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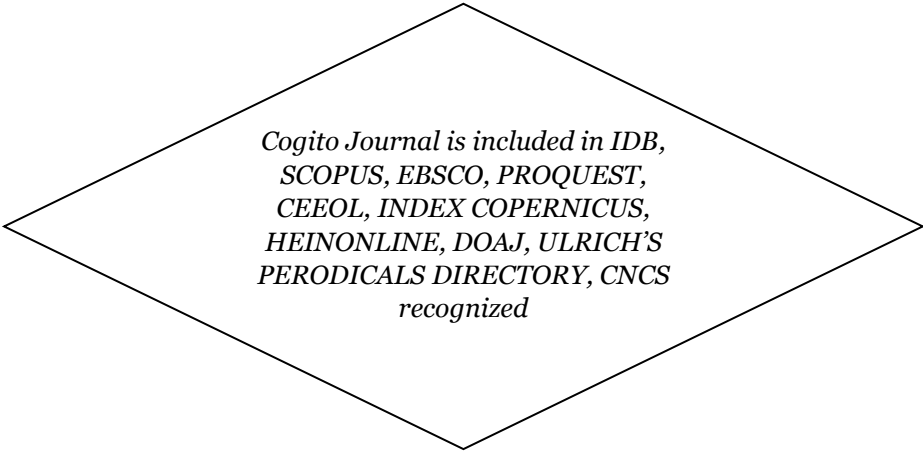
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MATTERS OF LIFE OR DEATH: SPIRITUAL OBSTACLES TO ORGAN DONATION IN CONTEMPORARY ROMANIA. TOWARDS A KANTIAN-INSPIRED DIALOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR BREAKING THE DEADLOCK

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Abstract: *This inquiry explores the potential for Kant's transcendental philosophy to offer a tangible, life-saving reconciliation between Orthodox Christian doctrine and the essence of general Christian humanism with respect to organ donation and transplantation. It questions, and answers affirmatively, whether Kant can serve as more than a symbolic figure, proposing that his framework, particularly in its apophatic elements, might align with Orthodox Christian perspectives on morality and ethics and their revealed essence. By examining the compatibility between Kantian ethics and the doctrines of Christian altruism and self-sacrifice, the study suggests that Kant's philosophy could bridge the gap between traditional religious beliefs and contemporary ethical challenges, such as organ transplantation. This reconciliation could lead to a more holistic understanding of morality that respects both the sanctity of life as emphasized by the Church and the imperatives of modern medical science. Thus, Kant's thought might not only endure as a philosophical legacy but actively contribute to ethical decision-making and the preservation of life today.*

Keywords: *organ donation and transplantation, brain death, Kantian ethics, Orthodox Christian doctrine, Kantian transcendentalism*

Introduction

This article serves as a preliminary and novel initiative, incorporating a social activist dimension - with a scholarly backing – driven by a national urgency, as lives are being lost due to refusals to donate organs for religious reasons.¹ The issue of organ donation within the Romanian Orthodox Church

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¹ For example,

<https://romania.europalibera.org/a/prelevare-organe-biserica/32593189.html>;

<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/presedintele-agentiei-de-transplant-increderea-transplant-este-destul-de-fragila-refuzul-la-donare-aproape-s-triplat-2112359>;

has seen significant shifts in recent years, particularly due to statements made by high-ranking representatives of the Church. Previously, the Romanian Orthodox Church allowed for organ donation, including the declaration of brain death by medical professionals, with the understanding that such decisions were left to the discretion of doctors and the consent of the donor's family. However, in the fall of last year, this stance was narrowed considerably. The Church now emphasizes the acceptance of organ donation only in cases involving paired organs, such as kidneys, which can be donated by living individuals. This change has led to a significant reduction in the Church's support for heart and liver transplants, as these procedures typically involve the use of organs from brain dead donors who are deceased from medical point of view but whose souls, in the view of the eastern Orthodox Church, including the Romanian Orthodox Church, are not certain to have totally left their bodies so that they can be considered truly dead.

Vasile Bănescu, the spokesperson for the Romanian Orthodox Church between November 2015 and July 2024, has articulated the Church's cautious approach to organ transplantation, particularly when it involves non-paired organs like parts of the liver or lungs. Bănescu has highlighted that while the Church views organ donation as an act of love and altruism, it must not endanger the donor's life or health. The preference is clearly for paired organ donation, where the risk to the donor is perceived to be lower. This position reflects the Church's broader concerns about the sanctity of life and the integrity of the human body while still alive, making it clear that the Church prioritizes the well-being of the donor, and their chances to be resurrected. Resurrection involves the reuniting of the soul with a glorified body at the end of time, which is an act of God and not contingent on the preservation of the earthly body. Therefore, only after the undoubted departure of the soul from the body the state or integrity of the corpse will cease to determine the fate or immortality of the soul.

The Orthodox Church's reservations about the transplantation of non-paired organs from brain-dead individuals stem from its emphasis on the mystery of death and the need for careful discernment, often questioning whether brain death truly represents the complete separation of the soul from the body.² In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church accepts brain death as a valid criterion for determining death, provided it is rigorously diagnosed, based on the belief that it signifies the end of essential bodily

https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/suceava/un-copil-a-murit-parintii-au-semnat-ca-i-doneaza-2300503.html#google_vignette

² John Breck, *The Sacred Gift of Life: Orthodox Christianity and Bioethics*, Crestwood, NY, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, p. 138-139.

functions.³ Protestant perspectives on brain death vary, with mainline denominations generally accepting it in line with modern medical standards,⁴ while evangelical and conservative groups may be more cautious, particularly regarding concerns about the sanctity of life and potential misuse of criteria.⁵ The Anglican Communion also accepts brain death as a legitimate determination of death, emphasizing pastoral care and support for families during end-of-life decisions.⁶

The Romanian Orthodox Church holds significant influence over the Romanian population, as reflected in the 2011 and 2021 censuses⁷, which showed that around 85% of the population identifies as Christian Orthodox. This strong religious affiliation underscores the Church's role not only in spiritual guidance but also in shaping moral and ethical decisions within the community. Priests often serve as trusted advisors to families, especially in sensitive matters such as organ donation from brain-dead members. Their counsel is highly regarded, and the Church's stance on such issues can deeply impact the decisions of individuals and families, highlighting the profound reach of Orthodox Christian values in Romanian society.

One of the pivotal points of this article's argument in favor of encouraging the Romanian Orthodox Church to be more open towards the donation of non-paired organs is the observation that Orthodox Christian perspectives on organ transplantation generally align with Christian ethics, particularly when the donation is made altruistically. Official Orthodox Church documents often frame organ donation as an act of Christian love and self-sacrifice, mirroring Christ's example. However, these perspectives tend to focus heavily on the spiritual benefits for the donor, sometimes

³ Pope John Paul II, "Address to the 18th International Congress of the Transplantation Society," August 29, 2000, accessed August 27, 2024, [<http://www.vatican.va>]; National Catholic Bioethics Center, "Catholic Teaching on the Determination of Death", accessed August 27, 2024, [<https://www.ncbcenter.org/>].

⁴ United Methodist Church, "Social Principles: The Nurturing Community", accessed August 27, 2024, [<https://www.umc.org>].

⁵ Episcopal Church, "General Convention Resolution 1991-A096: On the Determination of Death", accessed August 27, 2024, [<https://www.episcopalarchives.org>]; see also Nancy Valko, "Evangelicals, Brain Death, and Organ Donation", *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 11, no. 4, 2011, p. 581-592.

⁶ *General Synod of the Church of England*, "Medical Ethics: A Christian Perspective on Health Care", London, Church House Publishing, 1999, p. 55-57.

⁷ Institutul Național de Statistică, *Recensământul Populației și al Locuințelor 2011: Rezultate definitive – Religie*, Bucharest, Institutul Național de Statistică, 2011, accessed August 27, 2024, [<https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rpl-2011/rezultate-2011/>]; Institutul Național de Statistică, *Recensământul Populației și al Locuințelor 2021: Date provizorii – Religie*, Bucharest, Institutul Național de Statistică, 2022, accessed August 27, 2024, [<https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rpl-2021/>].

overlooking the role of the recipient and the relational aspects of transplantation.⁸

This emphasis on altruism and self-sacrifice, while noble, could potentially be expanded to consider the holistic relational dynamics involved in organ donation, something that could be significantly enriched by engaging with Kantian ethical principles. The growing reverence for Immanuel Kant's philosophy within Christian orthodox scholar circles presents an opportunity for these theologians to integrate Kantian-inspired ethical, religious, and metaphysical perspectives into their views on organ donation and transplantation. This alignment could allow for a nuanced approach that honors both Christian moral principles and Kant's emphasis on duty, autonomy, and the inherent dignity of human life but also principles of his transcendental theology.

Contrary to some common interpretations⁹, Kant's ethical framework does not categorically prohibit all forms of organ donation. In fact, from a Kantian perspective, certain types of organ donation can be seen as ethically permissible and even morally praiseworthy.¹⁰ This opens up the possibility of employing Kantian arguments to influence and potentially shift Christian Orthodoxy's attitude towards organ transplantation. Given Kant's profound influence on thinking after him, particularly through his critique of pure reason, ethics and transcendental idealism, his philosophy could provide a framework for reconciling empirical science with religious beliefs. Kant sought to secure Christian faith in the transcendental, which underlies all empirical experience, and his project also leaves room for traditional religious mysticism, particularly in transcendental theology.

Can Kant still save lives, not merely as a symbol, but tangibly and effectively, today, 300 years after his birth? Can his transcendental philosophy offer a framework that reconciles Christian Orthodox doctrine with the profound essence of Christian humanism, while embracing the apophatic revelation that is inherently compatible with Kantian thought? Based on a number of cutting edge interpretations of a number of subtle affinities between Kantian philosophy and Christian Orthodox theology, this article gives an affirmative answer to one of the most dramatic and pressing questions facing transplant doctors and their thousands of desperate patients on organ waiting lists.

⁸ Sebastian Moldovan, "Organ Transplantation and The Orthodox Christian Argument for Love", *Romanian Journal of Bioethics*, Vol. 7, Nr. 4, October – December 2009, e.g. p. 190, 191, 194.

⁹ Archimedes C. Articulo, "Living Organ Donation, Beneficent Helping, & the Kantian Concept of Partial Self-Murder", *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 4, 2014, p. 502.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 502-509.

Christian Orthodox views on organ donation and transplantation

The Orthodox Christian perspective on organ donation and transplantation is deeply rooted in its theological principles, which emphasize the sanctity of life, the integrity of the human body, and the moral implications of altruism. Official statements from Orthodox churches, including Greek, Russian, and Romanian documents, generally accept organ donation when it is done altruistically and reflects the principles of Christian love and self-sacrifice. The Greek Orthodox Church, for instance, frames organ donation as an act of “self-offering” that spiritually benefits the donor, while the Russian Orthodox Church, despite acknowledging the therapeutic value of organ transplantation, warns against potential threats such as organ trafficking. The Romanian Orthodox Church similarly views organ donation as a form of self-giving within the mystical body of Christ, where the donor’s act of love mirrors Christ’s sacrificial love for humanity.¹¹

However, the Orthodox Church approaches organ transplantation with caution, particularly when it involves non-paired organs from brain-dead individuals. This caution stems from the Church’s emphasis on the mystery of death and the importance of careful discernment in determining whether brain death genuinely represents the complete separation of the soul from the body. Orthodox theology often questions the adequacy of brain death as a definitive criterion for death, highlighting concerns about the sanctity of life and the ethical implications of defining death primarily for the purpose of organ transplantation. These reservations reflect a broader theological commitment to viewing the body as an integral and sacred part of the human person, which should not be reduced to a mere collection of parts available for medical use.¹²

Orthodox Christian ethics also highlight the relational aspects of organ donation, emphasizing the connection between donor and recipient that goes beyond the mere physical transfer of organs. This perspective critiques the principle of anonymity often upheld in organ donation practices, arguing that it disconnects individuals who are sharing a profound and life-altering experience. Instead, some Orthodox theologians propose that organ transplantation should be understood as creating a form of spiritual kinship between donor and recipient, blessed by the Church and recognized within the broader context of Christian community.¹³ This approach underscores the importance of relational and spiritual dimensions in ethical decision-

¹¹ S. Moldovan, “Organ Transplantation”, p. 185-197.

¹² J. Breck, *The Sacred Gift of Life*, p. 138-139.

¹³ S. Moldovan, “Organ Transplantation”, p. 197.

making about organ donation, aligning with the Orthodox view of human beings as inherently relational and interconnected.

Organ donation as a duty from a Kantian ethical perspective

From a Kantian ethical perspective, organ donation can be explored through the lens of duty, autonomy, and the categorical imperative, which commands actions that can be universally willed without contradiction and that respect the dignity of every rational being. Kant's philosophy emphasizes the inherent worth of individuals and the moral obligation to act out of respect for humanity, both in oneself and in others. This framework raises complex questions about the permissibility and ethical obligations surrounding organ donation, particularly in contexts where the act may involve self-harm or the use of one's body merely as a means to an end.¹⁴

Kant's moral philosophy traditionally condemns acts of self-mutilation or self-harm, viewing them as violations of one's duty to preserve and respect one's own body as a manifestation of rational autonomy. This stance has led to interpretations that categorize living organ donation, particularly when it poses significant risks to the donor, as impermissible under Kantian ethics. However, some scholars argue that Kantian ethics, when interpreted with a focus on autonomy and the duty of beneficence, can support the moral permissibility of organ donation, especially when it is motivated by altruism and the intention to save lives.¹⁵

For instance, D. Robert MacDougall argues that Kantian ethics requires the legal permissibility of kidney sales, distinguishing between moral and legal frameworks. He contends that while Kant's moral philosophy may condemn the sale of organs as commodification of the body, his political philosophy, which emphasizes the "innate right" to freedom, necessitates that individuals have the legal autonomy to make decisions about their own bodies, including the sale of organs, provided that such decisions do not undermine their rational agency. This interpretation suggests that Kantian ethics can be reconciled with certain forms of organ donation, including those that involve financial transactions, as long as they respect the dignity of the individual and are conducted with informed consent.¹⁶

Furthermore, the concept of beneficence, which is central to Kantian ethics, aligns with the moral obligation to help others when doing so does not violate one's own duties to oneself. Living organ donation, when it does not endanger the donor's life or impair their capacity to act as a rational

¹⁴ Archimedes C. Articulo, "Living Organ Donation", p. 502-509.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 506.

¹⁶ D. Robert MacDougall, "Sometimes Merely as a Means: Why Kantian Philosophy Requires the Legalization of Kidney Sales", CUNY Academic Works, New York, 2019, p. 1-26.

agent, can be seen as an expression of this duty of beneficence. This perspective challenges the strict interpretation of Kant's prohibition against self-harm, proposing that organ donation, when done out of a genuine desire to help others and without compromising one's own dignity, can be morally praiseworthy within a Kantian framework.¹⁷

Death and life-support technologies within Kantian and Orthodox Christian ethical frameworks

The advent of advanced life-support technologies and the medical definition of brain death have introduced significant ethical challenges within both Kantian and Orthodox Christian frameworks. These technologies have redefined the boundaries of life and death, creating ethical dilemmas about when it is appropriate to withdraw life support or to use a brain-dead patient as an organ donor. Both Kantian and Orthodox Christian perspectives provide distinct but overlapping insights into these complex issues, emphasizing the need for careful ethical discernment and respect for the dignity of the human person.¹⁸

Kantian ethics, with its focus on autonomy and the respect for rational beings, necessitates a careful consideration of life-support decisions to ensure that they respect the autonomy and wishes of the patient. In cases where patients are unable to express their wishes, such as in brain death, Kantian ethics would require that decisions be made in a way that aligns with the presumed rational interests of the patient, emphasizing the importance of autonomy¹⁹, informed consent²⁰, and the minimization of harm.²¹ The determination of brain death must be approached with rigorous

¹⁷ Archimedes C. Articulo, "Living Organ Donation", p. 507-508.

¹⁸ Alberto Molina Pérez, Janet Delgado & David Rodriguez-Arias, "Defining Consent Autonomy and the Role of the Family", in Solveig Lena Hansen, Silke Schicktanz (eds.), *Ethical Challenges of Organ Transplantation*, Bielefeld, Transcript Verlag, 2021, p. 52; D. Robert MacDougall, "Sometimes Merely as a Means", p. 20; Sebastian Moldovan, "Organ Transplantation", p. 186.

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. Gregor and J. Timmermann, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 4:440. In these passages on moral autonomy, Kant suggests that moral actions must respect the rational autonomy of individuals, which aligns with the importance of respecting the patient's ability to make informed choices about their own care.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 4:429. Here, by discussing the categorical imperative. Kant elaborates on the idea of treating individuals as ends in themselves, not merely as means to an end. This directly relates to the ethical requirement of informed consent in healthcare. In the context of medical ethics, this implies that any treatment or decision must involve the patient's voluntary and informed agreement, respecting their autonomy and rational capacities.

²¹ I. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 6:388. In these passages, Kant emphasizes the duty to prevent harm to others as part of his broader moral framework. This principle aligns with the ethical

standards to ensure that it truly reflects the cessation of all functions that constitute personhood, including consciousness and the ability to make autonomous decisions.

Orthodox Christian ethics, on the other hand, approaches life-support technologies and the concept of brain death with a particular emphasis on the sanctity of life and the mystery of death. The Orthodox Church often questions whether brain death truly represents the end of life, highlighting concerns that the criteria for brain death may be influenced by the needs of transplantation medicine rather than a genuine understanding of death as a process. This perspective is rooted in the Orthodox belief that life is a sacred gift from God, and that the body and soul are intrinsically connected in ways that transcend purely medical definitions.²²

The use of life-support technologies, such as artificial respiration, raises theological and ethical questions within the Orthodox framework about the appropriate balance between medical intervention and acceptance of natural death. The Church emphasizes the importance of discernment in making decisions about withdrawing life support, ensuring that such decisions respect the sanctity of life and are made with compassion and pastoral care for both the patient and their family. This cautious approach reflects the broader Orthodox view that death is not merely a medical event but a profound spiritual transition that requires careful and respectful consideration. On the other hand, one can say that such a stance can relatively easily lead to radical interpretations (like the ones referred to in the above Introduction) in the direction of discouraging organ donation.²³

Kant's metaphysics and the Patristic theological tradition

Kant's metaphysical philosophy and Patristic theology share a common recognition of the limitations of human reason in fully comprehending the divine, emphasizing a transcendental approach to understanding God. Kant, in his critiques of traditional proofs for the existence of God—such as the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments—argued that these rational proofs were insufficient because they attempted to apply human reason to matters that transcend empirical experience. As Vasile Mihai points out, Kant's position closely aligns with the Church Fathers' view that God's true essence is beyond human understanding, much like Kant's concept of the noumenon, or "thing-in-itself," which infinitely transcends the finite human mind, a view also echoed by Didymus the Blind, who described God's essence as "invisible and incomprehensible even to the

obligation to minimize harm in medical decisions. It suggests that actions must be guided by rational interests, which include the avoidance of unnecessary harm.

²² S. Moldovan, "Organ Transplantation", p. 193.

²³ *Ibidem*.

eyes of Seraphim."²⁴ For Kant, true knowledge of God could not be attained through rational deduction alone but required practical reason, where belief in God is rooted in moral necessity and ethical imperatives rather than purely intellectual certainty.

Similarly, patristic theology, as articulated by the Church Fathers, integrates philosophical reasoning with divine revelation and spiritual experience, underscoring that knowledge of God goes beyond rational arguments. While the Church Fathers engaged deeply with philosophical discourse about the nature of God, they ultimately grounded their understanding in the teachings of Scripture and the transformative experience of faith, particularly through theosis—the process of becoming united with God.²⁵ St. Basil the Great emphasizes that “what seems simple and robust at first glance is found in reflection [to have] progressive complexity,” illustrating the belief that human concepts, while useful, are insufficient to grasp the entirety of divine reality. This aligns with Kant’s acknowledgment of the limits of human cognition, where the divine, much like the noumenon, is inexhaustible and remains beyond full comprehension.²⁶

Traditional comparative studies, however, often highlight the differences between Kantian and patristic approaches to metaphysics, particularly in their views on the role of reason and revelation. Kant’s critical philosophy delineates clear boundaries for human reason, suggesting that while metaphysical speculation about God is an inevitable part of human thought, it remains beyond the capacity of reason to provide definitive knowledge of the divine. This reflects Kant’s broader emphasis on the autonomy of reason and the importance of moral faith as a guide to understanding God. Vasile notes that Kant “found it necessary to limit knowledge in order to make room for faith,” a stance that parallels patristic apophaticism but stops short of fully integrating reason and revelation as seen in the Church Fathers’ works.²⁷

In contrast, patristic theology embraces a more holistic view, where reason is seen not in isolation but as part of a broader spiritual journey illuminated by faith. The Church Fathers believed that reason, when guided by divine revelation and enriched by the lived experience of the Christian community, could lead to a profound encounter with the mysteries of God. For instance, St. Gregory of Nyssa articulated that “our intellect discovers in

²⁴ Mihai Vasile, “Patristic Arguments of God’s existence in Immanuel Kant’s metaphysics”, *Cogito*, vol. 2, nr. 1, 2010, p. 103.

