands that he can live only by ignoring his demons. Descartes made the world a phantasm, doubting even, or perhaps especially, the data gathered by the senses. How do we know, though, if *ego cogito* is not a phantasm too? Ultimately, the very mind becomes a problem. Descartes needs a warrant of truth – God – in order to be able to *reconstruct* the world, but this warrant of truth is still a phantasm of the mind…

There is still the question *how can we escape this immense trap*? The answer to Descartes' philosophic schizophrenia is to be found in "A Beautiful Mind": *the only certainty is love. This is the fulcrum of the entire reality*.

Mathematics shows in this scenario its illusory nature. Yes, yes, be surprised! It was uttered by a mad professor of mathematics in front of an audience who came to listen to a Nobel Prize awardee. Precisely due to this, it could not be addressed to the entire audience but only to the person who made this revelation possible:

> I've always believed in numbers and the equations and logics that lead to reason. But after a lifetime of such pursuits, I ask "What truly is logic?", "Who decides reason?" My quest has taken me through the physical, the metaphysical, the delusional – and back. And I have made the most important discovery of my career, the most important discovery of my life: It is only in the mysterious equations of love that any logic or reasons can be found.
>
> I'm only here tonight because of you [to his wife, Alicia]. You are the reason I am. You are all my reasons. Thank you.

Unlike John Nash, who survived due to his love for a woman, Descartes – without revelation – died because of a woman who, ironically, was passionate about mathematics.

John Nash failed in Cartesianism but survived and received the Nobel Prize. Descartes was read at this time by a considerable number of women but he became famous only after death. To be ironic, I would not be surprised to find out sometime that the French philosopher was a Russian agent who died mad in the trap of his own *mathesis universalis*. Mathematics cannot free us from our demons. On the contrary, it might feed them even more, make them even more real.

One thing is certain: not mathematics is the one that saves; on the contrary, it may kill. Between failure and death, John Nash chose failure and I think that happened because the Nobel Prize is not awarded for mathematics…

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ESSAYS

PRESENTATIONS

REVIEWS

The Autopoiesis of Intelligence Technologies

Review

Bogdan POPOVENIUC, *"Philosophy of Singularity. The Global Brain or an Ethics of the Thinking without Man"*, **Eikon Publishing House, 2016.**

Vianu MUREŞAN,
vianumuresan@gmail.com

As the title of the paper that I am going to dedicate to professor Bogdan Popoveniuc's book shows – *A Philosophy of Singularity. The Global Brain or an Ethics of the Thinking without Man* (Eikon Publishing House, 2016) –, I will start by recognizing my gratitude for the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, and especially as regards the theory of autopoietic formation and reproduction of social systems. Although the German sociologist is not mentioned in the book, however the theory of the autopoietic reproduction is tackled, with direct reference to those who inspired him some decades ago, namely Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco Varela (*Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*, 1980). I believe that the debate proposed by Bogdan Popoveniuc on the creation of artificial intelligence, on a *Global Brain* takes over this idea long substantiated in his studies by Niklas Luhmann – *communication is the foundation of social systems, it is the driving force of their development*. Or, as long as the new knowledge and communication technologies have become a system that tends or threatens to become autonomous in relation to their creator, it becomes clear that the luhmannian model of the autopoietic reproduction of social systems can be implemented in communication systems or, if we will, of Communication as a system.

Let us see now the elements on which Bogdan Popoveniuc builds his philosophical analysis of the theme of Technological Singularity (TS) and into which he leads it. First, what is it? The explicit articulation of the idea of the kinds of technologies that rely upon the adepts of the singularity theory, is first conveyed by Irving John Good, who in 1965 was talking about ultra-intelligent machines that could outclass the intellectual performances of the smartest people, while pointing out that these are the latest toys that man should try. In order to develop

an "autopoietic" model (n.n.) of intelligence, eventually assimilated to the universal Spirit of Hegel's philosophy, contributed theoretically Charles S. Peirce, with his evolutionary cosmology, the theologian Teilhard du Chardin, with a vision of universal becoming towards an Omega Point, the highest possible level of complexity of conscience and knowledge. Writers such as Samuel Butler (with *Darwin among the Machines*, 1863, and *Erewhon*, 1872), Henry Adams (with *The Law of Acceleration*, 1904, and *The Rule of Phase*, 1909), George Harry Stine (with *Science-fiction is too Conservative*, 1961), Alvin Tofler (with *The Shock of the Future*, 1970), Ray Kurzweil (with *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, 1999, and *Singularity is Near*, 2005) imagined in different ways models of a new technical intelligence.