²⁵ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Crestwood, NY, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1976, p. 66-78.

²⁶ M. Vasile, “Patristic Arguments of God’s existence”, p. 105.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

the objects only the properties needed to our life,” but the true essence of things, particularly divine things, remains inexhaustible for discursive knowledge.²⁸ This synthesis of reason and revelation in patristic thought stands in contrast to Kant’s more restrained view of reason’s capabilities, where reason operates independently of revelation.

Despite these differences, there are significant overlaps that suggest a deeper compatibility between the two traditions. Both Kantian metaphysics and patristic theology emphasize the insufficiency of purely rational knowledge in capturing the fullness of divine reality, advocating instead for an approach that transcends human cognition. Kant’s view that “noumenal Being for the knowing subject is a foundation and generator of all things” parallels the patristic understanding of God as the source of all existence, who reveals Himself through His energies, or *Dynameis*, as St. John Chrysostom describes: “God has revealed but never His being in Itself, He still made a descent (*synkatabasis*), taking into account the incapability to those who contemplate Him”.²⁹

Moreover, both traditions affirm that while human reason is instrumental, it is ultimately limited in accessing the fullness of divine knowledge. Kant’s metaphysical framework restricts reason’s reach, much like the apophatic theology of the Church Fathers – and going far beyond the strict traditional cataphatic interpretations of Kantian theology –, which emphasizes knowing God through what He is not, rather than what He is. This shared recognition underscores the complementary roles that reason and faith can play in the pursuit of understanding the ineffable nature of God, highlighting both the common ground and distinct perspectives that characterize Kantian metaphysics and patristic theology within the broader field of comparative studies.

Along similar lines, Artem Malyshev’s study of Kant and St. Innocent (Borisov) further explores these intersections, especially in their Christological reflections. Kant’s Christology, as articulated in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, reinterprets traditional dogmatic Christology by presenting Christ as a moral exemplar rather than a divine figure. Kant portrays the Son of God as an idea of the good principle mystically existing within the human soul, emphasizing a rational and ethical embodiment rather than an ontological reality. In contrast, St. Innocent sought to incorporate Kant’s insights into Orthodox Christology by positing that Christ is not merely a model for moral behavior but is both the Ideal and God Himself. He formulated the concept of the gradual

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

²⁹ G.W.H. Lamps (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ninth edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989.

manifestation of divinity in Christ, addressing Kant's challenge that Christ's native holiness seems incompatible with His role as a moral example.³⁰

St. Innocent's approach provides a nuanced response to Kant's moral interpretation, suggesting that while Christ is indeed an exemplar, His divinity is not merely symbolic but real, guiding believers in their own journey toward holiness. This dialogue between Kantian and Orthodox thought illustrates the broader potential for integrating philosophical and theological insights, where differences in dogmatic detail can coexist with a shared commitment to understanding the divine as a source of moral and spiritual guidance.³¹

By examining these similarities and nuanced differences, it becomes evident that Kant's metaphysical restraint and the apophatic traditions of the Church Fathers both point toward a transcendental source of ethics and understanding that lies beyond empirical and rational grasp. This transcendental source, while described differently in each tradition, reveals an alignment in their views on the divine as ultimately unknowable and yet fundamentally foundational to human experience and moral reasoning. Thus, the intersection of Kant's and the patristic approaches offers a profound dialogue on the limits of human knowledge and the role of faith in the quest for ultimate truth, highlighting a shared journey towards grasping the ineffable through reason illuminated by faith.

Kantian and Orthodox Christologies and Apophatic Theologies

One of the most daring groundbreaking works that claims to have identified deep theological-metaphysical convergences between Kantian philosophy and Orthodox theology – and thus establishing compatibilities for extended future dialogue between the two traditions – is David K. Goodin's article, "Orthodox Theology and Empirical Science: Kant as a Bridge to the Apophatic Revelation of the Orthodox East".³² In this study published in 2018, Goodin explores the potential for dialogue between Orthodox theology and empirical science through the lens of Kantian philosophy. He argues that Kant's apophatic aspects of transcendental theology can bridge the gap between Kantianism and Orthodox negative theology, particularly in relation to the hesychastic writings of Gregory of Sinai, Gregory Palamas, and Nikitas Stithatos. Further, this approach challenges the perceived divide between empirical science and religious

³⁰ Artem Malyshev "Dogmatic aspects of the Christologies of Kant and St Innocent (Borisov)", *SHS Web of Conferences 161 03003 (2023), 12th Kant-Readings Conference*, p. 4.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 4, 5.

³² David K. Goodin, "Orthodox Theology and Empirical Science: Kant as a Bridge to the Apophatic Revelation of the Orthodox East", *Icoana credinței*, vol. 4, nr. 7, 2018, p. 67-80.

mysticism, suggesting that Kant’s philosophy can create common ground for constructive engagement.

Goodin’s thesis hinges on the idea that Kant’s transcendental idealism, which positions empirical science within the perceptual foundations of thought, closely aligns with the Orthodox emphasis on apophatic revelation. He states, “Kant’s project was to locate empirical science with respect to the perceptual foundations of thought, properly understood philosophically, thus securing the Christian faith in the transcendental—that which underlies all empirical experience”.³³ This perspective resonates with Friedrich Lange’s critique of scientific objectivity, describing it as “merely shared epistemological subjectivity through the Kantian perceptual manifold”.³⁴ Such reflections underscore how both Kantian and Orthodox thought prioritize the limits and frameworks of human understanding, paving the way for deeper theological and philosophical dialogue.

By framing the science and religion debate as not merely a conflict of truth claims but as fundamentally different ways of regarding reality, Goodin opens the door to a nuanced understanding of their relationship. He writes, “Scientific knowledge simply cannot be reconciled with the scriptures. Each speaks to fundamentally different realities”.³⁵ This view is echoed by Pamela Sue Anderson and Jordan Bell, who argue that Kant’s efforts to secure a place for religion within rational thought were motivated by the advances of empirical science: “Kant lived at a time when empirical science had made extraordinary advances... [his] project was a way to break free from the moral nihilism that emerged from a strictly scientific worldview”.³⁶ By bridging these disparate realms, Kant offers a philosophical structure that allows for both empirical and transcendental dimensions, enriching the discourse on faith and reason.

Expanding on this, Goodin delves into how Kant’s concept of the sublime aligns with Orthodox apophatic theology, particularly in the way both engage with the limits of human understanding. Kant described the sublime as experiences that transcend rational comprehension, invoking a pre-rational form of knowing akin to the “sacred shudder” experienced in overwhelming natural encounters, before what he also called the “dynamical” sublime³⁷. He noted that “intuitions without concepts are

³³ David K. Goodin, “Orthodox Theology and Empirical Science”, p. 67.

³⁴ Friederic Albert Lange, *History of Materialism and Criticism of Its Present Importance*, Vol 3, trans. E.C. Thomas. London, Trubner and Company, 1881 discussed by David Goodin, “Orthodox Theology and Empirical Science”, at p. 68.

³⁵ D. Goodin, “Orthodox Theology and Empirical Science”, p. 78.

³⁶ Anderson and Bell, *Kant and Theology*, 2010, p. 13.

³⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Trans. J.H. Bernard. London, Macmillan and Co., 1914, §28.

blind,” emphasizing that certain sensory experiences exceed rational interpretation³⁸ to which they are inadequate:

What we are entitled to say is that the [empirical] object is suitable for exhibiting a sublimity that can be found in the mind. For what is sublime, in the proper meaning of the term, cannot be contained in any sensible form but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though they cannot be exhibited adequately, are aroused and called to mind by this very inadequacy, which can be exhibited in sensibility³⁹.

Goodin connects this to hesychastic practices in Orthodox theology, where contemplative prayer and the experience of divine light transcend empirical knowledge, much like Kant’s view of the sublime as a bridge between sensory experience and moral reflection.

Kant’s apophatic tendencies find further resonance in Orthodox theology’s emphasis on the ineffability of God. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant argues, “transcendental theology is still, therefore in spite of all its disabilities, of great importance in its negative employment, and serves as a permanent censor of our reason, in so far as the latter deals with pure ideas which, as such, allow for no criterion that is not transcendental”.⁴⁰ This perspective mirrors Orthodox apophaticism, where human concepts are deemed insufficient to fully capture the divine essence. Both Kantian and Orthodox approaches thus set boundaries on speculative reason, advocating a humble acknowledgment of the limits of human cognition in the face of divine mysteries.

However, it is the very important to stress that Goodin states clearly that the Orthodox Church:

[H]as remained faithful to both scripture and tradition, while Kant, for his part, would likewise only accept a religion based in sensible experience, or the possibility of such experience, since even “*synthetic a priori knowledge is possible only in so far as it expresses the formal conditions of a possible experience*” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A638/B666). Instead, my article only seeks to show how hesychastic revelation is possible within a Kantian epistemological framework, and what that means for science and religion dialogue with the Orthodox East.⁴¹

³⁸ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. Norman Kemp Smith, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, B75/A51.

³⁹ I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §23.

⁴⁰ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A640/B668.

⁴¹ D. Goodin, “Orthodox Theology and Empirical Science”, p. 72.

Along these ambitious lines of argument, Goodin discusses Kant's nuanced stance on metaphysical speculation and mystical experiences, highlighting a cautious openness that aligns with Orthodox mystical traditions. Ayon Maharaj, writes Goodin, points out that while Kant categorically rejected direct mystical experiences, he allowed for indirect ones—manifestations such as moral feelings or revelatory moments that defy full rational explanation.⁴² In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant remarks, “[t]he persuasion that we can distinguish the effects of grace from those of nature... is enthusiasm [*Schwärmerei*]... though there do occur from time to time in the mind movements that work toward morality but which we cannot explain.”⁴³ These indirect experiences reflect dimensions of moral and aesthetic judgment that Kant considered integral to the broader human understanding, paralleling Orthodox mysticism's experiential insights into the divine.

Goodin further supports this link by highlighting Kant's belief that human cognition, while constrained by empirical and rational boundaries, remains open to encounters with the sublime. Kant saw these encounters as a way for reason to engage with concepts beyond its grasp, an idea that resonates with hesychastic practices in Orthodox Christianity, which seek direct, though ineffable, communion with God through contemplative prayer. William P. Alston bolsters this view, arguing that religious experiences, despite their limited empirical accessibility, provide essential epistemological insights that contribute to moral and spiritual understanding.⁴⁴ Phil Enns adds that Kant's reconciliation of reason and revelation highlights a unique integration where moral autonomy and rational belief in God coexist within a structured philosophical system.⁴⁵

Kant's understanding of ethical imperatives further complements this dialogue, as seen in his assertion that “The highest good, practical reason's own object, must be postulated.”⁴⁶ He viewed the moral law as inherently linked to the concept of the highest good, which involves postulating God as necessary for moral coherence. This concept of the highest good mirrors the Orthodox understanding of theosis—the process of becoming united with

⁴² Ayon Maharaj, “Kant on the Epistemology of Indirect Mystical Experience”, *Sophia*, vol. 56, No. 2, 2017, p. 311-336.

⁴³ Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, San Francisco: HarperOne Book IV, Part II, Sec. 2, 2008.

⁴⁴ William P. Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Phil Enns, “Reason and Revelation: Kant and the Problem of Authority”, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 62, Nr. 2, 2007, p. 103-114.

⁴⁶ I. Kant, *Groundwork of a Metaphysics of Morals*, Section 23; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A634/B662.

God—as both traditions seek to transcend empirical limitations in pursuit of moral and spiritual fulfillment.

Stephen Palmquist, exploring Kant's critical philosophy, argues that Kant's engagement with mysticism, although cautious, reflects a broader openness to the transcendental that transcends rigid empiricism.⁴⁷ Palmquist suggests that while Kant rejected irrational mysticism, he acknowledged a "mystical feeling" underlying his philosophy, aligning with apophatic traditions in recognizing the boundaries of human knowledge and the potential for transcendental experiences that inform ethical and aesthetic judgments.⁴⁸

In its conclusion, Goodin's article suggests that recognizing the shared transcendental roots of Kantian and Orthodox apophatic ethics can foster a meaningful dialogue between empirical science and Orthodox theology, expanding the ethical and spiritual horizons of both disciplines. By acknowledging that both Kantian philosophy and Orthodox apophatism draw from a revealed, ineffable, transcendental source of ethics, a new common ground is established for discourse that respects the distinct epistemologies of each while highlighting their potential for mutual enrichment.⁴⁹

As stated above, Kant's critical philosophy similarly acknowledges the limits of human reason, particularly in his distinction between phenomena (the realm of human experience) and noumena (the realm of things-in-themselves). In the Orthodox theologian Mihai Vasile's words,

Trying to determine the attributes that can be known about the *noumenon*, Immanuel Kant reaches the discursive model of negative theology and such, it reaffirms the characteristics set forth by the Church Fathers about divine-Being-as being [...]. Noumenal Being for the knowing subject is a foundation and generator of all things, which, therefore, are inexhaustible in terms of knowledge [...]. Noumenal Being reveals Himself, in the subject of knowing, as a concept of a perfect being, characterized by its absence [...], and as Noumenal Being [...], is acting on the knowing subject through his energies (*Dynameis*) making adequate his nature to the sensitive subject experience.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Stephen R. Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion: Volume Two of Kant's System of Perspectives*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000, p. 299ff.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, e.g. Ch. X, "Reason's Birth in Immediate Experience" (p. 298-324), and p. 88, 92, 340, 439.

⁴⁹ D. Goodin, "Orthodox Theology and Empirical Science", p. 72.

⁵⁰ M. Vasile, "Patristic Arguments of God's existence", p. 101.

In other words, Kant argues that while we can have knowledge of phenomena, the noumenal realm, which includes God, is beyond the reach of human cognition. This recognition of the limits of human understanding resonates with the Orthodox Christian apophatic tradition, suggesting a shared humility in the face of the divine mystery. However, whereas Orthodox apophaticism leads to a deeper mystical and experiential knowledge of God, Kant's approach remains firmly within the boundaries of ethical and rational discourse, reflecting the philosophical divide between the two traditions. Yet, the possibility of dialog between the two traditions seems to have received a sufficiently consistent shared referential framework for promising future developments.

Virtue ethics and xenotransplantation

The Romanian Orthodox Church has officially addressed aspects related to organ transplantation, including xenotransplantation – another controversial subject of debate in transplant ethics literature⁵¹ – in a meeting of the Holy Synod on June 17, 2004. According to Fr. Iulian Negru, a counselor within the Mission, Statistics, and Pastoral Forecasting Sector of the Archdiocese of Iași, the Church is not fundamentally opposed to xenotransplantation, stating, “If animals are used for human nourishment, then they can also serve in this way to sustain human life.” This perspective suggests a theological openness to the concept, grounded in the broader principles of compassion and the sanctity of life.⁵² However, in practice, the Church offers little encouragement for xenotransplantation, reflecting a cautious approach that emphasizes the need for careful discernment and consideration of ethical implications.⁵³

This nuanced stance aligns with broader discussions on virtue ethics as applied to xenotransplantation. Virtue ethics, which focuses on the character and intentions of individuals rather than specific actions or rules, provides a complementary perspective to the deontological and theological approaches of Kantian and Orthodox ethics, particularly in the context of xenotransplantation. The transplantation of animal organs into humans raises significant ethical questions about the use of animals, the boundaries of human identity, and the implications for human dignity. Virtue ethics emphasizes the cultivation of moral virtues such as compassion, courage,

⁵¹ A relevant example is Andrew J. T. George, “Ethics, virtues and xenotransplantation”, *Perfusion*, Vol. 39, Nr. 2, 2024, p. 334–343.

⁵²<https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/galati/ce-spun-preotii-despre-credinta-ca- oamenii-trebuie-1849985.html>

⁵³ See John Chryssavgis, and Bruce V. Foltz (eds.), *Toward an Ecology of Transfiguration: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Environment, Nature, and Creation*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2013.

and practical wisdom, guiding ethical decision-making in these complex medical scenario.⁵⁴

Andrew J.T. George argues that virtue ethics can play a crucial role in navigating the moral challenges of xenotransplantation by focusing on the character and motivations of researchers and clinicians involved in the practice. This approach highlights the importance of virtues like temperance, justice, and clinical curiosity, which encourage a balanced and responsible approach to medical innovation. For example, temperance involves carefully weighing the risks and benefits of xenotransplantation, while justice requires ensuring that the practice is conducted fairly and with respect for all parties involved, including animals.⁵⁵

While the Romanian Orthodox Church's position is not explicitly against xenotransplantation, its practical stance of limited encouragement underscores a broader ethical framework that values cautious engagement with modern medical advancements. This approach reflects a commitment to life preservation within the boundaries of ethical discernment, prioritizing the dignity and well-being of all beings involved. By allowing for the possibility of using animal organs to sustain human life, yet exercising restraint in promoting it, the Church is trying to entangle the innovative medical practices with religious moral and spiritual considerations which leave space for interpretations not always favorable to the wellbeing of the humans or animals involved.

Brain death as a scientific, social, and religious fact

The concept of brain death, which emerged in the mid-20th century alongside advances in life-support technologies and organ transplantation, remains a complex and contested issue across scientific, social, and religious domains. Scientifically, brain death is defined as the irreversible cessation of all brain activity, which is seen as signifying the end of integrative bodily functions essential to life. This definition was developed in response to the need for a clear and consistent criterion for determining death, particularly in the context of organ donation, where the timing of death is critical for the viability of transplanted organs.⁵⁶

Socially, the acceptance of brain death as a criterion for death varies widely across cultures and countries, reflecting differing ethical, legal, and cultural considerations about the meaning of death. In some societies, brain death has been quickly adopted and institutionalized as a medical fact, while

⁵⁴ A. George, "Ethics, virtues and xenotransplantation", p. 339, 340.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶ Luciana Kind, "Máquinas e argumentos: das tecnologias de suporte da vida à definição de morte cerebral", *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*, Rio de Janeiro, v.16, n.1, jan.-mar. 2009, pp.13-34.

in others, such as Japan, the concept has been the subject of prolonged debate and controversy. These variations highlight the interplay between medical definitions of death and broader cultural values, revealing the complexity of integrating scientific concepts into diverse social and ethical contexts.

Religiously, the concept of brain death is interpreted differently across Christian denominations, with varying degrees of acceptance and resistance. The Roman Catholic Church generally accepts brain death as a valid criterion for determining death, provided that it is rigorously and accurately diagnosed.⁵⁷ This acceptance is grounded in the belief that brain death, defined as the irreversible cessation of all brain activity, signifies the end of the integrative bodily functions that are essential to life. In contrast, the Orthodox Church approaches brain death with caution, questioning whether it truly represents the complete separation of the soul from the body and emphasizing the need for careful discernment in making end-of-life decisions.⁵⁸

The ongoing debate about brain death reflects deeper philosophical and theological questions about the nature of life, death, and the human person. It underscores the need for continued critical examination of the concept, recognizing that it is not merely a settled scientific fact but a complex construct shaped by medical, cultural, and religious influences. This recognition calls for a nuanced approach to brain death, one that respects the diverse perspectives of individuals and communities and that seeks to balance the ethical imperatives of medical practice with the moral and spiritual values of those affected by these decisions.

Cross-comparing ethical perspectives

Cross-comparing Kantian and Orthodox Christian ethical perspectives on organ donation and transplantation reveals both commonalities and divergences in their approaches to these complex issues. Both traditions emphasize the intrinsic value of human life and the need to respect the dignity of the person, but they differ significantly in their views on the commodification of the body and the moral permissibility of using one's body to save others.

Kantian ethics, with its deontological focus on duty and autonomy, provides a framework that can support altruistic organ donation, especially when it respects the principles of consent and rational agency. However, Kant's strict prohibition against self-harm poses challenges for living organ donation, particularly when it involves significant risks to the donor. This

⁵⁷ National Catholic Bioethics Center, "Catholic Teaching on the Determination of Death".

⁵⁸ J. Breck, *The Sacred Gift of Life*, p. 138.

tension reflects the broader Kantian concern with maintaining the integrity of the person as a rational being, whose worth is not merely instrumental but intrinsic.

Orthodox Christian ethics, rooted in theological principles of love, self-sacrifice, and theosis, frames organ donation as an act of divine self-giving that mirrors Christ's sacrificial love for humanity.⁵⁹ This perspective embraces the relational and spiritual dimensions of organ transplantation, viewing it as a profound expression of Christian charity and community. However, the Orthodox caution regarding brain death and the sanctity of the body underscores the need for discernment and respect for the mystery of death, highlighting a more holistic view of the human person that integrates both body and soul.

Virtue ethics adds another layer of analysis, offering a character-centered approach that emphasizes the cultivation of moral virtues in navigating the ethical complexities of transplantation practices. This perspective aligns with both Kantian and Orthodox views by promoting moral excellence and responsible decision-making, while also providing a flexible framework that can adapt to the evolving challenges of modern medical technology.

The integration of these diverse perspectives reveals a rich and multifaceted ethical landscape, where traditional moral principles intersect with contemporary medical practices. It underscores the importance of ethical discernment, the need to balance respect for autonomy, human dignity, and the intrinsic value of life, and the potential for interdisciplinary dialogue to enrich our understanding of the moral challenges posed by organ donation and transplantation.

Conclusions

The dialogue between Kantian philosophy, Orthodox Christian theology, virtue ethics, and the critical examination of technological advances provides a comprehensive and nuanced approach to understanding the ethical dimensions of organ donation and transplantation. While Kantian and Orthodox perspectives often differ in their foundational principles, both traditions uphold the sanctity of life and the dignity of the person, offering valuable insights into the ethical decision-making processes that guide medical practice.

Kantian ethics, with its emphasis on duty, autonomy, and respect for persons, provides a robust framework for evaluating the moral permissibility of organ donation, particularly in contexts where the act aligns with the principles of consent and beneficence. However, Kant's

⁵⁹ V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, p. 66.

reservations about self-harm and the commodification of the body reflect deeper concerns about the integrity of the person, highlighting the need for careful ethical consideration of the risks and motivations involved in living organ donation. This view is consonant with the Orthodox concerns elaborated on at the beginning of this study and may be one of the cornerstones of the dialog.

Orthodox Christian ethics, with its emphasis on love, self-sacrifice, and the relational aspects of human existence, offers a theological perspective that sees organ donation as a profound expression of Christian charity and community. The Orthodox caution regarding brain death and the sanctity of the body underscores the importance of discernment and respect for the mystery of death, providing a holistic view that integrates both body and soul in the ethical evaluation of transplantation practices.

The apophatic traditions of both Kantian philosophy and Orthodox theology also reveal intriguing points of convergence and divergence. Apophatic theology, or the theology of negation, is central to Orthodox spirituality, which emphasizes the ineffability of God and the limits of human language and understanding in comprehending the divine essence. This approach seeks to describe God not by what He is but by what He is not, acknowledging that the divine mystery exceeds all human concepts and categories.

Kant's critical philosophy similarly acknowledges the limits of human reason, particularly in his distinction between phenomena (the realm of human experience) and noumena (the realm of things-in-themselves). Kant argues that while we can have knowledge of phenomena, the noumenal realm, which includes God, is beyond the reach of human cognition. This recognition of the limits of human understanding resonates with the apophatic tradition, suggesting a shared humility in the face of the divine mystery. According to the non-mainstream comparisons between the two traditions briefly summarized above, both Kantian philosophy and Orthodox apophatism draw from a revealed, ineffable, transcendental source of ethics, which offers the possibility of establishing a new common ground that respects the distinct epistemologies of each while highlighting their potential for dialogue and mutual reinforcement of their theological views in general, and of those regarding organ donation and transplantation in particular.

Virtue ethics, with its focus on character and moral purpose, complements these deontological and theological approaches by emphasizing the cultivation of virtues that guide ethical decision-making in complex medical contexts. This perspective aligns with both Kantian and Orthodox views, promoting a balanced and responsible approach to the ethical challenges of modern transplantation technologies and can thus

significantly contribute to the dialogue between the Kantian and Orthodox Christian traditions.

The integration of these perspectives underscores the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue and critical examination of ethical principles in the face of evolving medical practices. It highlights the need for a nuanced approach that respects the diverse values and beliefs of individuals and communities, while also recognizing the profound moral and spiritual implications of organ donation and transplantation. Ultimately, this comparative analysis, which is only a modest opening sketch that requires and deserves more worthy developments, reveals the potential for a richer and more holistic understanding of the ethical landscape, one that honors the dignity of the human person (from a Kantian perspective) and the sanctity of life (from Christian Orthodox perspective, and not only) in all its complexity.

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ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL ASPECT OF RAWLS' THEORY OF JUSTICE

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[...] Event [...] brings to pass 'something other' than the situation, opinions, instituted knowledges; the event is a hazardous, unpredictable supplement, which vanishes as soon as it appears [...].¹

Abstract: *The article is focused on finding out when and to what extent the intergenerational aspect is incorporated in Rawls' theory of justice: whether it is incorporated at a later stage as an extension of Rawls' main ideas on social justice to the relations between generations, or adopted in advance and in a much more complex way than it appears at first glance stretching all over his theory. If the latter is the case, then it should have further implications on Rawls' theory of justice in terms of its general direction and main commitment. Inspired by the experiences of post-Soviet societies, in particular, their initiatives to reform institutions within the liberal democratic frame in order to create durable and resilient ones, and invoking the theoretical framework by North, Wallis, and Weingast, the article proposes a new reading of Rawls' theory of justice from the intergenerational aspect.*

Keywords: *intergenerational justice, Rawls' theory of justice, post-Soviet societies, institutional reforms, durability, resilience, non-individualistic commitments.*

Introduction

The history of political philosophy as well as of political ideas provide brilliant illustrations of why and how some issues and topics arise, theories and conceptions are proposed or reconsidered. In its turn, it is always a matter of a scientific angle when these "why and how" are at stake. For it determines what is singled out or viewed as decisive. Ignoring the latter as it leads one to another area of topics and another type of examination, nevertheless, one factor or condition which plays a huge role in arising of any issue or proposing and reconsidering of a theory can be discriminated: that is the realities at hand. It is realities that enforce to (re)visit and

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¹ A. Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, London, 2001, p. 67.

(re)consider whatever comprises part and parcel of (social and) political thought in terms of ideas and concepts. One can even argue that a kind of ‘resonation’ begins between the two opening a space for new readings and intellectual innovations. Hence, an investigator gets a chance to shed a new light on old ideas or conceptions and view them from a new perspective. Here, such a chance is provided by the experiences of post-Soviet societies as well as a theoretical framework within the institutionalist approach. Both enable to view anew the intergenerational aspect of Rawls’ theory of justice. In particular, the intergenerational aspect of Rawls theory of justice considered through the experiences of post-Soviet societies and a specific theoretical framework let one to grasp its aspects unnoticed before.

The Notion of Intergenerational Justice

The idea of intergenerational justice is among the most popular topics of political philosophy in recent decades. Covering a moral aspect of ecological as well as of other issues of social, political, and of economic nature from the intergenerational perspective it holds numerous debates and bears a potential to be enriched with new ones. In particular, it examines “first, whether present generations can be duty-bound because of considerations of justice to past and future people; second, whether other moral considerations should guide those currently alive in relating to both past and future people; and third, how to interpret the significance of past injustices in terms of what is owed to the descendants of the direct victims of the injustices”.² Naturally, these questions invoke various visions and approaches resulting into sometimes polar answers. At the same time, given the current global as well as local issues and tendencies in the world, the idea of intergenerational justice appears as a conceptualization enabling one intellectually to face those issues. Then, it is worthy to disclose some of its central aspects paving a path in revealing its complexity.

First of all, intergenerational justice concerns and regulates relations between non-contemporaries. Given the constitutive role of the latter for intergenerational justice it is of vital importance to find out the nature of those relations and its possible implications. As in the article Rawls’ theory of justice is at stake it is preferable to carry it out in terms of that theory. L. Meyer referring to B. Barry puts it in this way: ‘There is a lack of direct reciprocity between generations’ and ‘there is no mutual cooperation and there are no exchanges in kind’.³

² L. Meyer, “Intergenerational Justice,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2021 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. Available at:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-intergenerational/>.

³ Ibidem.

Here two concepts capture one's attention, direct reciprocity and mutual cooperation, which, as is well-known, in their turn play a substantial role in Rawls' theory of justice. For Rawls 'a society is a more or less self-sufficient association of persons who in their relations to one another recognize certain rules of conduct as binding',⁴ and 'these rules specify a system of cooperation designed to advance the good of those taking part in it'.⁵ Moreover, as he further concludes, 'a society is cooperative venture for mutual advantage'.⁶ In other words, without direct reciprocity and mutual cooperation not only principles of social justice but also society as a form of association between persons will be if not impossible then at least at risk. Namely, some conditions which make possible not only some sort of association between persons – society – but also principles of social justice which 'provide of a way of assigning rights and duties'⁷ and 'define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation'⁸ are not actually met when relations between generations are at stake.

Actually, the latter discloses the problematic and vulnerable aspects of justice between generations viewed from the perspective of Rawls' theory of social justice. But let leave them for a moment at the same time fixing a preliminary connection between the notion of intergenerational justice and the theory of justice by Rawls even if it is at first sight appears as partly a negative one with challenges to be faced.

Concerning the second feature of relations between non-contemporaries Meyer once more refers to Barry and observes 'the permanent asymmetry in power-relations between living people and those who will live in the future'.⁹ Both believe that 'these power relations are qualitatively different from those among contemporaries, which are relatively fluid and subject to change'.¹⁰ In addition, the idea of intergenerational justice implies that 'future people's existence, number, and specific identity depend (are contingent) upon currently living people's decisions and actions.'¹¹ In fact, this second feature, a permanent asymmetry in power-relations, brings to the fore another reason why justice between generations is vulnerable and quite problematic and why it is of prime interest to reflect on and insure its possibility.

Generally, the idea of asymmetry in power-relations, roughly reformulated, the asymmetry between the strong and the weak is central to

⁴ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, 2005, p. 4.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ L. Meyer, "Intergenerational Justice".

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Ibidem.

the liberal scholarship.¹² In some sense, liberalism itself developed as an intellectual reaction against violations of power and authority. Hence, in advance it was inclined to elaborate ways for precluding or finding ‘remedies’ for asymmetry in power-relations and its negative consequences. So, its invocation in the notion of intergenerational justice, especially by a liberal thinker such as B. Barry and not only by him cannot be random.

The main aspects and features of intergenerational justice sketched here suppose that a wide range of issues can arise between non-contemporaries in relation to rights (whether future non-contemporaries are bearers of rights vis-à-vis present generation), benefits and harms (if the existence, identity and number of future people depend upon present decisions and actions to what extent can the former be said to be harmed by the latter?), interests and claims (must present generation take into account interests as well as claims of future generations?).¹³ In practice, these questions concern environmental and health issues around the globe (for instance, COVID-19, or other diseases), tax policy or pension reforms etc. Therefore, if the general normative commitment is to maintain life, a life worth to be lived, to preserve human civilization and cultural diversity on earth then intergenerational justice is a topic that is unavoidably to be considered and perhaps meticulously elaborated.

At the same, it is J. Rawls who has first proposed the systematic account of obligations to future people – of justice between generations.¹⁴ On the other hand, it is his theory of social justice that has gained a huge critical attention since 1970s and been examined from different angles including the intergenerational one. Therefore, at first sight, any of its reconsideration could seem a vain enterprise as hardly would new interpretations be available to an investigator. But as in hermeneutics is put, interpretation is ‘an infinite task,’¹⁵ and any text is open to new readings. Hence, there is still a possibility to view that theory from a new perspective and here a specific context as well as an institutionalist approach in a particular framework have played a significant role in making a new one. Namely, the experiences of post-Soviet societies serve an inspiration and simultaneously as a “catalysator” for a new reading. At the same time the theoretical framework proposed by D. North, J. Wallis, and B. Weingast within the institutionalist approach enables the latter one.

¹² See J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, New Haven, 2003; M. Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*, Cambridge, 2007; J. Shklar, “The Liberalism of Fear,” *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. by Nancy L. Rosenblum, Cambridge, Mass., 1989.

¹³ L. Meyer, “Intergenerational Justice”.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism: And Other Writings*, trans. and edit. by Andrew Bowie, Cambridge, 1998, p. 23.

Post-Soviet Experiences and the Background of the Argument

It is already mentioned that an urgent need to comprehend the realities at hand forces one to revisit ideas, conceptions, or theoretical frameworks. Sometimes these realities are specified as crises, historic events, fundamental changes etc. But whatever the specifications they remain experiences to be made sense of. And the main task of an investigator is to face it as a challenge.

Though there is a huge body of researches and books on the topic, the events taken place and processes evolved during the last decades (some are currently in progress) in the space of *so-called* post-Soviet countries are still among thought-provoking and challenging one from an academic point of view. And their complexity and ambiguity may question already instituted knowledges and lead to substantial rethinkings. But currently, the “so-called” as well as the term “post-Soviet” require a little bit more attention and explication.

In the 1990s and 2000s (and even so far), scholars, researchers, and politicians were widely using the term “post-Soviet” to identify newly born nation-states and societies emerged as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. In some way, it helped them intellectually to condense the general features of those countries, their controversial nature of being in relative distance and closeness to the experiences of the Soviet Union and its characteristics. Naturally, after more than thirty years of this collapse one can legitimately question the validity of this “Soviet – Post-Soviet” temporal coordinate arguing that due to the dates of event and radically different developing trajectories of the post-Soviet countries etc., probably, the post-Soviet period should be taken as finished. And it is the right time to abandon the term and find new academic coordinates for locating a huge space of social fabric and reflecting on its experiences. In this sense, the last claim sounds quite justified and invites for new academic undertakings and quests but not within this article.

Nevertheless, some social inertia still persists in relatively new emerged countries and societies of post-Soviet space such as long-lasting rule of former communist leaders or affiliated politicians (in Central Asia), the renaissance of state symbols of the Soviet period (in Belarus and Russia), preservation of state-run institutions and structures in many aspects of social life, paternalistic expectations of population from the state etc. Then, how is it possible to locate and understand this Soviet and at the same time non-Soviet experiences of these societies and countries? Are they still *post*-by nature?

Probably, temporal identifications of prefix “post” provided by cultural critic R. Chow could allow us still to consider them in this long-used coordinate but in much more sophisticated way. For her, the prefix *post*-

means: (1) “having gone through”, (2) “after”; (3) “a notion of time that is not linear but constant, marked by events that may be technically finished but that can only be fully understood with consideration of the devastation they left behind”.¹⁶ Therefore, the term “post-Soviet” still maintains its validity, of course, with certain reservations especially in case of some countries and societies.

Then a legitimate question can be raised: how is Rawls’ theory of justice proposed in 70s, revised and further developed in the 90s of the 20th century within the American context connected to the events and processes of last decades in the post-Soviet societies? What makes this connection and a new reading of that theory through the experiences of post-Soviet societies possible? Only at first glance does the latter seem impossible. At least two circumstances create a kind of common carcass within which those two become related: the first one is the institutional aspect equally relevant to both Rawls theory of justice and the post-Soviet experiences; and the second one is the ideological frame, the liberal democratic stance, shared by Rawls theory of justice and reformist initiatives in the post-Soviet space.

First about the institutional aspect. Devoting many years of research to moral and political issues Rawls has developed a theory of justice within the institutionalist approach.¹⁷ It is of capital interest for him to ruminate not on actions but on rules which make the scheme of social cooperation both just and stable. He especially notes that ‘although a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage, it is typically marked by a conflict as well as by an identity of interest.’¹⁸ For him, it is the rules, principles of justice, that are capable to provide ‘proper balance between competing claims.’¹⁹

Considering the post-Soviet experiences, it should be taken into account that after the collapse of the Soviet Union the newly emerged nation-states, post-Soviet societies, faced a great challenge: fundamentally to reform their own institutions and practices. During the late Soviet period, just before what is mostly known as Perestroika, it was clear that the Soviet way of modernization, the institutional design and practices of Soviet republics reached their limits.²⁰ In other words, the operative rules of social cooperation were rather dysfunctional than functional in terms of balancing competing claims. Moreover, in a whole the system was ineffective and the

¹⁶ R. Chow, “Between Colonizers: Hong Kong’s Postcolonial Self-Writing in the 1990s.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 1992, vol 2, no. 2, p. 152.

¹⁷ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 7; Th. Pogge, *John Rawls: His Life and Theory of Justice*, Oxford, 2007, p. 28.

¹⁸ *Ibidem.*, p. 4

¹⁹ *Ibidem.*, p. 5

²⁰ R. Sakwa, “The Soviet collapse: Contradictions and neo-modernisation,” *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 2013, vol. 4, no.1, pp. 65-77.

institutions were non-durable and not resilient.²¹ And actually, Perestroika was initiated to reform those ones which brought, in the end, to the collapse of the USSR. Naturally, these newly emerged countries were concerned with fundamental changes which would exclude dysfunctions and malfunctions and create effective and resilient institutions and structures.

Then the second aspect comes to the fore: which type of ideological frame served and has been serving so far in directing and enacting those institutional reforms regardless their actual results? For most of the post-Soviet countries, liberal democracy with its emphasis on human rights, market economy, multi-party system has been framing the formally initiated reforms. Of course, a question can be raised: did they have other choices with this respect? Post-Marxist thinker Ch. Mouffe believes that there were other choices but at that time (she meant the 1990s and even the beginning of 2000s) ‘[...] Liberal democracy seemed to be recognized as the only legitimate form of government.’²²

As is mentioned above, the theory of social justice by Rawls is also committed to liberal democracy. Proposing principles of justice concerning both the legal-political and social-economic aspects of institutional design of society he especially stresses the priority of the principle according to which ‘each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.’²³ What Rawls has in mind by saying basic liberty is ‘political liberty (the right to vote and to be eligible for public office) together with freedom of speech and assembly; liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; freedom of person along with the right to hold (personal) property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of the rule of law.’²⁴

In order to come to an understanding of the experiences of post-Soviet societies and gradually to develop a new reading of Rawls theory of justice from the intergenerational aspect here some central claims of the theoretical framework by D. North, J. Wallis, B. Weingast also ought to be incorporated. In their seminal work *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, North, Wallis, Weingast distinguish three types of social order: the foraging order, the natural state or limited access order, and the open access order. Focusing on the last two ones, the authors clarify that ‘social orders are characterized by the way societies craft institutions that support the existence of specific forms of human organization, the way societies limit or

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Ch. Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*. London, 2000, p. 80.

²³ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 60.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 61.

open access to those organizations, and through the incentives created by the pattern of organization.²⁵

In their view, personal relationships are at the basis of social organization and term relationships especially among powerful individuals in the natural states. Here, the individuals are substantially limited in forming and accessing to organizations. In contrast to the latter, the open access orders open a space for impersonal relationships and provide opportunities for forming and accessing organizations if a set of minimal and impersonal criteria are met. Overall considering different historical examples, North, Wallis, and Weingast aim at explaining ‘how durable and predictable social institutions deal with an ever-changing, unpredictable, and novel world,’²⁶ what enables long-lasting prosperity and vitality of the open-access orders characterized by democratic regimes and free markets and well-being of their citizens in contrast to the natural states or limited access orders.

Going back to the experiences of the post-Soviet societies with their reformist initiatives it can be stated that for the last thirty years efforts have been put in building durable and resilient institutions, institutions that would be capable to provide, what is called, sustainability, prosperity, and well-being. In this context, perhaps the central question is whether formally declared initiatives for reforming the institutions and practices in the post-Soviet societies within the frame of liberal democracy have failed or succeeded. As a matter of fact, some of them have achieved quite impressive results, the others have not: not only does their prosperity or well-being but also statehood remain quite vulnerable to different challenges revealing numerous instabilities in the established social orders. Putting the latter in North, Wallis, and Weingast’s terms, the first cases have managed a transition from the limited access order to the open access one. But the second cases have still been operating within the limited access order.

It is more or less clear how within the frame of liberal democracy and aspirations of institutional reforms the paths of the post-Soviet experiences and Rawls’ theory of justice converge. Moreover, the experiences of the post-Soviet societies raise issues about the nature of institutions resulted in during the last three decades and the importance of their durability and resilience for those societies. Given all of that as well as the notion of intergenerational justice the following questions can be raised.