The idea that there might be a unitary intelligence or extra-human forms of intelligence is by no means new. The Universal Intellect of Neoplatonists, as an autonomous sphere of reality in which the human intelligence is participating in a synergistic way, is Intelligence in its absolute infallible coordinates, but it has a transcendent status and benefits from the articulation of the divine. Now that the invention of artificial intelligence is at stake an elaborate instrumental form of human intelligence, fueled by human intentions and instincts, without transcendent nature and divine reason appears. I would consider it appropriate to characterize it by using these terms − *Luciferian* intelligence in respect of Blaga, or *Faustian* intelligence, referring to Goethe. Both models are heteronomous, relative to the authorizing divine principle, as both have the character of *temptation and transgression*, in short, variations of *hubris*. Usually *hubris* – reckless intelligence or crazy courage of a mind enlightened by blind ambitions − is the mechanism by which man draws his punishment in a universe dominated by divine reasons, in which not everything is allowed and not everything is well received.

But let us get back to defining the theme of Singularity. The most enlightening answer to our question − What is Singularity? − is given by Ray Kurzwail, the founding father of Singularitarianism, as follows:

Singularity will mean the culmination of the merger of our biological thinking and existence with our technology, resulting in a world which, though still human, transcends our biological roots. There will be no distinction, in post-Singularity, between human and machine, nor between physical and virtual reality (…)What is Singularity then? It is a future period in which the pace of technological change will be so rapid, its impact so deep, that human life will be irreversibly transformed. Although neither utopian nor dystopian, this epoch will transform the concepts on which we rely to give a meaning to our lives, from our business models to the cycle of human life, including death itself. Understanding Singularity will change our perspective on the

significance of our past and our future. In order to really understand it, man should change his perspective on life in general and in particular on his own life.[1]

The effect of "explosion" of artificial intelligence, given by the pace of its development, would make the role and the effectiveness of natural human intelligence to regress immediately and in an inversely proportional way, generating unpredictable and uncontrollable developments. The support of the idea is constituted by the proof that technology has assumed the role of ontological component in the contemporary human existence, taking the place of nature for the archaic and premodern societies. In the horizon of technology is conducted the greatest part of the individual, social and cultural experience of the human living over the past few decades, with the vector of the technological conditioning indicating a steady increase from decade to decade. Life itself, meeting the food and security needs, maintaining healthcare, achieving personal aspirations, as well as keeping and proliferating cultural patterns depend at an increasingly higher level on technology. Moreover, from a product of inventiveness, of human creativity, technology has slowly turned into an alternate condition of creativity, including in art and literature. Paradoxically, the "natural" itself came to be produced by technologies.

Then, we should understand the challenge that could represent the formation of Singularity for the cultural, moral and religious horizons of the modern man, who lacks real historical experience, cultural data necessary to interpret the revolution of technical thinking, that took place in front of him, simply because it is unprecedented. There were, of course, innovations that have revolutionized human civilization in a particular era, but now it is a revolution of mechanisms and technologies producing thought, and not effects of thinking/creativity. Invested with almost unlimited power, technology tends to play the attribute of the divine omnipotence, thereby winning the human attention and beliefs in their religious coordinates. Technology is literally deified, being placed above human and nature. We are expecting everything from it. Technology is the easiest version of magical practices, whose goal was and remained the fact of manipulating reality, targeting phenomena towards purposes for which human intelligence and natural powers are not enough.

Professor Popoveniuc integrates the thesis of putting a spell on the world in its explanatory system, arguing that technology acts as the medium of *captivation, fascination and seduction* for human consciousness, impacting its cognitive and

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[1] Bogdan Popoveniuc, *Filosofia Singularității. Creierul global, o etică a gândirii fără om* (Eikon Publishing House, 2016), 79.

spiritual field, after having recognized its contribution to human phylogenesis as a species with genetic mutations and the action of the natural environment. Obvious practical advantages of technology and utopias that generated from it make up the ontological horizon of magical controllability of the world that expects increasingly more, finally the eternal life or a divine status. Transferring onto technology the principle of antropic conservation of the Creation indicates the sense of a kind of quasi-religious utopianism that renders insufficient the technological nihilism of the philosophy of Singularity. This insidious formula of nihilism is hard to ignore, as long as the pace of transformation generated by technology, including in personal life, leads to a diversification of forms of communication and information whose immediate effect, the gain of information, takes all the time necessary for the mind to produce summaries of understanding, systematic comprehension of the world we live in. It seems paradoxical, but the over-informing destroys the thorough understanding, fundamentally philosophical of the world and our lives. From this point of view, the knowledge technologies lead to the entropy of the process of Systematic Knowledge. The problem is, at this point, can a Global Brain take over the task of Knowledge? If yes, then what is the role of natural human thinking in the development of that Knowledhe System, but more importantly, what is the practical purpose of that knowledge?