- *Can we regard designing and creating of durable and resistant both state/public and non-state/private institutions with the*

²⁵ D. North, J. Wallis, and B. Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, Cambridge, 2009, pp 1-2.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. xii.

proper practices by present generation and their transferring to future ones within the idea of intergenerational justice?

- *Can a success or failure in reforming institutions be viewed as a matter of intergenerational justice?*
- *Are there possibilities to conceptualize it taking seriously existence, rights, claims, identity, prospects of future generation?*

These three questions can legitimately gain positive answers as future generations states are predominantly contingent on the institutional design and functioning of a polity. Therefore, the concept of intergenerational justice can imply the latter aspect, namely, that present generation has a specific duty toward future generations in reforming, creating and transferring strong, durable and resilient institutions for ensuring their existence, identity, rights and meeting their interests and claims. And one of the claims of this article is that this aspect is already incorporated in Rawls' theory of justice in advance with a due implication for his theory. In order to justify the latter, it is time to scrutinize this theory of social justice by him.

The Intergenerational Aspect of Rawls' Theory of Justice

Though insights and resources for intergenerational justice go back to the ancient times and ancient philosophy it is Rawls who provides the first systematic account of obligations to future people. It is of prime interest for him to justify that 'persons in different generations have duties and obligations to one another just as contemporaries do.'²⁷ And in his *A Theory of Justice* he embarks on 'the problem of justice between generations' as 'the account of justice as fairness would be incomplete without some discussion of this important matter.'²⁸ And it is first of all has to do with satisfying the two principles of justice by the social system as a whole, by its institutional framework.

In order to serve claims and interests of future generations and especially those of the least-advantaged he proposes the just savings principle. The latter intends to ensure real capital accumulation in different forms and a transfer to the next generation 'a fair equivalent in real capital as defined by a just savings principle.'²⁹ 'Each generation must not only preserve the gains of culture and civilization, and maintain intact those just institutions that have been established, but it must also put aside in each period of time a suitable amount of real capital accumulation. This saving

²⁷ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 293.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 284.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 288.

may take various forms from net investment in machinery and other means of production to investment in learning and education.’³⁰ The rate of accumulation is specified by the representative men from the least advantaged by the virtual adjustments.

Simultaneously, Rawls conceives a two-stage arrangement: the first is the accumulation stage distinguished by a necessary saving and the establishment of just institutions; and the second stage implies allowing future people to continue to live under just institutions. Following the contractual approach, he assures that the just savings principle is the outcome of a decision reached in the original position where under the veil of ignorance no one knows to which generation he belongs to. But all generations are virtually represented in the original position; and at some point in *A Theory of Justice* he notices that ‘the parties are regarded as representing family lines, say, with ties of sentiment between successive generations.’³¹ For him there is no definite answer how the burden of capital accumulation and of raising of civilization and culture is to be shared between generations. At the same time, the contractors cannot know whether previous generations have saved for them or not. According to him, the first generation do not benefit from this arrangement as they begin the process.

But it is of great importance to understand why the principle of just savings is incorporated in his theory in which the difference principle is adopted for regulating the matters concerning the least advantaged. It has first of all to do with the social minimum. ‘The appropriate expectation in applying the difference principle is that of the long-term prospects of the least favored extending over future generations. [...] Assuming for the moment that a just savings principle is available which tells us how great investment should be, the level of the social minimum is determined.’³² Hence, the matter of the social minimum, the level of which is to be set, leads to considering the claims of the successors of present generation and duties of the latter to them and how far it bounds to respect them.

In his theory, the just savings principle that he proposes for serving claims and interests of future generations is combined with the difference principle. The final formulation of the second principle of justice by Rawls is: ‘Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.’³³ With this respect, he states that the just savings principle serves as a constraint to the difference principle

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 285.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 292.

³² Ibidem, p. 285.

³³ Ibidem, p. 302.

and limits its application between generations. In comparison to it, the first principle of justice and the principle of fair opportunity limit the application of the difference principle within generations.

With regard to the intergenerational aspect of his theory it is of no less interest to add Rawls' critique of utilitarianism. In his view, the classical principle of utility leads in the wrong direction for questions of justice between generations: for instance, it 'may demand heavy sacrifices of the poorer generations for the sake of greater advantages for later ones that are far better off.'³⁴

Actualizing Intergenerational Potential of Rawls Account of Justice

Surely, there are numerous critiques concerning Rawls systematic account of justice between generations and conceptual tensions that it causes overall in his theory. But here only one of them is to be considered. Examining Rawls' solution to the problem of justice between generations J. Thompson notices a remarkable transformation in his assumptions. As members of society parties' task is to determine principles of justice for their social cooperation behind the veil of ignorance, deprived of knowledge on themselves, hence, of knowledge of their interests as well. Being contemporaries and impartial they, however, cannot guarantee that they will not ignore future (and past) generations or make unfavorable judgments to them. But Thompson writes: 'When Rawls turns his attention to justice between generations he incorporates the interests of future citizens, not by putting them in the original position, but by changing his assumptions about the identity and interests of the contractors. They are now conceived to be 'fathers of families' who are assumed to care about their descendants and can thus be depended on to represent the interests of their family lines in the making of contract.'³⁵

Obviously, J. Thompson targets one of the crucial aspects of Rawls' theory of justice, that which ensures a fair procedure in contracting and fairness of principles of justice themselves, that which primarily deals with his project "justice as fairness". In fact, this valuable critique reveals a retreat from that project uncovering a tension within Rawls' theory, a theoretical inconsistency which could also bring to practical consequences. But for the current examination ignoring it and going back to the second principle of justice could be much more fruitful.

So far Rawls provides bases to promote the idea of why it is important to consider the problem of justice between generations and who are the

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 287.

³⁵ J. Thompson, *Intergenerational Justice: Rights and Responsibilities in an Intergenerational Polity*, New York, 2009, p. 19.

contractors. Nevertheless, it is not of less interest, if not of prime importance to find out concrete ways of ensuring the future of the least advantaged. His expectation in applying the difference principle is the following: ‘The appropriate expectation in applying the difference principle is that of the long-term prospects of the least favored extending over future generations.’³⁶

At first glance, it seems Rawls is mainly concerned with the social and economic aspect of the matter. The emphasis on importance to accumulate real capital concretizing its forms, incorporation of the just savings principle in the last formulation of the difference principle in general, the main concern of which is the least advantaged in future generations, explicitly leaves no room to view his account of intergenerational justice from the other perspective, other than the social-economic is. But with this respect there is an implicit aspect in his theory, that which contains insights, statements on intergenerational justice but goes beyond pure socio-economic understandings of the matter – beyond the problem of the least advantaged, real capital accumulation or social minimum.

Then where and how is a space opened for a new reading? What ‘lenses’ provide a possibility for its emergence? The latter could come true if one looks at Rawls’ theory from the perspective of durable social institutions, institutions functioning over a long period of time and enabling to face serious challenges. A statement based on the conceptual framework by North, Wallis, Weingast allows to declare that within a polity durable, strong and resilient institutions better serve not only to ensure interests, rights and benefits of present generations but also of future generations. Thus, some formulations by Rawls can be read from this angle. In his *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls has incorporated an understanding of ‘a natural duty to uphold and to further just institutions’, an agreement ‘on a path over time which treats all generations justly during the whole course of a society’s history.’³⁷ As is stated the latter forms the concept of intergenerational justice within the frame of liberal democracy by Rawls. Moreover, in his *Political Liberalism* J. Rawls, reflecting on political justice in a democratic society, raises two questions: ‘[...] What is the most appropriate conception of justice for specifying the fair terms of social cooperation between citizens regarded as free and equal and as fully cooperating members of society over a complete life, from one generation to the next.’³⁸ And ‘[...] How is it possible for there to exist over time a just and stable society of free and equal

³⁶ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 285.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 289.

³⁸ J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, New York, 1996, p. 3.

citizens, who remain profoundly divided by reasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines.’³⁹

Given the emphasis on *the just and stable society over time*, social cooperation between citizens regarded as free and equal and as fully cooperating members of society *over a complete life, from one generation to the next* it is evident that Rawls’ concerns have implicitly to do with designing a just framework which institutionally ensures a proper future for next generations. Hence, in his theory the social and economic aspect of intergenerational justice is completed by a new – legal and political – dimension, enlarging the scope of the problem of justice between generations and transforming it into a matter of the whole institutional design of society and its basic structure.

Further Implications

The disclosure of an enlarged intergenerational aspect in Rawls’ theory of justice claims further to put forward another questions: ‘*What are the possible implications of this enlarged aspect on Rawls’ theory of justice itself? How does the former affect the latter’s understanding and placement among other theories and their commitments?*’ Here the examination will be constructed on the axis of ‘individualistic commitments vs. non-individualistic commitments’ with a particular stress on the second, non-individualistic one.

Rawls positions himself not only as a liberal democrat but also as an egalitarian liberal. As a liberal thinker he ought strongly to bear individualistic commitments throughout his theory. And one finds it right at the beginning of his *A Theory of Justice* when the primacy of justice is proposed and the loss of freedom for the sake of any other good is rejected,⁴⁰ or the first principle of justice concerning basic rights and liberties is dominated over the second one.⁴¹ As for egalitarianism, he asserts that his two principles of justice express an egalitarian form of liberalism which is evident due to:

- The guarantee of the fair values of the political liberties,
- Fair equality of opportunity,
- The difference principle, in which the social and economic inequalities attached to offices and positions are to be adjusted so that, whatever the level of those inequalities, whether great or small, they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 4.

⁴⁰ See J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 3-4.

⁴¹ See Ibidem, p. 42-43.

He adds to this list the fourth aspect, too: '[...] The first principle covering the equal basic rights and liberties may easily be preceded by a lexically prior principle requiring that citizens' basic needs be met, at least insofar as their being met is necessary for citizens to understand and to be able fruitfully to exercise those rights and liberties.'⁴²

His egalitarianism entails both political and socio-economic aspects which, in fact, mutually ensure each other. But at the same time, they reveal a kind of oscillation between individualistic and non-individualistic commitments within his theory of justice. The latter is brilliantly analyzed by M. Sandel in his *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. Sandel puts: '[...] Rawls' theory implicitly relies on an intersubjective conception he officially rejects [...]. [...] Such language first appears in the discussion of the difference principle when, as we have seen, the distribution of natural talents is described alternatively as a 'common' or 'collective' or 'social' asset to be used for the 'common advantage'.⁴³ He illustrates that this intersubjective language appears not only in the difference principle but also in the idea of social union as well.

Resuming on these two aspects the communitarian thinker states: 'By their intersubjective dimensions, the difference principle and the idea of social union counter individualistic assumption in two different ways, the difference principle by nullifying the arbitrariness that arises when natural assets are seen as individual possessions, the idea of social union by overcoming the partiality of persons that appears when individuals are thought to be complete in themselves.'⁴⁴ Sandel notices that for Rawls 'in a social union, 'the members of a community participate in on another's nature... [and] the self is realized in the activities of many selves'[...].'⁴⁵

Of course, it is another interesting topic to map the internal tensions or oscillations within Rawls' theory of justice as Sandel, Thompson or other scholars and thinkers have brilliantly carried out so far. But at the moment the main concern is to fix quite a strong non-individualistic commitment in Rawls' theory of justice and to stress that it continues in that part of his theory where intergenerational justice, namely, interests and claims of future generation, is at stake. Hence, the intergenerational aspect of Rawls' theory of justice strengthens its non-individualistic commitment and enables to inhabit and flourish it throughout his theory. And, actually, the matter is not only to hold present generation duty-bound to future generation but also to gain a stable institutional scheme of social cooperation over a long period of time.

⁴² J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 7.

⁴³ M. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Cambridge, 1998, p. 80.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 81.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

An opponent to or skeptic of the idea of intergenerational justice can find persuasive arguments for rejecting its legitimacy by bringing to the fore the fact that currently living people know neither future people's individual identities nor their particular preferences, or a normative statement that an act can be wrong only if that act harms, or will harm or can be expected to harm, a person who does or will exist.⁴⁶ Any impersonal approach to the matter questions a right-based theory which ought to be first of all concerned with persons. Therefore, Rawls' theory of justice with its emphasis on duties of present generation to future generations or concern to ensure stable and just society over time has to enforce the non-individualistic commitment at the price of reducing its individualistic ones. And his egalitarianism, and as it is known egalitarianism is first of all about reducing or omitting differences, serves as a basis for developing a theory into that direction.

Conclusion

From a philosophical point of view to face challenges imposed by practical issues always means risks and chances to be taken for. And in their own way, the experiences of post-Soviet societies provide both of them and not only for the social sciences but also for Humanities among which is philosophy, in particular, political philosophy as one of its branches. In recent decades, one of its popular topics is intergenerational justice which covers a wide range of issues from moral aspect being focused at the relations between generations. Though the insights and sources of intergenerational justice can be dated back even to the Ancient times it is only J. Rawls who has first proposed a systematic account of obligations to future people. And his theory of justice deserves a special attention from its intergenerational aspect. Read through the experiences of institutional reforms in post-Soviet societies which have been partly failed as well as the theoretical framework proposed by North, Douglas, and Weingast, it is obvious that in Rawls' theory the intergenerational aspect is incorporated in advance stretching all over his theory. Here the relations between generations play a central role. Given the emphasis on *the just and stable society over time*, social cooperation between citizens regarded as free and equal and as fully cooperating members of society *over a complete life, from one generation to the next* it is evident that Rawls' concerns have implicitly to do with designing a just framework which institutionally ensures a proper future for next generations. Hence, in his theory the social and economic aspect of intergenerational justice is completed by a new – legal and political – dimension, enlarging the scope of the problem of justice between generations and transforming it into a matter of the whole institutional design of society and its basic structure. And the latter has further implication: it

⁴⁶ L. Meyer, "Intergenerational Justice," J. Tremmel, *A Theory of Intergenerational Justice*, London, 2009, pp. 35-63.

strengthens the non-individualistic commitments of Rawls' theory of justice though he first of all positions himself as a liberal thinker and the right-based nature of his theory privileges openly the individualistic one.

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AFRICAN RESPONSE TO THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

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Abstract: *Rene Descartes tried to no avail to resolve the problem that resulted from his celebrated meditations. The mind/body problem has persisted since then, in spite of the much intellectual efforts that have been devoted to its resolution. We argue in this work, that the problem may likely not be resolved until the ontological and logical background upon which philosophers stand to ponder on this problem is reviewed. In attempting to review this background, we argue that the African unique ontology that sees reality as dovetailing into another, could serve as a guide. This work therefore presents African unique conception of the mind/body problem, with the aim of showing clearly why the mind/body problem is absent in African philosophy and may even be a mirage in Western philosophy, if looked at from a different ontological and logical foundation.*

Keywords: *mind/body problem, Africa, spirit, matter, response*

Introduction

The mind-body problem constitutes one of the most discussed topics in contemporary philosophy of mind. René Descartes, a French philosopher and mathematician, is credited with developing the classical formulation of dualism in the 17th century, which is where the present issue of the link between mind and body originates, and the implications of this dualism have had huge ramifications for philosophy of mind as well as metaphysics.

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Descartes believes that the mind and body are two distinct "substances". He posits that while mind is non-extended, thinking, feeling, invisible substances, bodies are spatially extended entities that are incapable of sensation or thought. Descartes continued by asserting that these substances, despite being unique and existing separately, exhibit some degree of interaction, meaning that the mind and body interact. However, Descartes was unable to provide appropriate information regarding the nature of their interaction, thus sparking intense debates among western philosophers.

African philosophers were not left out of this all-important debate, and a summation of their analysis is the primary objective of this paper. However, before delving into this, the background to the mind-body problem shall be briefly highlighted. Afterwards, the various responses to the mind/body problem would be x-rayed. After which we shall go on to explore some African traditions as presented by Placid Temples, Kwame Gyekye, etc, bearing in mind how their views align with Descartes' dualism, and where they part ways. We shall conclude with the argument which is central in the views of Africans that the body and mind act in tandem, yet they are also largely independent from one another while keeping their own substantiality. The picture presented in the aforementioned statement, further establishes the idea that the ontological foundation for the mind-body relationship in the African conceptual framework is that vital force diffuses in both directions between the mind and the body, therefore undermining the strict interaction of one over the other. The African view of the mind-body dilemma challenges Western philosophy's static and speculative reasoning, providing a distinct perspective on the nature and scope of interaction between the mind and body. Moreover, in contrast to its division by Western ideology, the image of "man" presented in African culture, depicts a harmonious synthesis of the spirit and body as one whole individual. As a result of this critical impression imprinted in African thought, Descartes' mind-body dilemma becomes weaker and feebler within the African discussion of the mind-body problem.

Before beginning, it is good to note that, not all philosophers agree with the categorization of a philosophy as African - there is disagreement as to the existence of an umbrella philosophy that could be properly called African philosophy. Those who are in disagreement with the concepts 'African Philosophy' argue that this paints Africans as monolithic and thus suffering from 'group think'. This means Africans in all countries and communities think or reason in the same pattern and arrive at the same

conclusions and beliefs, which is incorrect. Innocent Asouzu¹ is one of the greatest critics of categorization of philosophy. For him, categorizing a philosophy as African, brings an unhealthy competition between Africans and the West, thereby impeding the growth of philosophy in Africa. This research however disagrees with Asouzu and others who share this view because we believe categorization gives identity to philosophies. Besides, categorization does not imply 'group think' because it is not meant to include everything. A common-sense definition of a class or category is not a set with a completely identical features or things. The definition of human beings for instance, as a class of rational humans, does not exclude those humans without this rationality. The human mind continually conceives humans as rational animals, even when deep within it, it knows that not all humans are rational. This means that in every definition of a class or category, there is an implied understanding that there are exceptions, to which the definition does not adequately apply. We define the male sex, for instance, as a class of humans with a deep voice, even when we are aware that some men have light voices. We define sub-Saharan Africans, as a set of Africa that is black in color, even when we can find a good number of people in this region, with light skin². Categorization in common sense therefore, does not carry that strict insistence for uniformity, it admits exceptions. The categorization of a philosophy as African, therefore, ought to be understood based on this common-sense understanding of categorization. Categorization as useful as it is, would be impossible if we were to insist on excluding all exceptions. If categorization is taken this way, African philosophy would not be possible. But since categorization generally does not follow this format, there is no need to demand this of African philosophy³. African philosophy of mind is therefore possible.

Background to the Mind-Body Problem

Descartes is believed to be the originator of the mind-body problem, which resulted to the branch of philosophy known as philosophy of mind. Descartes is most famous for his meditations. The meditations is a series of writing in which Descartes attempted to find the foundation for true

¹ Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: new complementary ontology beyond world-immanetism, ethnocentric reduction and impositions*. Zweigneiderlassong Zurich: Litverlag GmbH & Co. KG Wien, 2007, 111.

² Christopher Akpan, 'Traditional African epistemic categories and the question of rationality: A case for reconceptualization', *Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy*, vo;7. no2: 38-44.

³ Peter Bisong, 'What criterion should define African philosophy?' *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)*, vol.3, no.2, 2020: 67-73.

knowledge. It started with doubt. Descartes⁴ likens this doubt to what the architect's does when preparing to lay a foundation of a building.: While for house building, one could think of bulldozers as the ground clearing tools; for Knowledge building however, Descartes construes sceptical doubts as the ground clearing tools. Using sceptical doubts, Descartes shows us how to find “some reason for doubt” in all our existing opinions. Descartes⁵ however, unlike the sceptics who doubt for the sake of doubting, Descartes aims “to reach certainty – to cast aside the loose earth and sand so as to come upon rock or clay.” His doubts eventually led him to an indubitable truth –“I think” which he feels he could stand to build an edifice of knowledge that would be devoid of doubt.

Descartes concluded his meditations with the hope that he has rescued knowledge from the jaws of skepticism and placed it on a firm foundation – the cogito. What marks a particular knowledge as certain is the quality of distinctness and clarity. These marks of certain knowledge led Descartes to formulate his argument for the mind-body distinction. The argument runs thus:

I have a clear and distinct idea of the mind as a thinking,
non-extended thing.

I have a clear and distinct idea of body as an extended,
non-thinking thing.

Therefore, the mind is really distinct from the body and
can exist without it.

Another version of the argument runs thus

I understand the mind to be indivisible by its very nature.

I understand body to be divisible by its very nature.

Therefore, the mind is completely different from the
body.

Descartes is arguing here, that what characterizes a body as a body, is divisibility, while what characterizes a mind as a mind is indivisibility. Descartes' reasons for the claims about the respective natures of mind and body is that, it is easily perceptible that bodies are divisible. For instance, if we take a piece of stick and break into two, we immediately have two bodies instead of one – a stick therefore as a body is divisible just like any other body. On the contrary, if a mind or an “I” could be divided, then two minds or “I's” would result; but since this “I” is the self, this would be the same as claiming that the division of my mind results in two selves, which is absurd.

⁴ Rene Descartes, *Meditation on First Philosophy*. Tweyman, Stanley. Routledge, 1991, 23.

⁵ Ibid. 23.

According to Descartes therefore, the body is essentially divisible and the mind is essentially indivisible.

This distinction between mind and body based on their completely diverse natures by Descartes is the root of the famous mind-body problem. The question has always been, how can these two substances with completely different natures causally interact so as to give rise to a human being capable of having voluntary bodily motions and sensations? For example, when one voluntarily chooses, to take a knife to peel an orange, the causal interaction between the cause (choosing) and the effect (peeling) becomes a problem when we maintain substance dualism with Descartes. This is because choosing is a mode of the non-extended mind alone, whereas the arm's motion is a mode of the extended body alone. How is it possible for a non-extended mind to bring about this extended effect? The concern here is that in order for one thing to cause motion in another, they must be contact between the two. But in the case of voluntary bodily movements, contact between mind and body would be impossible given the mind's non-extended nature. This is because contact can only be between two surfaces, but surface is a mode of body and not mind. However, since the mind does not have a surface that would need to come into contact with the body and cause it to move, there can be no causal interaction between the mind and the body. Since this causal interaction is experienced every day, it is either the mind has a surface, in which case it would not be different from the body or the "clear and distinct" ideas of mind or body, as mutually exclusive natures as argued by Descartes is false. This is a problem that has perplexed philosophers for eons of years. And various attempts have been made to resolve this problem – these attempts have resulted to the emergence of different schools of thoughts which could broadly be categorized into dualism and monism.

Responses to the Mind/Body Problem.

The dualists agree with Descartes that there are two substances and that a person is made up of an immaterial substance called the mind and a material substance known as the body. There are different versions of dualism. Substance dualism is the version of dualism held by Descartes himself. The substance dualists maintain that the mind and the body are distinct substances which could exist independently of the other, implying that mind and body refer to different kinds of entities in addition to having different meanings. Though, they are distinct, Descartes insists they causally interact.

Property dualism in attempt to overcome the problem of substance dualism as proposed by Descartes, argue that mental attributes are separate from and irreducible to physical properties, even when both sorts of

properties may be present in the same item, like the human brain. Put differently, proponents of this school believe that there are two different types of properties: physical properties and mental properties; even though the world is made up of only one form of substance, which is the physical kind. In other words, it is the idea that some, if not all, non-physical mental qualities (including memories, imagination, and thoughts) are present in or naturally supervene onto particular physical things (such as brains). Other notable schools that defended dualism though in a modified form include: occasionalism (heavily defended by Louis de la Forge, Arnold Geulincx, and Nicholas Malebranche), parallelism as propounded by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, epiphenomenalism propagated by Howard Robinson, pansychism as muted by Thales and Anaxagoras.

Monism is a philosophical school that sees reality as composed of one substance. It is the belief that ultimately the mind and the body are the same thing. The three main branches are materialism, idealism and neutral monism. The materialists see reality as composed of only matter, while the idealists see it as composed of ideas or spirit. The neutral monists believe that reality is neither mental nor physical. Monism is thus directly opposed to dualism⁶. Monism has three main branches: Materialism/physicalism, idealism and neutral monism.

Materialism/physicalism is the belief that nothing exists apart from the material world. Materialist psychologists generally agree that consciousness (the mind) is the function of the brain. The materialists therefore, see mental processes as emanating from purely physical processes in the central nervous system. The evolutionists are the main proponent of this view. Maslin comments, "Evolution gives us a reason for privileging the physical. If life on Earth is the result of an entirely physical process as the evolution theory suggests, then humans are entirely physical beings. Paul Churchland forcefully drives this home:

The important point about the standard evolutionary story is that the human species and all of its features are the wholly physical outcome of a purely physical process... If this is the correct account of our origins, then there seems neither need, nor room, to fit any non-physical substances or properties into our theoretical account of ourselves. We are creatures of matter. And we should learn to live with that fact.⁷

⁶ C. Stephens, 'Monism Philosophy Beliefs and Example'. Study.com (study.com/academy/) Accessed 20th July, 2023, 13

⁷ P. Churchland, 'Matter and consciousness'.

<http://scott.brisbane..id.au/philosophy/case-for-dualism.html>. Retrieved May 15, 2018.

The principle of parsimony (Ockham's razor) is also often invoked to support materialism. As John Heil⁸ explains, "Ockham's Razor bids us not to 'multiply entities beyond necessity' Given two accounts of the same thing, people should prefer the ones that are simpler", that is, "accounts that refrain from introducing new kinds of entit[ies or process[es]]". A theory that only involves one entity (i.e. matter) as an explanatory tool ought to be preferred over one that involves two entities. Thus materialism as an explanation of bodily processes is better than dualism, which brings up two entities – mind and body as explanation of bodily processes.

Another argument in favour of materialism has it that, if the soul and body are different substances; this would lead to a problem of determining how many minds are in a body. As Maslin⁹ posed it, How do you count souls? By what criterion or criteria is it decided at a given moment how many souls are present? The point being made here is that dualism gives room for the postulation of many minds in a single body. The schools of philosophy under materialism include: type physicalism, token physicalism, eliminativism, emergentism, behaviorism, anomalous monism, biological naturalism etc.

Idealism on the other hand is directly opposed to physicalism. According to the idealists, reality is fundamentally equivalent to mind, spirit, or consciousness, that reality is entirely a mental construct, or that ideas are the highest form of reality or have the strongest claim to being considered "real"¹⁰. Idealist theories include: absolute idealism, solipsism, subjective idealism etc.

Neutral monism, is the metaphysical view that the mental and the physical are two ways of organizing or describing the same element, which are themselves "neutral," that is, neither physical nor mental. Neutral monism agrees with idealism and materialism that ultimate reality is all of one kind. What distinguishes neutral monism however, from its better known monistic rivals (idealism and materialism) is the claim, that the intrinsic nature of ultimate reality is neither mental nor physical. Ultimate reality to them is said to be neutral between the two. This view denies the dualist thesis, that the mind and body are basically two different things. It rather claims that reality consists of only one kind of substance, in the form of neutral elements that are neither mental nor physical. These elements might have the properties of colour, shape, extension, taste et cetera. But these shaped and coloured elements do not exist in a mind or the body; they

⁸ John Heil, *Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York, Routledge, 1988.

⁹ K. Maslin, *An introduction to the philosophy of Mind*. Maiden, MA: Policy Press, 2001, 25.

¹⁰ G. Wilkams *The Idealists Beliefs* London: Penguins Publishers, 1989, 37.

exist on their own. Philosophers often classified under neutral monists include: David Hume, Bertrand Russell and Williams James.

The African Response to the Mind/Body Problem

Unlike the west that tends to place a sharp divide between the mind and body, mind and body for Africans are interconnected, yet they are also substantially independent from one another. The African ontological foundation for the mind-body interaction is that the vital force diffuses in both directions between the mind and the body. This implies that, in African ontology, there is no pure spirit and no pure matter. As captured by Bisong & Odok¹¹ 'in Africa a thing could be both spiritual and material at the same time without contradiction – a phenomenon which Descartes found impossible to explain due to his look at it on the basis of two-valued logic ... it is only explainable through three-valued logic'. From two-valued logic perspective Su-S (where S represents spirit and –S represents matter) is not possible, while it is very possible in Africa and most other traditions. A thing is either a spirit or matter for Descartes leading to the mind/body problem but for Africa, a third term (which is a union of matter and spirit) is possible. Thus, stemming from African ontological and logical background as captured by Tempels¹², Momoh¹³, Ijiomah¹⁴), Asira & Bisong (2015) and other African scholars, a thing could be spirit and matter at the same time. In Africa therefore, there is no pure spirit and there is no pure matter, because reality flows from one to another. As such in every spirit, there is a bit of matter and in every matter there is a bit of spirit. Conception of reality this way by Africans, makes the problem of interaction between mind and body that has been a perennial problem in the west to be absent in Africa. For if there is spirit in matter and matter in spirit, then the point (surface) of interaction is no longer a problem.

Thus, as opposed to its differentiation by western ideology, the image of "man" given within the African culture portrays a cohesive composition of the spirit and body as one whole person. Placid Tempels is amongst the first to observe and bring to fore the holistic nature of African ontology. For him, because everything is interconnected and is impacted by changes to the system, reality is viewed as a closed system. From Tempels' perspective, Africa's understanding of life, is centered on the vital energy (vital force).

¹¹ Peter Bisong and Odok, J., 'Three-Valued Logic as an Authentic African Logic: A Critical Reflection.' *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, vol.10. No. 4, 149.

¹² Placid Tempels, *Bantu philosophy*, Editions Réclame, Paris, 1959.

¹³ C. Momoh, *The Substance of African Philosophy*. Auch: African Philosophy Projects Publications, 1989.

¹⁴ Enya Asira and Bisong, Peter, 'Western and African Conception of Cause and Effect: impact on Scientific Development'. *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences*, vol.8 no.1, 2015, 24-29.

The vital force that gives both living things and inanimate objects life makes this relationship and interaction possible. This vital force, which is an ontological entity, serves as the foundation for the forces that interact to create everything that is. All of creation is infused with life force, including the environment that people and communities draw nourishment from. Tempels himself stated, 'Force is the nature of being, force is being, and being is force'¹⁵. It is the Spirit that holds the universe together'¹⁶. According to Baily¹⁷ the idea of Tempels has been accepted and endorsed by African scholars, which means in Africa, reality is conceived as dovetailing into one another due to the vital force that is in its constitution. This implies that reality in Africa is dynamic and flows from spirit to matter and matter to spirit – there is nothing that is absolutely pure. Thus, there is no absolute entity called the mind or any absolute entity called the body in Africa. The mind is in the body and the body is in the mind. Through the understanding of the vital force, African thought system is distinctively characterized by the dynamic relationship and interaction of the constituent parts of existence.

In Descartes' analysis of the mind-body interaction, he presented a picture of the mind dominating the body and controlling it by way of interaction, even though these two substances are distinctly separated. The picture of interaction presented in the African thought as expressed by Tempels, rather see man as force himself, not necessarily distinct from his body. Tempels notion of man (muntu), knows himself and is aware that he is a powerful force that both influences and is influenced by other forces. Apart from the ontological order and the interaction of forces, there is no concept of a human in Bantu conceptions, force is the term (1959). For the Bantu there is interaction of being with being, that is to say, of force with force. Transcending the mechanical, chemical and psychological interactions, they see a relationship of forces which we should call ontological.¹⁸

Tempels, in his analysis of being, opines that by removing "being" from its attribute, "Force," we may conceptualize the transcendental idea of "being," but the Bantu cannot. He believed that "force" is a component of "being" that cannot be separated from the definition of "being." The concept of "being" separate from the concept of "force" does not exist among the Bantu. It is impossible therefore to imagine "being" without the element "force." This force permeates everything. As a result, Temples compares what Descartes refers to as mind to "vital force," which he claims is rarely

¹⁵ Placid Tempels, *Bantu philosophy*, Editions Réclame, Paris, 1959, 44.

¹⁶ J. Kaoma, *God's family, God's earth: Christian ecological ethics of Ubuntu*, Kachere Series, Zomba, 2003, 70.

¹⁷ J. Baily, 'Vital Force Understanding the Force in our Body' 27th March, 2020. Barenaturopath.com.au/blog/. Accessed 20th July, 2023.

¹⁸ Placid Tempels, *Bantu philosophy*, Editions Réclame, Paris, 1959, 46.

believed to be different or exist indecently and influence the body remotely. Even though a person's body and soul are intertwined, when a person is characterized in terms of the vital force, any differences or mind-body interactions (problems) are downplayed or do not apply. Moreover, man himself is a force that coexists with other forces greater than himself to grasp reality and sustain his existence, he is not necessarily controlled by just the immaterial part of him besides such interaction cannot be explicitly explained in proper African philosophy. Furthermore, the chain of dynamic organic relatedness includes both the material body and the immaterial soul. The body's actions, functions, and dispositions are therefore made evident by the faculties of the mind, and the action, function, or disposition of the body's vital energy is reflected in the mind and can either amplify or vitiate it. Man is further united by the unifying flow of the life energy (vital force) from the soul, the principle of life, to the body, and vice versa.

Another renowned and well-known African philosopher who epitomized African tradition was the Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye; a man who played a significant role in the growth of contemporary African philosophy. Gyekye was a visiting professor of philosophy and African-American studies at Temple University as well as an emeritus philosophy professor at the University of Ghana. Gyekye explores the idea of the Akan people in his analysis of man as a combination of body and soul, even though he disagrees with Tempels' tripartite view of man (as being a composite of body, soul, and spirit). Man, as presented by Gyekye, in accordance with the Akan people, is composed of *okra* (soul) and *honam* (body). The *okra* is regarded as the innermost self, the very essence of an individual person; the life for which it is referred as *okrateasefo*, meaning "the living soul", which is typically identified with life itself. It is an embodiment and transmitter of the individual destiny - *nkrabea*. The English translation of *okra* is the soul. For the Akan people, as explained by Gyekye, the soul and the body are so close that they form an indissoluble or indivisible unity, which consequently implies that the human person is a homogeneous entity. This relationship is so tight such that the *okra* - soul is fused in the *honem* – body¹⁹.

The level of the soul-body integration which Gyekye emphasizes, which takes place between the *okra* and the *honem*, is such an inseparable yet unexplainable integrated one, especially as one is permanently (unless in occasion of death of the *honem*) glued and immersed in another one. This bond subsists until when the body is destroyed through death, only then does the soul assume and find another body as the case maybe. The *okra* does not experience temporal termination or destruction since it is

¹⁹ Kwame Gyekye, 'Akan Concept of a Person'. *International Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 18, no. 3, 1978, 277-87.

immaterial, instead, it migrates into another body where it continues its mission in existence.

Gyekye used the terms "mind" and "soul" interchangeably, treating them as one concept. On the Akan's relationship between mind and body the vital force was proposed by Gyekye as the dynamic channel of the mind-body relationship. Since the mind and body are forces, they are bound together and compete with one another. Bearing this in mind, it is rather difficult to assume a bifurcated or distinct level of operations between the soul and the body. The soul (mind) is immaterial, existing in the body and empowering its existence, while also maintaining its essence, the body on the other hand is cooperative and enhancing such integration, thereby culminating to a force in nature which fosters reality and the existence of the human person. With this in mind therefore, it is obvious that in African philosophical conception, the mind and body are logically and operationally separate but not ontologically so.

The idea of a person is frequently seen in African philosophical thought as a holistic entity that encompasses both the spiritual and material components of human existence. The soul is seen by many African traditions and religious doctrines as an integral component of the human condition that governs and controls the physical body. As a result, the contact, kinship, and dependency between the body and soul are frequently used to define the concept of a person.

It is vital to realize that the traditional insight to the mind-body dilemma cannot be effectively grasped without first looking at the African analysis of man and his nature, which was why the study recorded some philosophical opinions of various African thinkers. Be that as it may, the ideas represented by the various African traditions as expressed above, fairly agrees with Descartes' dualism (the idea that a person is made up of both material and immaterial substances), but ignores the traditional interplay between the two substances that Descartes foresaw. This is the case because, despite the fact that these two elements coexist in the same body, they are rarely distinguishable since the soul (mind), which functions as a life force, pervades and engulfs every aspect of a person, undermining any notion that one influences the other. Put in a different way, Africans share the western understanding that a person is an amalgamation of two elements: the body and the mind (soul), which are, respectively, immaterial and material, extended thinking and non-thinking substances. However, Africans perceive the mind and body as being linked, a merger of the real essence of man (the soul) and that, through which this essence is manifested (the body). The western conception of these two components presents a segmented and subdivided picture of the mind and body. Consequently, the

argument concerning mind-body interaction is weak; and if this is the case, then African philosophy does not subscribe to the mind-body dilemma.

Furthermore, “interaction”, irrespective of the context used, refers to the idea that the effect of one factor may depend on the presence of another factors. When Descartes landed himself in the mind-body dilemma (where two distinct entities, one accessible and the other inaccessible, operating independently yet interacting), he painted a picture where one entity depends on another entity; probably the body depending on the mind. The explanation created an impression that the body existed simply to serve the mind, or seem like the mind is superior hence being the essence for which the body existed. This bearing of course, rekindles Ryle’s critique of Descartes dualism – ‘the ghost in the machine”, which for him stems from a categorical mistake of trying to blend these two terms as if they belong to the same category²⁰. But then, like Ryle further ask, “what becomes of the machine if the ghost is removed from it?”

Africans (though subscribe to dualism) do not particularly see the soul as being superior to the body, neither is the body functioning as a mere point of habitation for the soul. It is believed that so long as one is alive, these two elements form a merger (though distinct, but retaining their substantiality). It is therefore “only at the instance of death, that the soul exercises its unique power of migrating into another body and continuing another stage of existence²¹. Implying that it is only when the body is destroyed at death, that the dual nature of man is exposed, else the soul (or mind) and the body form such an inseparable unit, strengthened and engulfed by the vital force, such that one is unable to describe or explain their individual schemes or influence on each other.

Descartes' investigation identified the pineal gland in the brain as the site of the alleged interaction, however he was unable to provide a more detailed explanation of how it functions. Africans, on the other hand, think that the human body does not include a specific location for the soul (mind). They also think that even while it can be perceived, the soul actually acts in a realm that is restricted in terms of access and spirituality, making it impossible to characterize it using physical criteria as Descartes' encounter could have suggested.

Conclusion

Descartes in his theory of dualism, posits that man’s body is essentially an extended physical element from which his mental activity can be more clearly portrayed. These two substances (mind and body) form parts of a

²⁰ Gilbert Ryle, ‘Descartes Myth’. *The Concept of Mind*. Hutchinson, 1949, 67.

²¹ A. Foshola, *The Yoruba Vision and the African Thought System*. Ibadan: Express Books, 200, 17.

single thing called a human being. Descartes asserted that they engage in interaction despite being separate and distinct from one another. This interaction served as the foundation for a number of arguments that all questioned the nature of this interaction and the feasibility of an immaterial substance initiating or causing interaction on a material.

The majority of the responses by western philosophers, fall under the two fundamentals yet diametrically opposed schools of dualism and monism. Unfortunately, neither the proponents of these schools of thought nor Descartes' detractors were able to properly provide a viewpoint that resolved the problem. Due to this, the problem still exists and calls for new solutions from many perspectives, therefore necessitating this African philosophical response.

African thinkers such as Placid Temples, Kwame Gyekye (1984)²², Metuh (1999)²³, and Edeh (1991)²⁴ all participated in this discussion to represent the African perspective on the mind-body issue. From their arguments presented so far, African philosophers, in contrast to Western philosophers who usually approach the mind-body problem from a substance-based perspective, see reality as a dynamic force and reject the Cartesian idea that underlies it. According to their claim, the soul, which is thought to be the true essence of man but is not necessarily superior to the body in actuality, and the body, which serves as the physical manifestation of a man, are merged together. Western notions of these two components, in contrast, present a segmented and separated image of the mind and body.

The concept of "force" as the cosmic universal force permeating all elements of reality is the foundation of the African conception of mind-body interaction. The Cartesian dualism that sees the mind and body as two distinct and independent things is rejected by this dynamic viewpoint. The body and mind are viewed in African philosophy as being related and having an influence on one another. The holistic relationship and interaction process between knowledge, belief, and physiological responses, which have a significant impact on health, are highlighted by the African perspective.

The mind/body problem arises only where there is a strict divide between mind and body as is the case in the west. In such a worldview these opposite substances cannot possibly interact. However, in Africa ontology, nothing is permanently what it is, because reality is dynamic and flows from one to another. Thus, in every mind there is a body and in every body there

²² Kwame Gyekye, 'Akan Concept of a Person'. *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1978, 277-87.

²³ Metuh, I., *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes: The Problems of Interpretation*. Jos: Imico Publisher, 1991.

²⁴ Edeh, E., *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1999.

is a mind – no pure mind and no pure body. The mind continuously flows and dovetails to the body and the body also interpenetrates the mind.