Finally, I believe that the stake of the analysis of the theme of Singularity is the following: if it is possible to get a level where the technical intelligence, concentrated in a Global Brain, can reproduce itself in a way which is unknown to the human intelligence and intentions, that is an autopoietic of it. Professor Popoveniuc does not respond to this question, but points to the possibility that artificial intelligence and the Global Brain can be created, and we do not realize it for the simple reason that we are not part of the process. If it is true that there is a network of all beings and then a network of intelligent beings connected via all media, the product of this constant interplay of knowledge / intelligence would be the Mind of the Global Brain and we are all already part of this mind ever since its creation. We have to note that, at this point, there is an essential distinction between mechanism and product. How are we supposed to do that? Previous cultural revolutions, such as the discovery of the printing press for example, meant products then people used to do something better (to write, to publish, to multiply messages and codes), while creating artificial intelligence, carried to the level of Singularity, allows the *transforming of the product in mechanism or production technology*. It is the point in which technical intelligence can enter into an

autopoietic process of reproduction, and the human intentions and activities can be either employed or subordinated, or even useless to that reproduction.

Under the threat of this possibility, Bogdan Popoveniuc believes that it takes a major leap at the cognitive and moral level of human consciousness as a phenomenon, to manage the reality of Singularity, in order to prevent the tool from becoming a weapon, in order to prevent technology from becoming a trap. While postulating the need for such a major mental mutation, the author redefines actually the sense of the theme discussed upon, of Singularity, by subtly baffling its technical meaning:

> *The technological progress needs an adequate cognitive development, as not to create a fatal planetary imbalance. Autoreflexivity at the level of the species and of the global intelligence represents the true Singularity towards which the culture of the humankind should head for (...) The Singularity of global self-reflexivity of the self-reflexive agents is the finality towards which converges the technological development and human evolution, the point of agglutination of biological and artificial intelligence. Mankind will also move towards a trans-human self-reflexive Singularity or will be consumed in a destructive ST...[2]*

By redefining its meaning for reasons of human ecology, Bogdan Popoveniuc makes out of Singularity a spiritual apex, passing in the background, in a sharply argumentative manner, its technological ideal. That is, instead of believing that the creation of a Global Brain, which will threaten to dismantle the human natural intelligence, would be the last step in our evolution to the point of Singularity, the author diverts the potential threat bidding a new target, imposing another objective that Singularitarians have not taken seriously into account. He grants to the technological progression of intelligence the status of condition of a new spiritual achievement, he turns it into a foundation for a quality leap of human consciousness. If we want to find a term for it, we could call it the condition and the path towards a global necessary *metanoia*.

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[2] Popoveniuc, *Filosofia Singularităţii*, 260-261.

Criticism of Ethical and Philosophical Foundations of National Socialism

Review

Antoniu Alexandru FLANDORFER, *"Criticism of Ethical and Philosophical Foundations of National Socialism"*, Eikon Publishing House, 2016.

Sorin-Tudor MAXIM, *Professor Ph.D.*
University "Ştefan cel Mare" of Suceava, Romania
Department of Philosophy, Social and Human Sciences
maximsorintudor@yahoo.com

I think that the topic chosen is likely to highlight original and timely research questions and answers, which are of real interest in the current philosophical, moral and political situation. Moreover, it is a theme of European interest, in the context of political and social developments the old continent is facing.

The paper addresses a topical issue, in a time concerned to find solutions for overcoming the crisis that is being felt in Europe and worldwide, most troubling than ever and that currents of extremist thought and social action know very well. In a time open to all kinds of speeches, in which the far right-wing claims the support necessary for political options in a whole philosophy and mythical thinking of the clearest fascist inspiration, a thorough analysis of the Nazi phenomenon – the archetype of spiritual and actional manifestations of right-wing totalitarianism – seems to be more than appropriate.

1) A legitimate question could be asked: what is the new element that can be brought upon a subject so extensively researched by historians, political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, and even physicians or psychiatrists? It must be emphasized from the very beginning that this book is a philosophical work, not a historical one. And, even if there are analyzes of political philosophy on the National Socialism, one cannot say the same thing about the ethical and moral philosophy perspective on understanding this phenomenon.