The mind/body problem therefore is just a matter of logic and ontology and nothing more. When the ontology and logic are properly tackled the mind/body would fizzle out.

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JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU’S “COMMON GOOD APPROACH,” “GENERAL WILL,” AND “COMMUNAL LIFE” AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

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Abstract: *This article investigates the ethical and social philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, specifically his concept of “communal life” rooted in the “common good approach”, in the context of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The aim is to explore how Rousseau's ethics-social philosophy has contributed to the promotion of the common good approach, as well as the implications that this approach has for attaining peace between Israel and Palestine. Although, the paper does, however, concede that there are hurdles, such as historical grudges, power disparities, and ideological divides, it argues that Rousseau's concepts could serve as a roadmap for a peaceful conclusion in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine by promoting mutual recognition, conversation, and a shared vision for a just and inclusive society. The study recommends and concludes that a long-term commitment to discussion, reconciliation, and equality is essential for achieving sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East.*

Keywords: *The Common Good Approach, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Communal Life, Philosophy, Religion, Music, Art, Israel-Palestine, Peace.*

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Introduction

Forming a social concept that governs the relationship between individuals and society has proven to be a contentious issue. Despite its ethical nature, the law may struggle to establish or enforce norms in specific sectors, and it may not adequately address emerging challenges. Law and ethics deal with community living; ethics also addresses individual behaviour. Plato, who lived from 427 to 347 BCE, and Aristotle, who lived from 384 to 322 BCE, was two of the most influential ancient Greek philosophers who advocated the idea that human activities should foster ethical communal life.¹ The French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) is widely considered the most significant modern proponent of this “ethical communal life” rooted in the “common good” approach.² Rousseau believed that the “general will” of the people should govern the finest human society, generating what he thought was best for the people as a whole. Rousseau's viewpoint has had a significant impact on the modern world. This approach to ethical life highlights the networked features of society and emphasizes the development of compassion and respect for others, especially those who are more susceptible to harm. Because the common good tends to obscure moral boundaries, for instance, Mbiti's social ethic has a difficult time defining the individual's liberty, space, and social responsibilities.³ The Gyekye philosophy, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of individual liberty, rights, independence, and dignity as fundamental principles for the advancement and well-being of society.⁴

It becomes necessary to adopt a fresh strategy for resolving the dispute between Israel and Palestine to enable the United Nations to accomplish better results while decreasing the amount of damage it causes. Prioritizing rights and human security is crucial to achieve this. The “common good approach”, which has its origins in the ethical theory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, provides a perspective on how to resolve the dispute between Israel and Palestine, notwithstanding the difficulties that arise from historical, political, and cultural factors surrounding the conflict. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ethics-social philosophy has contributed to the promotion of the common good approach, as well as the implications that this approach has for the peace

¹ Plato, *Republic* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 462a; Kadri Simm, “The Concepts of Common Good and Public Interest: From Plato to Biobanking”. *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, vol. 20, no. 4(2011): 554.

² Jean-Jacques Rousseau. “Jean-Jacques Rousseau”. <https://iep.utm.edu/rousseau/> (Accessed 12 September, 2024).

³ John Mbiti, *African Traditional Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann Press, 1971), p.100.

⁴ K. Gyekye and Kwasi Wiredu, *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies 1* (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), 22.

process between Israel and Palestine. This article is divided into five primary components. The first section discusses Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophy of "Communal Life," which is based on the concept of the common good. The second section presents an examination of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The third section of the article presents a discussion of the common good approach. The third part examines the general will idea, while the last section of the paper investigates its implications for the possibility of peace between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a prominent thinker who lived in Europe during the Enlightenment period, which occurred in the eighteenth century. His first significant philosophical writing argued that the arts and sciences deteriorated character and righteousness. This led him to write his second essay, "The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality". He argued that while human beings are good by nature, historical events have tainted them.⁵ Throughout his later works, such as *Emile and the Social Contract*, Rousseau continued to express his admiration for the natural world. Because of the uproar that these paintings provoked in France, the authorities in Paris decided to ban them. After fleeing France, Rousseau eventually relocated to Switzerland, where he encountered challenges from both the authorities and his friends. Two defining characteristics of Rousseau's existence were his growing paranoia and his attempts to rationalize his life and work. Additionally, Rousseau influenced Immanuel Kant's work on ethics, played a significant role in the Romantic Naturalism movement, and championed political principles held by the leaders of the French Revolution.

In addition to making significant contributions to music theory, Rousseau was a gifted composer who authored seven operas. His Aunt Suzanne and Françoise-Louise de Warens were two of the artists who influenced him to combine late Baroque and classical stylistic elements. The Académie des Sciences, a scientific institution, rejected a musical notation system that Rousseau designed. It is impossible to deny Rousseau's influence on Western philosophy, especially the ethical framework that Immanuel Kant formulated. Kant's moral rule is based on rationality, while Rousseau's philosophy emphasizes nature and emotional pity. Kant's belief in the universalization of moral deeds inspired Rousseau's political theory, particularly the concept of the general will.⁶ Kant's beliefs influenced Rousseau's political thought. The Romantic Naturalism movement, which

⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Political Writings*, Quintin Hoare (trans.) and Christopher Bertram (ed.) (London: Penguin, 2012), 114.

⁶ J.S. Canon, "Three General Wills in Rousseau", *Review of Politics*, 84(2022): 354.

emerged in the latter half of the eighteenth century, was significantly influenced by Rousseau's theory, and the leaders of the French Revolution supported his works.

As a philosopher, Rousseau faced criticism for his model lifestyle, rejection of civilized existence, trust in collective will, and belief in social agency. Critics also pointed out his disregard for societal rules, his egotism, and his borrowings from Locke and Hobbes. Rousseau's association with nationalism and its excesses persisted throughout the Cold War era. However, contemporary Rousseau studies continue to discuss topics such as individual liberty, authoritarianism, and Rousseau's perspective on the family, particularly the roles that men and women play within the family. During his time as a renowned thinker of the Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau placed a strong emphasis on the significance of community life as well as the common good in his social philosophical viewpoints.⁷ He contended that individuals can obtain freedom and moral autonomy by participating in a collective social compact that aligns individual wills with the will of the general population, to achieve justice, peace, and the well-being of society.

The Israel-Palestine Conflict

According to Scott-Baumann, in 1882, the entry of Jewish immigrants into Palestine coincided with the emergence of Zionism in Europe, which led to the beginning of the battle in Palestine.⁸ Issued in 1917, the Balfour Declaration provided backing for the Zionist cause, leading to hostilities between Arabs and Jews.⁹ In 1936, an Arab uprising sought independence but ultimately faced defeat. In 1947, the United Nations partition plan was the impetus for a civil war. It was in 1947 when the Partition Plan was proposed, to divide Palestine between Arab and Jewish states.¹⁰ This was the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel's relations with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria became tenuous, which ultimately resulted in the Six-Day War in 1967. Following the conclusion of the battle, Israel was able to take control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, as well as the Golan Heights from Egypt. The Yom Kippur War, also known as the October War, took place six years later and resulted in an

⁷ C. Bertram, "Rousseau's Legacy in Two Conceptions of the General Will: Democratic and Transcendent", *Review of Politics*, 74(2012): 411.

⁸ Michael Scott-Baumann, *The shortest history of Israel and Palestine: from Zionism to Intifadas and the struggle for peace* (New York: The Experiment, 2023), 17.

⁹ The Center for Preventive Action, "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict> (Accessed 8 October, 2024).

¹⁰ Dov Waxman, *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 2.

unexpected attack on Israel from two different fronts. Israel and Egypt reached the Camp David Accords in 1979, ending their thirty-year conflict. It was not possible to reach a consensus over Palestinian self-determination and self-governance. 1987 was the year when Palestinians began their first intifada, which was a rebellion against the Israeli government.¹¹ An arrangement for Palestinians to rule over themselves in the West Bank and Gaza was established as part of the Oslo I Accords, which were signed in 1993 and served as a mediator in the conflict.¹² The Palestinians began the second intifada in the year 2000, and it continued until the year 2005. Despite criticism from the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, the Israeli government gave its approval in 2002 for the construction of a barrier wall that would surround the West Bank.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) participated in diplomatic negotiations based on its rejection of terrorist activities and its acknowledgement of Israel's "right to exist." Because of this, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had to concentrate on the 22 per cent of historic Palestine that was under Israeli military control in 1967.¹³ At the end of the 1970s, the leaders of the Palestinian people and Arab states were in favour of a two-state settlement. Israel's response was to organize an invasion of Lebanon in 1981 to remove the PLO from the list of potential negotiation partners. The Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988 explicitly enshrined this purpose, advocating for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel, argued that the United States' choice to engage in negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was a mistake.¹⁴ He stated that negotiating with the PLO implied admitting the existence of a Palestinian state.

The victory of Hamas in the 2006 parliamentary elections by the Palestinian Authority, which led to the elimination of Fatah, the long-standing majority party, and granted Hamas control over the Gaza Strip, intensified the division among Palestinians.¹⁵ Conflicts in the Palestinian territories in 2014 sparked a military confrontation between the Israeli military and Hamas, ultimately leading to an Egyptian-mediated cease-fire

¹¹ Sari Bashi, Stern-Weiner, Jamie (ed.). *Moment of truth: tackling Israel-Palestine's toughest questions* (New York: OR Books, 2018), 91.

¹² Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem Since 1967* (Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 67.

¹³ James L. Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: A History* (4th ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 6

¹⁴ Jamie Stern-Weiner, *Deluge: Gaza and Israel from Crisis to Cataclysm. Introduction* (London: OR Books, 2024), p.3.

¹⁵ Tareq Baconi, *Hamas contained: the rise and pacification of Palestinian resistance. Stanford studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic societies and cultures* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, (2018), p.89.

agreement. In 2022, Israel inaugurated a far-right administration that prioritized the growth and establishment of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, currently under Israeli occupation. On October 7, 2023, Hamas carried out a fatal strike against Israel, which resulted in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) embarking on aerial campaigns as well as military operations in the Gaza Strip.¹⁶ Since October 2023 the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have forced nearly two million Gazans to evacuate their homes and held over a hundred Israeli and foreign captives. The majority of attempts to liberate them have failed. Over 42,000 people have reportedly lost their lives in Gaza, and the Secretary of State of the United States, Antony Blinken, is currently mediating a truce and a deal to release hostages.¹⁷ There has been an upsurge in regional tensions throughout the Middle East as a result of the conflict.

The Common Good Approach

Throughout history, philosophers have developed the notion of the common good, dividing philosophical ideas into two distinct families: the substantive and the procedural varieties. While substantive conceptions emphasize the shared and beneficial nature of the common good for all members of society, procedural formulations emphasize the community's collective involvement in shaping a shared will. Ancient Greek philosophers like Aristotle and Plato first talked about the common good. Aristotle, Locke, Hume, Madison, and Rousseau are just a few of the philosophers who have agreed that the common good is the end of government and also a good for all citizens. This idea has been a recurrent topic throughout the history of political philosophy.

In his book *The Social Contract*, Rousseau makes the argument that the only way for a society to function is for its members to share interests and that the ultimate objective of any state should be to achieve the greatest possible good for all its citizens. According to his theory, the sovereign will invariably and consistently direct the will of a political community as a whole towards the common good. Rousseau distinguishes between the will of the general population and the will of all people, emphasizing that political authority gains legitimacy only when it aligns with the general population's will and serves the common good. Islamic political thinking frequently invokes the concept of the common good as a fundamental element underpinning divine law.¹⁸ This legislation encompasses ideas that

¹⁶ Rasha Khatib, Martin McKee and Salim Yusuf, "Counting the dead in Gaza: difficult but essential". *The Lancet*, vol. 404, no. 10449(5 July 2024): 237.

¹⁷ Khatib, 237.

¹⁸ Louis Dupre, "The Common Good and the Open Society". *The Review of Politics*, vol. 55, no. 4(2009): 689.

pertain to the public interest. Conversations about citizenship, equality, and tolerance bring up this idea in contemporary Islamic discourse. Within the framework of deliberative democracy, participants regard the common good as a regulative ideal and strive to bring it into existence. This distinct feature differentiates deliberative democracy from aggregative conceptions of democracy, which are simply concerned with preferences.

Rousseau distinguished the concept of individual private choice from the concept of the common good, which he believed citizens could achieve through active commitment.¹⁹ Political authority could only be legitimate if it served the people and the common good, making the state a moral society. A new definition of the term “common good” has emerged in the modern age.²⁰ It is now understood to refer to the collective good of a social group, the combined effect of people's goods, or an ensemble of conditions supporting individual benefits. On the other hand, its association with an engaged and public-spirited citizenry has cast doubt on the common good's relevance to contemporary politics. The common good concept posits that community action and active involvement are more likely to achieve freedom, autonomy, and self-government than individual self-interest.²¹ Locke's notion of citizenship was more individualistic and less organic than Rousseau's. Rousseau's conception of citizenship emphasized the state as a moral person whose life is the union of its members; laws are acts of the public will; and its purpose is the liberty and equality of its people.²² Locke's conception of citizenship was more individualistic and more organic.

Religion plays a fundamental role in the human worldview due to its firmly established presence in both daily life and the way people perceive their surroundings. For instance, Mbiti asserts that characterizing the religious convictions and customs prevalent in human civilizations is impossible due to their conceptualization in terms of cosmic drama.²³ On the other hand, he indicates that there are more commonalities than differences concerning religious views, given that every individual adheres to human own unique religious system. When individuals come into contact with one another, it is possible for them to spontaneously interchange religious thoughts and actions, regardless of whether or not there is organized missionary work taking place. Rousseau's idea of secular or civil religion has been contentious due to its argument that genuine Christianity

¹⁹ J. Cohen, *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.8.

²⁰ Antonio Argandona, “The Common Good”. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2011. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1947309> (Accessed 18 October, 2024).

²¹ Argandona, 19.

²² Hansong Li, “Timing the Laws: Rousseau's Theory of Development in Corsica”. *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, vol. 29, no. 4(2020): 662.

²³ Mbiti, 1971 *op. cit.*, p.100.

is insufficient for building patriotism and social solidarity. Rousseau's civil religion asserts the presence of an ultimate being, the afterlife, the idea that the just will flourish, and the sacred character of the social contract and laws. The ability to tolerate others is a prerequisite for citizenship, but individuals who insist on receiving salvation from sources other than their church cannot be citizens. A just state is characterized by consensus regarding the framework of religious beliefs, with adherents of many faiths affirming the dogmas that make up this structure. One of the most prominent modern approaches to deliberative democracy is epistemic democracy, which offers a cognitivist interpretation of the concept of the common good.²⁴ Published in 2004, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* offers a concise summary of contemporary Catholic social teaching on the common good. The Compendium defines the common good as the aggregate of societal conditions that make it possible for individuals to achieve their fulfillment in a more complete and uncomplicated manner. Pope John Paul II published *Veritatis Splendour* in 1993, and Pope Francis published *Laudato Si'* in 2015. These publications emphasize the common good in the context of the value of integrity, honesty, fairness, temperance, and solidarity in political leadership.

Mbiti's beliefs about spoken language, country people, and peoples emphasize the idea of a "common culture" as a vital trait that defines every person.²⁵ He believes that a group's members share a common history, often tracing it back to the first human beings created by God or the nation's founders. This particular line of lineage is necessary to preserve a sense of solidarity and nationhood. As far as Mbiti is concerned, the manifestation of a shared culture might take the form of actions, morals, ethics, social behaviour, and material things.²⁶ Each person maintains areas of differentiation, such as the family, age groupings, special persons, marriage practices, customary systems of governance, and political personages. Each person also maintains their own unique social and political organization.

The General Will

Both a democratic conception, in which the general will is the collective decision of the citizens, and a transcendent interpretation, in which the general will is the citizens' shared interest in conceptualization from their actual desires, are the two primary interpretations of Rousseau's

²⁴ K. Morrell and N. Harrington-Buhay, "What is governance in the public interest? The case of the 1995 property forum in post-conflict Nicaragua". *Public Administration*, vol. 90, no. 2(2012): 414.

²⁵ Mbiti, 1971 *op. cit.*, p.100.

²⁶ Mbiti, 1971 *op. cit.*, p.100.

consideration of the general will.²⁷ Rousseau's account is characterized by ambiguity and tension. The present epistemic notions of democracy frequently refer to these interpretations, which have had a significant impact on political thought. For the universal will to be general, Rousseau believed it must come from everyone and apply to all. These are both formal and substantive components of the situation. In a formal sense, the law must be comprehensive in its enactment and universal in its reach. This will enable citizens to demonstrate their support for laws that protect the common interest in an unbiased manner and are neither oppressive nor intrusive. However, to meet this criterion, citizens' circumstances must significantly resemble each other.

In his work, Rousseau proposes the existence of three distinct kinds of wills: individual wills, common wills, and corporate wills. A well-ordered society has no conflict between the general population's will and the individual's because people have accepted that justice and self-interest require subordination to a law that protects their liberty.²⁸ On the other hand, a lack of sufficient knowledge or the refusal of virtuous individuals to accept public interest-demanded behavioural constraints may prevent many communities from possessing this well-ordered nature. Dividing the political community into factions, each capable of imposing its own collective will on the state as a whole, is another form of political failure. The Social Contract explores the general will's origins and relationship to citizens' private wills.²⁹ Rousseau believes that individuals contemplating their self-interest, constrained by the constraints of universality and generality, evolve the general will. The formation of the general will, he believes, require first and foremost citizen virtue. The lawmaker figure, which is expected to instill a feeling of group identity in new citizens, is faced with a challenge as a result of this.

Rousseau posits that excellent laws foster the development of good citizens. However, the enactment of good laws requires the will of good citizens and their approval by the assembly. The psychological shaping of institutions poses a challenge, as citizens forming a new state may lack the moral qualities essential for establishing good laws. The role of a legislator is a complex one, as it necessitates manipulating the desires of their constituents, giving them the illusion of freedom of choice without providing

²⁷ Canon, 2022 *op. cit.*, p.362.

²⁸ Isaias Ezequiel Chachine, "Community, Justice, and Freedom Liberalism, Communitarianism, and African Contributions to Political Ethics". 2008. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:172042/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (Accessed 14 October, 2024).

²⁹ Christopher D. Wraight, *Rousseau's The Social Contract: A Reader's Guide* (London: Continuum Books, 2008), 61.

them with tangible benefits. Critics have painted the characters in question in a negative light, questioning their origins and the methods by which they acquired the knowledge and virtue necessary for their roles. The position of the legislator in such a society presents a problem of regression, as it raises questions about the formation of the legislator and the education of the tutor. Despite Rousseau's attempt to demonstrate the idea's relevance by citing historical figures like Lycurgus, it appears to be a tenuous argument.

The Implications for Israel-Palestine Peace

Several factors, including power disparities, radical ideologies, historical and ideological differences, and external interests, are challenging Rousseau's vision of peace in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Since the historical accounts of Israelis and Palestinians are defined by opposing claims to territory, religion, and cultural identity, it is difficult to develop a collective general will. This makes it far more difficult to reach a consensus. The disproportional distribution of power in the conflict, notably between Israel and Palestine, makes it more difficult to achieve fairness. It is possible that external entities with vested interests, such as the United States and neighbouring Arab countries, have agendas that are not in alignment with the common benefits of both populations. Radical sections on both sides may oppose the concept of a shared society based on equality and mutual respect. These factions may perceive compromise as a danger to their collective identity. The application of Rousseau's ethical-social philosophy to the conflict between Israel and Palestine reveals several implications for both societies that are working toward achieving peace. Rousseau's philosophy underscores that achieving the common good is a continuous process rather than a single goal. A long-term attitude toward reconciliation, peacemaking and peacebuilding, and mutual respect is required to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict, which has deep-seated historical origins. Consequently, this indicates that even after the formal peace deal has been reached, both cultures will need to continue working toward tolerance and collaboration, with a particular emphasis on social integration, and efforts to reconcile.

Through the imposition of penalties for the continuation of the *status quo*, a rights-based principle rooted in the common good approach to the conflict between Israel and Palestine has the potential to drastically improve the situation. Taking this strategy would make the United Nations or the United States of America a more credible mediator, which would provide the leaders of both Israel and Palestine the ability to agree.³⁰ Given that both Palestinians and Israelis have expressed scepticism towards the United

³⁰ Micah Harris, "Noah Webster and the Influence of Rousseau on Education in America, 1785–1835". *American Political Thought*, vol. 13, no. 4(2024): 509.