Moreover, the very idea that a current of thought with so profound antihumanist implications could be based on a genuine ethical or moral philosophy

seems absurd and irrelevant for a serious scientific explanation about Nazism. The merit of this study is to propose a critical look at the ethical-philosophical foundations of National Socialism, on the premise that *no current of thought, no movement of social action can commit – and affectively and emotionally attach such large groups of supporters / sympathizers, even among the intellectual elite, without a moral component*. The employment or the non-employment of individuals in the community life and, especially, the quality and depth of this participation has a fundamentally ethical determination. Edgar Morin writes that in the same way as man eats not only food, the society lives not only in economic management and efficiency. It also needs hopes, myths, ideals, dreams.

2) Europe invented democracy, undoubtedly, drawing on the ancient Greek rationalist political thought, but it should not be ignored that Europe also turned the twentieth century into "the century of totalitarianism". The calamity of democracy – wrote in January 1943 Robert Brasillach, one of the intellectuals attached to the extreme right ideas – is to have deprived the nation of *image, of the image of love, of the image of respect, of the image of genuine solidarity*, which feels like living in fraternity. Nazism has shown us how the modern world failed to find its identity in democracy. The National Socialism, fascism in general, was nourished by this symbolic identification – imaginary, figurative and mythical – answering a haunting expectation from individuals and communities of something that would represent them, even a "face", seen as a "providential face", identified with the destiny of the community itself.

The criticism of ethical-philosophical foundations of Nazism is an interrogation on the logic specific to its appearance and attraction for an overwhelming number of individuals, which should make us cautious about the possibility of restatement of our current history. It is also a formal guard against the idea that our time could not, in its turn, believe it is saved by the recourse to new myths and dreams.

3) If currently the Nazism seems to be a thing of the past, definitively condemned by history, especially for the bloody seal that it has put on the entire last century, the same cannot be said about Neo-Nazism, neo-fascism, in full resurgence and even in the process to expand their sphere of audience in the contemporary world. And the events that Europe is facing nowadays, related to the identity crisis of the European Union, to the serious problems related to the refugee crisis, to the crisis of interreligious dialogue, are not at all likely to stem the interest of communities to solve or at least manage crisis situations through means specific to the far right-wing.

More specifically, current social movements of National Socialist type feel the need for a re-foundation of values, using the conceptual elements of racialist theories, for the mythical obsessions of founding, programming, fulfilling the destiny of mankind that eventually, even if "upgraded", fall into the logic of the totalitarian thinking.

This paper is also relevant through the fact that *Nazism has the force of example* for any type of event radicalized towards the far right-wing that propagates in the collective mind. "This approach – states the author – is oriented towards National Socialism, precisely because this German form of radicalized fascism represents a starting point in understanding the trends of any other ideology or social action that competes and contributes to what could dehumanize us."

Now, once we highlighted the importance and the topicality of the issue studied, let us see to what extent the author has managed to build and to carry out the proposed research project.

4) In line with the logic of the research, the book is divided into three chapters: *A philosophical analysis of racism as an ideological matrix of National Socialism; Superman as the ideal type of the Nazi ethics marked by the theory of Aryan racial superiority;* respectively *The Reflection of the National-Socialist Weltanschauung as "political religion" and ethical grounds in totalitarian manipulation*, with a consistent introduction and final conclusions. It is worth appreciating the concern of the author to accompany each chapter – and the related subsections – with short explanatory conclusions, clarifying the assumed intentions and theorizations.

I note, from the start, the good organization of the content, as well as the representativeness of themes chosen for supporting the argumentative approach, what defines the author as a good connoisseur and a competent researcher in the field of the issues investigated, especially given the fact that he also uses a truly impressive bibliography, *from which does not lack virtually none of the significant titles of specialty literature*.

It is not easy to do a coherent theoretical exercise on an issue where the difficulties start right at some conceptual notions: racial, racism, racialism, myth - "false fable" (Platon), the myth – identitary essence, the myth – founding legend (with Heidegger preferring the term of *Saga*, in order to delineate himself from the Rosenberg's manner of conceiving the myth), clarifications that the author makes reasonably, not hesitating to often support his own views (for instance in relation

to racism contained in the so-called *myth of progress*, or hidden in the phrase *homo europaeus*).

Incisive and with real personal contributions is also the comparative analysis of several Nazi themes (racism, which the State being allowed to do anything if "motives are noble", the eugenics, the myth of the superiority of cultures and civilizations, the authoritarianism, the biological conservatism), also found dissipatedly in democratic regimes.