States intervention, this could potentially create a credibility gap. The centring of rights could inspire public confidence and generate momentum towards reaching a political accord. At the moment, neither Israeli nor Palestinian leaders have any reason to establish political constituencies that would support a negotiated solution between the two populations.³¹ The United States' approach failed to impose tangible costs on right-wing nationalist views, leading political parties to commit to an unsuccessful peace process without facing any consequences. If Israeli actions that violated rights and earlier agreements came with costs connected to the relationship between the United States and Israel, it would require a recalculation and encourage politics that are more susceptible to political bargaining. Implementing a rights-based strategy could correct the power imbalance and provide Palestinians the agency to strengthen international consensus over their rights. It is also possible that this will encourage Israel to assume its responsibilities as an occupying power with greater seriousness and to negotiate a resolution to the conflict that is by the standards of international legitimacy. This approach to the resolution of the dispute also offers the possibility of reinforcing American aims and interests on issues that extend beyond the Middle East.

Territorial issues, national identities, as well as historical grievances are the root causes of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. To promote self-determination rooted in the common good approach, it could be suggested that a peaceful conclusion should acknowledge the rights and sovereignty of both Israelis and Palestinians. To accomplish this goal, we could use a bi-national or federal structure that strikes a balance between rights without allowing them to dominate one another. Rousseau is a proponent of justice in a communal society, and he addresses oppression systems such as the growth of settlements, military occupation, violations of human rights, and uneven access to resources. In this vein, prioritizing the common good promotes the idea of equal treatment, opportunity, and resource access for Palestinians and Israelis. The principles of autonomy, sovereignty, and equal rights for both the Palestinian and Israeli populations must form the foundation of the political resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem. It is necessary to put a stop to Israel's illegal occupation as well as annexation of Palestinian territory to achieve this goal. Furthermore, we must establish a sovereign and independent state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel. To ensure the mutual security of both peoples, it will be necessary to establish cooperative security arrangements, founded on equal sovereignty and territorial integrity, and supported by international agreement. The establishment of a Palestinian state and the termination of Israel's illegal

³¹ Uri Ben-Eliezer, *War over Peace: One Hundred Years of Israel's Militaristic Nationalism* (University of California Press, 2019), p. 85.

occupation of Palestinian territory should be prerequisites for the full normalization of ties with Israel in the region.

We can use Rousseau's notion of general will to suggest that Israelis and Palestinians should strive to cultivate mutual understanding and discussion, prioritizing peace and coexistence over historical transgressions.³² It is possible to apply this strategy, which is founded on the concept of shared humanity and communal benefit, to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, to foster open debates and a shift in cultural norms.³³ Rousseau placed a strong emphasis on the incorporation of citizen participation into decision-making processes, which applies to both the Israeli and Palestinian communities. There should be widespread participation from all sectors for a peace accord to be successful. Shared values and collective aims must form the foundation of this participation, which should involve marginalized groups, actors from civil society, community organizations, and ordinary citizens. When it comes to regional security, new kinds of inclusive discussion and cooperation will be required to achieve sustainable peace in the area. To satisfy the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, it is necessary to take initiatives, such as recognizing the State of Palestine and gaining full membership in the United Nations. Implementing a restricted version of statehood would not provide security to either the Palestinians or the Israelis. The governance arrangements in Gaza should support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination by adhering to international law. There should be respect for the democratic processes in Israel and Palestine and implement targeted measures and penalties in response to the systemic abuses of international law.³⁴ To successfully resolve the issue, all diplomatic efforts should be based on international law and equity, and all states should consistently apply these principles.

Rousseau draws a comparison between painting and music, arguing that the sentiments underlying the sounds are what captivate the listener. He contends that the formal aspects of these disciplines, including chords and notes, are what bring them to life and maintain the interest of audiences. Rousseau considers music to be a language, a customary sign system that necessitates expertise to decode and comprehend. The French philosopher Rousseau held the belief that music is a natural representation

³² Steven T. Engel, "Rousseau and Imagined Communities", *The Review of Politics*, vol. 67, no. 3(2005): 516.

³³ Zaha Hassan and Yousef Munayyer, "Approaching Peace: Centering Rights in Israel-Palestine Conflict Resolution", 2021.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2021/04/approaching-peace-centering-rights-in-israel-palestine-conflict-resolution?lang=en> (Accessed 4 October, 2024).

³⁴ Adam M. Garfinkle, *Politics and Society in Modern Israel: Myths and Realities* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), p. 61.

of human feeling that is capable of transcending both language and societal barriers. He thought that music had the power to bring people together by facilitating the sharing of emotional experiences and thereby building solidarity, empathy, and peace.³⁵ Furthermore, he believed that music might serve as a medium for moral teaching to elevate the spirit and enhance human behaviour. He thought that music, when coupled with straightforward and organic melodies, had the potential to foster honesty and virtue, hence diminishing society's corruption and inequality. The concept of the social contract, which Rousseau proposed, emphasized the significance of harmony between people and that of society. He thought that music had the potential to serve as a mode of communication within society, one that could bring about greater harmony and peace by bringing individual feelings and acts into alignment with the larger moral and social order.³⁶ Rousseau advocated for the simplification of music to ensure its understanding and experience by individuals from all social classes. People also acknowledged the significant role of music in public life and rituals, especially during national festivities and civic rites.³⁷ He believed that music had the potential to be a potent instrument in the process of forming communal identities and fostering social harmony. Rousseau's emphasis on emotional sensibility and social compassion reflected his philosophical concerns about human nature and society. We believe and posit that music could restore Israel and Palestine to their natural state, fostering peace, compassion, and solidarity with one another.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that Rousseau's philosophy offers a valuable ethical framework for understanding the conflict between Israel and Palestine in the context of attaining sustainable peace. Rousseau's emphasis on the common good, community life, and the general will suggest that shared ideals, justice, and equitable participation can build peace. The actual execution of Rousseau's ideas in the context of Israel and Palestine, on the other hand, presents major problems. These challenges include deeply ingrained historical divisions, power disparities, and the impact of other players. Rousseau's common good approach continues to be an effective instrument for understanding how peace could be accomplished,

³⁵ R. Douglass, *Rousseau and Hobbes: Nature, Free-will and the Passions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 39.

³⁶ Julia Simon, "Singing Democracy: Music and Politics in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Thought." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 65((2004): p.440.

³⁷ Esther Mavengano and Tobias Marevesa, "Contemporary Development Ethics from an African Perspective". In *Zimbabwean Politics and Development: An Ubuntu Perspective* (Springer Nature: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), p.73.

not through dominance or division, but rather by working together, equal treatment, and a common dedication to the well-being of all individuals involved.

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THE ARCHAIC CERAMIC AND ILLYRIAN NUMISMATICS AT THE KING MONUN'S TIME IN DYRRAH

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Abstract: *This scientific research aims to analyze, in the anthropological-semiotics aspect, how the archaic ceramic art was developed and empowered, and above all, the first cutting of an autonomous currency made by the Illyrian tribe of Taulants, from V-VII century B.C. The Taulants resided in the city which was established since in its origin from the father of all the divinities, Hercules, Known as Dyrrah (Dyrrachium/Durrës). The scientific study focuses deeply on a specific period, which is closely related to the reign of King Monun in the territory of the Illyrian tribe of Taulants. The conquest of Dyrrachium by King Monun brought radical changes to the economic, cultural and social development of the city at that time. Such a development is evidenced by archaeological discoveries in the underground of today's Durrës, where a great variety of clay vessels and coins have been found, which are identified with the symbol and inscription of King Monun.*

The methodology used is that of comparative analysis with the artifacts found underground in present-day Durrës and historical-archaeological data during the reign of King Monun.

Keywords: *Illyrian, archaic, ceramic, description, mythology, iconography esthetics, numismatics.*

Introduction

The scientific study on archaic ceramics and Illyrian numismatics during the reign of the Illyrian king Monun, analyzes all the developmental stages of these two important sectors for the economy and trade of the city of Dyrrachium at that time.

What this scientific study seeks to highlight are the diverse elements, be they figural or decorative, for the decoration of clay vessels, be it in the knowledge of the numismatics of King Monun. The staters of this time period testify to us thanks to the inscriptions that we can identify the name, or the identity of the person found on these coins. Inscriptions that

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according to this research and comparative scientific analyses lead us to the name of King Monun.

Although we do not possess much information and historical data about this Illyrian ruler named Monun, again what speaks more than anything are his coins. Coins which, thanks to archaeological discoveries in the territory of present-day Durrës, are the only direct legacy of his existence and representative of a bright economic, social and cultural period for the city of Durrës where he reigned.

Among the data, or written historical sources of the 2nd-3rd centuries AD, are those of the traveler and geographer Pausanias and those of the historian Justin (*Marcus Iunianius (or Iunianus) Iustinus*) of the Antonine period (adopted Roman emperors), the latter of which refers to the lost writings of the Roman historian Pompeius Trogus of the Augustan period. Based on these historical writings and above all on the archaeological discoveries in the underground of Durrës, we manage to reconstruct the physiognomy and general scope of the reign of King Monun and consequently the economic, commercial, political, social and cultural situation in the Western Balkans during his rule. King Monun was a powerful ruler, his power and influence was extraordinary in the territory of Durrës, but also in the entire Western Balkans of the Adriatic around 280 BC. His power was so great that it had an impact on foreign policy, especially in the conflicts between Epirus and Macedonia, and not only, since he also had an important role in the course of the Celtic migration movements.

By minting his coins, King Monun further increased his power and influence, important for the reconstruction of the territorial sphere of power in the city of Durrës. On the staters of Monun, the abbreviations ΔY are easily distinguished on the back of the coins, which indicates that these coins were minted in Dyrrhachium, today's Durrës in Albania. With its scheme, the coin follows the previous unchanged types of coins of the city. The only difference compared to the old series is that now, Dyrrhachium came under the control of King Monun, the name of the ruler and his title as king were added to the coins.

This scientific study not only proves the historical chronology of the development of pottery and coins minted in the city of Durrës during the reign of Monun. What is really important has to do with the positioning of the Illyrian king Monun, who emphasizes his Illyrian and not Greek affiliation, having a royal title on the coins minted in Durrës which prove that he was an equal ruler alongside other non-Illyrian dynasties in the Illyrian peninsula at that time and today known as the “Balkans”.

Unlike the Hellenic kings of his time, Monun did not have coins minted with his portrait, but simply added his name to a coin that had already existed for some time. After Monun's death, Dyrrhachium regained its

independence. The city continued to mint the same type of coin, without the name of the king, but with the names of the city officials and to produce the same pottery typology rich in figural compositions with the very high-quality clay that was found passively in the hills of Durrës.

Therefore, this scientific study is important for researchers of archaeology, Albanian cultural heritage, visual art historians and anyone who wants to know a piece of the glorious history of the city of Durrës in antiquity with the reign of the Illyrian king Monun.

Ceramic

From all the archaeological discoveries that have been made in Dyrrah, ceramic represents the largest part in numerical quantity and in the infinite typological diversity of the found ceramic certainly is in itself depending on the function. Relying and being found in front of this ceramic which pertains to a very important period of time, it would be best to classify it in three specific groups:

1. The first group includes all the ceramic productivity with the a typology of packaging containers that were used as urns.
2. The second group is the one that includes all productivity of daily usage containers/dishes of an average size such as: kitchen utensils, glasses, water tanks (*katruve, panazore, shtama*), pitchers for olive oil, salt etc.
3. The third group, which is somewhat special regarding the materials involved. These materials are: *minium*^[1a] (*small decorative painting set before the first letter of a paragraph*), some writing-paintings which had an inventory function for children tombs and the *ex voto suscepto*^[1a] (*object donated in honor of a divinity due to a miracle received from that very divinity*) for the worship of divinities¹.

The division of the Illyrian archaic ceramic into three groups creates many typological-shaped variants and their scientific study is always important.

Using a chronological order among the groups mentioned above, in the first group where included were the Archaic storing containers: Pitosa, Craters, Amphoras and Hydrias etc². After these containers were first used to store food, they would assume another function, as urns *cinis-eris*^[1a] (*a vase made of stone, marble, bronze, glass or ceramic used to hold the ashes of a dead person*) inside the necropolis premises. Being in front of this fact, we realize that *cinis-eris* under the anthropological perspective are much

¹ H. Hidri, *Shtatë mbreterit Taulantë*, Globus R, Tirana, 2008, pp. 63-64.

² Ibid., p. 64.

older than the *minimum repertorium*^[1a] (letter/image always placed in front of an initial paragraph, which served as its decoration; usually found inside gospels and antique manuscripts) that was used later on in the Illyrian culture. Under the lens of this analysis for understanding better the use of the massive pithos which served as family urns, it is believed that they belong to the second half of the VII century B.C.

The second group of ceramics, considered to be urns of Ionic style, belong to the same period of time as those of the first group, but they were created a little later, meaning during the last quarter of the VII century B.C. The rest of the archaic ceramic series as: Dinosas, craters, amphoras, jerries and hydria, become part of a massive usage in the Illyrian culture of Dyrrah from the end of the VI century B.C.³. To the same period belongs even the *cinis-eris*^[1a] (a vase made of stone, marble, bronze, glass or ceramic). It was used to hold the ashes of a dead person. It had thin borders and it was composed by a full set of table dishes. According to the Illyrian tradition it was a custom which served not to always have there the presence of the passed away family member. The archaic ceramic of Dyrrah, as an anthropological phenomenon, was established during the last quarter of the VII century B.C. As part of the archaic ceramic of Dyrrah, in general lines, they maintain the same shape and esthetic, but at the same time they have distinctive elements among them such as: the clay baking and the decorative style over their external surface.

The typology of the Illyrian ceramic is also enriched by from the containers of the Korkyro-Corinthis style, which because of the archaeological discoveries in the antique arena of Dyrrah, from a very important collection. In this collection the largest part of it is represented by small table dishes and those of daily use, about 13 types also enriched with their variations. Considered by an anthropological esthetic aspect, the technique and the decorative style of the Illyrian archaic ceramic is very special and native as well. Their decorations do not configure people or scenes from daily live habits. The decoration style of the vases, urns, amphoras and of all the productivity in ceramic is based on motives of geometrical shapes using a vivid diversity of forms in a fresh combination with various parallel, curved, zigzag lines drawn horizontally or vertically. The colors that are more evident and create a *stilus indigenae*^[1a] (our style) are the black and the red of the lacquer technique and the black lacquer is also used to finish up these motives in these motives in a form of rays. It all makes this decoration style very special and native of the Illyrian culture. another category which assumes a considerable importance in the anthropological-stylistic analysis of the archaic period in the Illyrian culture, who were the ancestors of the Albanians of today, are: Ojnohe, Olpe,

³ E. Gahi, *Gli Iliri*, vol. I, Edizioni FRAMA SUD, Modena, 1981, pp. 158-159.

Ariballe and Skyfosa (refer to the illustrative pictures) which are masterly decorated and have a brilliant elegance showing animals figures. The compositional dynamic, the diversity and the painting originality (truthfulness) of these animals in the above mentioned objects stand out the *non-fiction*^[la] (*real, not from fantasy*), element which is not found in the small/average sized pottery decoration. The pre-mentioned pottery is totally decorated with geometrical motives.

The realization techniques with animals and scenes from daily life are executed through the incision on slender clay and the final result in ceramic vases is obtained from the Illyrian masters by baking the clay in a perfect way. The masters created during the baking phase tonal effects, from light ocher in a yellow nuance to a dark gray or even to an English red. All this would create a *stilus unicum/eximum*^[la] (*a special style, unique; perfect*). Under the effect of an economical development and commercial exchanges with the nations around of that time, beside the local Illyrian ceramic, was also developing the Corinthian ceramic. However, what would enrich even more with new elements the Illyrian ceramic, would be the ceramic of the Greek Attic Style with typical black figures of the VII century B.C⁴.

The style of the archaic ceramic *Archaikos*^[el] (*signifies the initial phase of each historical process*) 700 – 490 years BC, is a period when art in ceramic and artistic productivity in general achieved high esthetic levels. In the productivity of the Attic ceramic is clearly noticeable that except the technique and the decorative style similar to the Illyrian-Corinthian one, there is a main distinctive feature from any other Greek or Illyrian center, which is the scarlet in orange color of their clay. The process followed during baking makes the clay become impressively resistant, almost metallic. After all these categories of the Dyrrahian ceramic and the Corinthian, Attic or Greek ones, around V century BC, starts the production of ceramic with a new technique with red figures. Ceramic with red figures is distinguished for its high quality of work and the dishes made during this period are the best achievement of the Attic style in the artistic point of view.

Although in the mutual commercial exchanges there was a mixture in styles and techniques within the Illyrian-Dyrrahian local ceramic and the Greek-Corinthian-Attic that was imported, the imitations on the Dyrrahian ceramic didn't reach the levels of the imported one. In the middle of the IV century BC began a new era for the Dyrrahian ceramic. The contact with production schools and known centers in Sicily, Apulia, Lucania and Campagna (gave) brought a new physiognomy and dexterity to the techniques used by the Dyrrahian masters for producing their ceramic⁵.

⁴ A. Stipčerić, *Ilirët (Historia, jeta, kultura dhe simbolet e kultit)*, Botimet Toena, Tiranë, 2002, pp. 115-398.

⁵ E. Gatti, *Gli Iliri*, vol. II, Edizioni FRAMA SUD, Modena, 1982, pp. 286-287.

Getting in contact with important production centers in the Apeninian peninsula beyond the Adriatic sea and always based in the known models with red figures of the Hellenistic ceramic, in Dyrrah in the second half of the IV century BC and above all during the last quarter of this century (330-300 BC), the over whelming category would be that of average size dishes/containers and in first plan would stand out scenes and figures of the Illyrian-Greek-Roman mythology. Made in ocher-pink clay with special sugete-s^[fr] (faded color) these ceramics would be the echo of the pantheon of glory for the ceramic masters of Dyrrah. The granted development of handy-craft during the archaic period became intensive and there was on increase in demand for containers of special typologies which were massively produced such as: Wedding Calpidas, balm Lekits, amphoras and the trophy Peliks for young athletes.

This new productivity, not only shows another level of welfare during this period through these luxurious containers, but it also presents topics related to the function⁶. After an *excellentis*^[la] (*excellent, perfect*) achievement, in the end of the IV century BC, we notice that this category loses its initial intensity and it goes toward a standardization and quality decline. So, in the second half of the IV century BC the Lekits were especially produced for sanctuaries and as oil containers used by athletes⁷. In fact, the Lekits which were decorated with various relief figures using mash decors, would be their best during the last phase of the archaic era (330-300 BC). From the archeological discoveries we learn that the ceramic with red figures has been accompanied along its way in parallel with another style of Gnatia and Kalen type. The characterizing shape is the same as in the ceramic with red figures, where mostly preferred from the population and masters of the time containers such as Hydria, Pelike-s, Situla, Ojnohe-s, bottles, Epiksis, Askos etc⁸. A typical shape would assume all the open containers of overage size used as table dishes such as: Kiliks, plates and soup bowls (or pots). The Kalen style includes the Fialas and Pateras. In both Kalen and Gnatian styles the external decor is the same, with *florae*^[la] (*floreal, flowers*) motives, where more distinguishable are ivy or bay leaves that twirl around the neck up to the edges of the vase. Inevitable in the decoration of these ceramic's external surfaces is the great variety of animals and birds which is proof for a rich fauna present in the Illyrian territory such

⁶ Ph. Bruneau, *Ceramique Hellenistiques et Romaines, Centre de recherches d'histoire ancienne*, vol. 36, Paris, 1995, p. 120.

⁷ A. Dhima, *Elementi antropo-tipologjik Ilir në nekropolin e Dyrrahut*, MSAD, Tiranë, 1983, pp. 61-67.

⁸ H. Ceka, *Elementi Ilir në qytetet Dyrrachium dhe Apolloni*, Bish, Tirana, 1951, pp. 3-4.

as: rabbits, lynx, storks etc⁹. The used painting technique is the one with bright black loquer and the mixture with white, yellow, blue and red paste makes this ceramic really magnificent and esthetically special.