5) And the analyze of the conceptual elements of racism as an ideological matrix of National Socialism; the transgression of racialism in anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, anti-rabinism with the inhuman implementing of the so-called *Hebrew issue*; the Aryanization of Christianity, and last, but not least, the politicization of theology, represent an inspired and interesting release on the topics mentioned in the title.

The criticism of the manner in which Nazism took over and distorted Nietsche's ideas, rebuilding ideologically the original connotations that the philosopher ascribed to metaphors "superman", "blond beast", or to the distinction "master's moral" versus "slave's moral", is also remarkable and admirable.

The Superman theory, with its symbolic identification, the blond beast was able to impose the racial mirage of Aryan superiority and of the right of Germans to pursue the legitimate aim of ensuring the so-called *Living space*. Rightly, the author identifies the philosophical origins of the theory of vital space in the German political romanticism who claimed the racial superiority that shaped the cultural characteristics of Germanness, insisting, however, that these Nationalistic connotations, in terms of cultural hegemony and Germans' character of "chosen people", meant to arise the pride and responsibility of belonging of this nation, *do not justify Nazi slippages and concrete measures meant to control the population, conceptually united in Nazi biopolitics*: racial hygiene, genetically controlled human reproduction or "the final solution". "All these facets of Evil have found their last expression in the theory of Vital Space (*Lebensraum*)." states the author, surprising on the basis of his own analysis, the evolution of such theories in the current political thought, from population control to geopolitics, consistent with the expansionist and hegemonic totalitarian ideology promoted.

Mr. Antoniu Flandorfer legitimately notes that the theory of Vital Space was developed not only in Germany, but was generated by the emergence of pan-nationalist ideologies; however, in the case of National Socialists, this theory, geopolitical in essence, was subject to totalitarian ideology, at the expense of state policy, even at the risk of collapse of the Third Reich.

The idea of achieving to get the prototype of Superman – including through programs of euthanasia of many people whose *lives need not be lived*, from persons with disabilities to alcoholics and homosexuals – in order to populate the vital space with this one, the ultimate objective of Nazism, assumed as state policy, demonstrates "[...] the fact that National Socialism sought to substantiate an ethic against human nature, in which the individual has undergone a total control, beyond the atomisation imposed by the totalitarian punitive system."

6) The work investigates in the end the building of totalitarian ethics of Nazism in the context of the paradigm of modernity, starting with a necessary and well done analysis of the research methods of the National Socialist imaginary, analysis all the more valuable as, among experts, there is controversy regarding the methodology of investigating the imaginary.

Stressing the complexity of the research of the Nazi phenomenon and the difficulty in identifying a methodology on the imaginary accepted by the academic field, the author does not hesitate to state, as a result of his own analysis, the approaches that suit best his theoretical endeavour: "In this study we are interested to probe the Nazi imagery from an ideological perspective, as well as in terms of moral criticism, and we intend to highlight the manner of taking up the individual consciousnesses of adherents who have been manipulated to commit a series of atrocities under the auspices of an anti-humanist ethical hypostasis without living with the guilt, but, on the contrary, feeling entitled or elected to participate in building a better world."

Consequently, in accordance with the methodological specifications explicitly formulated, the author pursues the ethical determinations imposed by the structures of political imaginary built by Nazi symbolism assumed by the instruments of propaganda and manipulation, concluding with the analysis of the utopian position of National Socialism in a *political religion*.

Perhaps it is precisely in this conclusion that lays the greatest danger represented by such movements of thought and social action: to turn themselves into *political religions*, which have the force to transmit to individuals utopian ideals, which these ones are ready *to believe in and to sacrifice themselves for*.

In conclusion, the author legitimately states that "The stakes of the research project undertaken was to demonstrate that any current theoretical thinking and / or social movement, albeit a deeply anti-humanist one, is based on certain ethical and philosophical foundations", without which it cannot win a mass base.

The critical analysis conducted in this paper, the correct identification of the main themes that serve the argumentative approach proposed, the capacity for

synthesis, the systematizations and interpretations, often original, are conclusive that as a whole, *Criticism of ethical and philosophical foundations of National Socialism* is a success, proposing to the more or less circumspect reader, serious reasons of reflection on the worrying perspectives that the theoretical slips and extremist actions transmit to the contemporary world.

I recommend a careful reading of this book, and I am convinced that the message sent will get beyond the narrow circle of specialists, whether they are political philosophers or thinkers and address a wider audience interested – and worried in a responsible way! – in the spiritual prospects and possible actionable experiences regarding Europe and even our current world as a whole.

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