In the ceramic painted with black lacquer, produced in Dyrrahian manufactories, starts the use of decorative techniques with Kanelyra (type of paint) effects, which gives to the dishes a metallic look in their exterior. The typology of this ceramic in the III-II century BC in Dyrrah forms the largest part of the productions ever found(discovered) pertaining to the last period so called *stilus serverus*^[1a] (*regular, strict style*). It signs the beginning of a totally new style, the classic period, *regūla di Policleto*^[1a] (*the Polyklet rule, V century BC, 460-420*) in the Albanian territory. This analysis leads us to the conclusion of a time continuity throughout three centuries IV-III-II BC. They were massively used in graves and the inventory role for the life a deceased person. It meant they were dishes used from the late and thus they accompanied him in the afterlife. This tradition originally starts in the V century BC with containers of Attic style, continues along the IV century BC in complete parallelism with the ceramic with red figures and reaches a culminant intensity during the III century BC. The uniquenesses and distinctions of this ceramic from one period of time to another are classified according to the types, decoration style and the baking quality of clay. Ceramic with black lacquer and colorful pastry of the III century BC is divided into two important phases:

1. The first half of the III century B.C, which includes a very rich output in quantity as well as in quality of the painting technique with black and brown lacquer.
2. The second half of the III century B.C until the II century B.C; the ceramic production continues to have the some variety of repertory, but with sensitive quality decline.

The Hellenistic ceramic in Dyrrah is concluded by a category of simple containers considering the style, without decoration, lacquer and it is left in its original and natural color of clay. The group of average size containers which belongs to the simple Hellenistic ceramic in Dyrrah is represented by Ojnohe-s, Olpe-s, pots, Kantharos, Kotyle-s, Skyphos, Laginosas, Lotores, Gutuse-s, Askose-s, cups, plates, fruit bowls, miniatures etc. These containers were usually painted in the upper and lower part of the nozzle or left totally unpainted, just in the color of the baked clay. So the final phase of the so-called "*Hellenistic ceramics*", the category of cups decorated with reliefs and various subject perti nent to the II century B.C. and the ongoing, is completely produced from Illyrian masters of Dyrrah, not forgetting the

⁹ P. Alexandrescu, *Historia IV, La céramique d'époque archaïque et classique (VII-VI siècle)*, Editura Academică, Bucharest, 1978, pp. 40-42, 50-58.

ceramics of the Megare type (with geometrical shapes) which represent the last category of this period¹⁰.

The ceramics of the Megare type was produced in many Mediterranean cities, however the Megare cups made in Dyrrah can be immediately distinguished because of their typological diversity, their special decorations and rich reliefs all over the surface. We have a vivid and full proof thanks to the shapes found during archeological discoveries made in Durres. The decoration of these Megare cups have as a subject floreal motives, wheat-cobs, hunting scenes and sometimes we even see people (humans). Really special is the painting of the exterior side as well made with black lacquer which creates an illusive metallic effect. My argument that Dyrrah was a very important center, from the IV-II century BC, for a massive and qualitative production in the Mediterranean area, gets certified and confirmed by the deposits with materials that testify the existence of artisans and specialists. The produced a great variety of kitchen containers and table dishes such as: plates, bottles, pots etc. I can also mention Kids toys or even objects of *ex-voto*^[la] category (object offered to a divinity in its honor for a miracle received by him /her).

Numismatics

From the archeological discoveries made in Dyrrah we detect another very important element for the historical establishment of the Illyrian ancient civilization (*ancestors of Albanians*). It is the creation of the native currency in Illyria; a phenomena that emphasized even more the Illyrian identity in the archaic era of the IV century BC. The archaic Dyrrahian society in that period had a satisfying commercial exchange and cultural cooperation with southern Balcanic population such as the Greeks. This brought to a great economical improvement. As a result, they needed an exchanging object *pëcūniā*^[la] (*currency, money, cash*). It wouldn't be anymore as it used to, which means that goods were exchanged. This is exactly the phase when in Dyrrah were created the first cuttings of Illyrian currency. There were realized 10 monetary cuttings, 3 of which were made in silver and 7 bwere made in bronze¹¹. The currency cutting reaches its peak in the middle of the V century BC, called Statere.

The material used was silver. Illyrian coins can easily be identified because of the configuration sculpted in the front side showing a cow with its calf drinking milk and on the back we see a backround with squares filled with geometrical shapes. These were typical decorations found in the

¹⁰ P. Puppo, *Le coppe megaresi in Italia*, L'ERMA-di Bretschneider, Roma, 1995, pp. 147-148, 150.

¹¹ Sh. Gjongencaj, *Qarkullimi i monedhave të Korkyrës në Ilirinë e Jugut*, Iliria, Tiranë, 1984, pp. 172-179.

Illyrian ceramic. The decoration with geometrical shapes somewhat styled in an abstract way are the description of *Alcinous gardens-Alkínoös^[la]* ("alce"-strength/power; "noos-nous"-thought/idea, spirit; "the power of thought "is the meaning of Alcinous)¹²¹³ famous for his gardens full of fruit in every season¹⁴. This is a character that belongs to the Illyrian mythology (nowadays borrowed and presented as greek but in fact really discussed over the anthropological-cultural and historical-geographical studying optics; without a doubt this figure belongs to the Illyrian mythology because the territory where king Alchino and his people lived, was inhabited by Illyrian tribes such as Thesprots, Kaons and Molosians). Alchino was the king of the Feaci-s¹⁵ who lived in *locus amoenus^[la]* (in *hapiness, welfare and abundance*) and what proves my argument that they belong to the Illyrian culture is exactly the tradition and their values *xenia^[el]* (hospitality) described by Homer in "*Odyssey Scheria*" and the location in southern Illyria¹⁶. Standing in front of these facts and the configuration in the Illyrian coins it is clear that Alchino is part of the Illyrian mythology. Furthermore, these coins are an anthropological testimony for the Illyrian mythological evolution during the archaic era. The figure of the cow and the calf drinking milk belong to the Illyrian-Pelazg culture as a symbol of power and fertility.

The cow and the calf drinking milk is not the only element to be borrowed from the Pelazg-Illyrian mythology. In their coins the Illyrians had reflected even characters of the Greek-Roman mythology, creating through compositions a tow-starred shape inside a quad on the back side of the coin. This twin composition refers to Κάστωρ^[el] – *Castōr^[la]* (Kastori) and Πολυδεύκης^[el] – *Pollūx^[la]* (Poluksi)¹⁷¹⁸ (Castor and Polux) the twin boys of *Zeus* and Leda, also known as *Dioscuriorum* (known in the Greek-Roman mythology as protectors of the music, poetry and dance)¹⁹²⁰. This is the semiotic of twin stars formed by the incision of *Hercules^[la]* weapons. Hercules' is the earliest myth of Dyrrah' establishment. Analyzing the reflections on the coins of the Illyrian archaic era, the cow with the calf could

¹² J. Wilkes, *The Illyrians, the Peoples of Europe*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, New York, 1996, pp. 63-72, 127.

¹³ P. Grimal, *Enciclopedia della Mitologia*, seconda edizione, Garanti editore, Brescia, 2005, p. 32.

¹⁴ A. Shewan, *The genealogy of Arete and Alkinoos*, The Classical Review CR, Cambridge, 1925, p. 145.

¹⁵ L. Biondetti, *Dizionario di mitologia classica*, Baldini & Castoldi, Milano, 1999, p. 150.

¹⁶ A. Taccone, "Feaci", *Enciclopedia italiana Treccani*, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, 1932, p. 37.

¹⁷ Teocrito, *Idilli*, Libro, XXII, p. 24.

¹⁸ Orazio, *Ars Poetica*, p.147.

¹⁹ Pindaro, *Nemee*, Libro, X, p. 55.

²⁰ Omero, *Odissea*, Libro, XI, p. 300.

be related with Goddess Hera, too. According to the Pelazg mythology she was the protector of cow herds. She was even presented and described as a young cow in the book "*Illyad*" by Homer (Hera Akraia)²¹²².

The reflection of the cow is also to earlier habits when cows and oxes served as exchanging goods. If we relate it to this fact their use in the coins is connected to this function. The hypotheses over the symbolic of these incised figures on the Illyrian archaic coins of the V century BC have been taken from the Pelazg-Illyrian and Greek-Roman mythology. On the back side of the coins we often find reflected the garden of the three Hesperides-Egle, Ericia and Esperaretusa which symbolized the fruit of the golden apples tree (immortality) planted for the sake of the marriage between Goddess Hera and Zeus, king of Gods²³. The three hesperides (known as the 3 compassions in Roman mythology) became symbol of immortality thanks to Gea^[el]-Gaia^[sq], the goddess of mother earth which according to the *Θεογονία*^[el] Teogony of Esiodos²⁴ offered a branch with golden apples to the newly wedded couple Hera-Zeus. They planted it in the garden of the hesperides.

The archaic coins of this period are full of mythological figures. So we see reflections of the Pelazg Hera as protective Goddess of worriers or as cited by Homer-Hera Limenia. For the Pelazg goddess Hera, Euripid wrote about a legend where *Μήδεια*^[el]/*Medea buried her children in the cult of the Pelazg goddess Hera after they were killed. Hera had found her peace in Corynth* in the I century BC. The greek historian Straboni writes that *there had been heard many legends about the Pelazgian Hera and her cult in Corynth*²⁵ Hera had many common elements with Ἀθηνᾶ^[el]-Athena who was the protector of cities and olive groves²⁶. Another important coin of the archaic era was found in the territory of Dyrrah. We find in it reflected the symbol of Zeus with goat *Ἀμάλθεια*^[el] –Amalthea²⁷²⁸²⁹.

²¹ K. Kerényi, *Gli dèi e gli eroi della Grecia, il racconto del mito, la nascita della civiltà*, il Saggiatore, Milano, 1963, pp. 326-329.

²² Omero, *Iliade*, Libro, IV.

²³ K. Kerényi, *The Heroes of the greeks*, Thames & Hudson; New edition edition, London, 1978, p. 134.

²⁴ G. Semerano, *Le origini della cultura europea*, vol. II, Leo S. Olschki editore, Firenze, 1994, pp. 84-90.

²⁵ W. Mitford, *The history of Greece*, vol. III, Published by Timothy Bedlington, Charles Ewer and David Hale – Cornhill, Boston, 1823, pp. 160-172.

²⁶ E. McDermott, *Euripides' Medea; The incarnation of Diorder*, University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, London, 1985, pp. 106, 496-502.

²⁷ M. Blanche, "*The Sanctuary of Hera Akraia and its Religious Connections with Corinth.*" *Peloponnesian sanctuaries and cults: proceedings of the ninth international symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens*, Robin Hägg, ed. Stockholm, Stockholm, 2002, pp. 85-91.

²⁸ Diodoro Siculo, *Biblioteca Storica* (IV, 35; V, 70).

²⁹ Ovidio, *Metamorfosi*, Libro, IX, p.87.

On the forefront of the coin there's a goat head and above it is written "Eliria". On its back side there a two-blade axe and along both side of it is written "Zoti te ne"-God to us".

There's another coin cut in Dyrrah, unique in its Kind, which is a statere. On front it has incised Pegasus and the back it has Athena's portrait. This coin typology remains as the typical cutting of Dyrrah. Among the silver coin cuttings there have also been found typical symbols of Hercules and Pegasus. The coins cut in Dyrrah weighed 1/4 of the statere made in Corynth, however they kept the some symbolics and originality in presenting characters of Pelazg-Illyrian mythology³⁰. Comparing from a semiotic point of view, the Dyrrahian coins had a good productivity under the rule of king Monun who required these coins to be stamped with his name and symbols. This is the difference between the Dyrrahian and Corynthian coins. Coins produced in King Monun's time had the words "Bazileos Monuniou" and the city name (Dyrrahachion) abbreviated in ΔYP, DYR or DYRRA³¹.

The numismatics study along its analitical-semiotic way is full of surprise. The reflections on the coins transmit and testify about many dates which lack in the chronicals of ancient authors. Through these coins we have found out about the figure of king Monun. They tell us about the existence and power of this historical figure, while he reigned over the Taulants, the inhabitants of Dyrrah (today known as DURRËS)³². Starting from the middle of the IV century BC the Illyrian tribe of Taulants formed a powerful state in every aspect. It was established and empowered around the Dyrrah's center. After falling under the empowered around the Dyrrah's center. After falling under the pressure of on Illyrian invasion in 350 BC the city/state of Dyrrah totally fell under the political-economical and social-cultural dependence of Illyrians. Under the Illyrian invasion Monun became the new king and thanks to the victory against the city/state of Taulants he started to cut and produce a new version of coins with a cow and calf drinking milk on them.

This is personification of the legend of Basileos Monunion and it clearly shows that he invaded the tribe of Taulants, even though the written sources of that time remain almost completely silent. Being under the power of king Monun, Dyrrah is transformed and becomes the most prominent and dynamic center of Illyrians. Monun's rule and influence wasn't or temporary. On the contrary, it would last many years and from the archeological discoveries it seems that it lasted until he died. The coins cut during Monun's reign tell about his power. In a semiotic-symbolic analysis,

³⁰ Strabone, *Geografia*, Libro, VIII, p.75.

³¹ M. Tirta, *Mitologjia ndër shqiptarë*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë - Shtypëshkronja Mësonjëtorja, Tiranë, 2004, pp. 35-45.

³² N. Ceka, *Ilirët*, Migjeni, Tiranë, 2005, p. 113.

Monun didn't have a benevolent approach toward Dyr, the legend of the city, therefore he disregards it. To secure a dominant role he replaces it with a spear head which was the main attack weapon used by Illyrian fighters.

In fact from an anthropologic point of view, Monun was the first king in the history of Illyria who creates a phenomenon completely equalizing with the strong Corinthian economy. He released *monētae nostrum* (our coin), an absolutely autonomous monetary activity. This phenomenon is more present during 330-325 B.C. Monun's first coin dates around 350-330 B.C. It was a silver coin with a cow leaning its head down toward the calf that drinks milk from its breasts, all this on the front side. Over the cow there is incised a boar's jaw. On the back of the coin there is a square field divided in two and symmetrically decorated with granules and stems. Over two of the frame sides was written the king's name in genitive³³.

The coins used during Monun's reign were rich in symbols and various figures such as: the figure of the spear top/the mace, the *βουκράνιον*^[el] – *bucranium*^[la] (the bull's skull which originates in pagan temples, IV millennium B.C), the bull's head, the Kurrill (type of bird). In some other coins are shown the head of Hercules with lion leather, the figure of Zeus semi-nude sitting on a throne and holding an eagle on his right hand, a scepter on the left hand along with set of pearls, etc. In all my studies and researches done so far about the figurative content of Illyrian coins in Dyrrah, the conclusion is that the boar's jaw is the symbol of Monun, as an Illyrian King. But, no previous scientific research has explained or elaborated the symbolic meaning of the boar's jaw. So the rightful question that rises is: What does the boar's jaw symbolize?

In my opinion it relates to the cult of the mythical hero *Μελέαγρος*^[el] – *Meleagrus*^[la]³⁴. Meleager, this figure of Roman mythology, was the son of king Oineo and queen Altea of Caledony in Etholy. According to the legend, his father forgot to make a sacrifice to *Αρτέμιδος*^[el] – Artemis, therefore the furious goddess immediately sent a monster pig to wipe out Caledony. Meleager, very powerful, took over to kill the strong ferocious beast. After the killing, Artemis ignited an argument among the hunters about the boar's skin which resulted into a tragedy. Meleager killed his maternal uncles.

His mother cursed him for this tragedy³⁵. Another antiquary font tells that, according to Ovidio's *Metamorphoses* VIII, 267-546, where Meleager was born his mother was visited by the Moirai (fates) *Μοῖρα*^[el]. The Moirai, the three daughters of Zeus and Themis, Clothos-Lakes and Anthropa which predicted the prophecy, warned the mother. They told her that her son

³³ Ibid., p. 114.

³⁴ A. Ferrari, *Dizionario di mitologia greca e latina*, UTET, Torino, 1999, pp. 99-100.

³⁵ M. Zeqo, *Mbreti ilir Monuni dhe kulti i Meleagrit Shkruan*, Alba Project Networks, Tiranë, 2012, p. 1.

would only live until a brand, burning in the family hearth, was consumed by fire.

PUBLIO OVIDIO NASONE
Metamorfosi
Libro VIII

267 - Vagando per le città dell'Argolide, la fama aveva sparso notizia dell'impresa, e i popoli stanziati nella ricca Grecia, in caso di pericolo, invocavano l'aiuto di Teseo. E il suo aiuto chiese, con preghiere angosciate, anche Calidone, che pure aveva tra i suoi Meleagro: causa della supplica era un cinghiale, strumento di vendetta del rancore di Diana. Si racconta infatti che Eneo, per l'esito felice del raccolto, avesse offerto le primizie delle messi a Cerere, a Bacco il suo vino, e il succo d'oliva alla bionda Minerva. Onorate le divinità campestri, un ambito omaggio fu reso a tutti gli altri dei; solo gli altari della figlia di Latona, dimenticati, rimasero vuoti e senza incenso. Lo sdegno coinvolse gli dei. "Non lo subirò impunemente! Potranno dirmi senza onori, mai senza vendetta!" esclamò Diana; e per vendicarsi dell'offesa mandò nei campi di Eneo un cinghiale, grande quanto nei prati d'Epiro o nelle campagne di Sicilia non sono i tori. Di fuoco gli brillano gli occhi iniettati di sangue; ispide sul collo possente si ergono setole come rigidi aculei, **546** - foggia la bocca e, così mutate, le affida all'aria.³⁶

Overhearing, Meleager's mother doused and hid the brand in a crate only she knew about. After a long time, when Meleager grew up, he took part in the hunting for the ping of Caledony. It was fate, that along with Melager, in the hunting took part the beautiful archadian huntress Αταλάντη^[el] – Atalantis. Her beauty made Meleager fall in love³⁷. After killing the boar, Meleager took its skin and donated it to Atalanta as a love sign, but his uncles didn't appropriate it. His uncle Pleksip, not accepting Meleager's gesture, took back the boar's skin by force from Atalanta. Meleager got angry from his uncle's action and killed him. When Meleager's mother heard about her brother's murder committed by her own son, she felt desperate and took out the brand she had hidden and placed it upon fire. Thus when the brand burned all out Meleager died. The legend narrates that Meleager's sisters, after their unfortunate brother's death, cried so much and mourned lying over his grave. Artemis was deeply touched

³⁶ Omero, *Iliade*, Libro, IX, pp. 529-599.

³⁷ Pseudo-Apollodoro, *Bibliotheca*, Libro, I, p. 1-3.

by the women so she ended the pain and desperation of Meleager's sisters by turning them into birds called Meleagrides. In these birds feathers there were white spots that looked like tears³⁸.

This is an evidence of the strong impact that Meleager's cult had in Dyrrah during the rule of Monun. The second version is that of fighting scenes with the boar of Meleager's legend, found sculpted on a marble sarcophagus of the II century BC³⁹. This sarcophagus, magnificent for its dimensions, is not casually realized in that period of time. It is one of the most beautiful of the early period of Antonine, 140-150 BC. Now it is kept in the Capitoli Archaeological Museum in Rome⁴⁰. Through sculpted figures and the style of reliefs on this marble sarcophagus, is vividly confessed the powerful myth of Meleager. All the scenes are sculpted and composed in two levels on the external vertical surfaces of this monumental sarcophagus. There are figures such as Meleager and Atalanta shown in first plan and then there are others which appear flatter and overlapped. On both sides the sarcophagus is completed with the depicted faces of the Dioscuri brothers, Castor and Pollux. This means that the cult of Meleager in Dyrrah is synchronized with the Dioscuri cult. Without a doubt the sarcophagus was made in honor of a very important historic figure for the city. At this point we are found in front of a scientific issue. The cult of Meleager is compared and turned into a trophy for the military victory of Monun in the invasion of Dyrrah (the Calydonian boar is depicted on the coins of Dyrrah as a consumed being and it is symbolically represented by a jaw).

In this context Meleager's myth continues to speak through reflexions for six centuries, starting from the IV century B.C until the above mentioned sarcophagus is presented as a sculpted masterpiece of the myth. In a historical-anthropological point of view this aspect means that this important myth was never forgotten. Under the semiotic lens, the Roman era revives these Hellenistic myths and uses them metaphorically. After a detailed semiotic-historical analysis, the existence of king Monun's figure symbolics in his coins. About the magnificence and intelligence of the Illyrian king Monun tells even an unusual archeological discovery which comes as an inalienable testimony. This discovery is his helmet of Macedonian type. On its external surface it holds the identifying inscription "Bazileos Monunio" which makes the this helmet unique in its kind.

Certainly, neither this archeological testimony is random. Very important to be considered are also the historical circumstances when the Illyrian king, Monun of Taulants, succeeded to strengthen his power over

³⁸ Publio Ovidio Nasone, *Metamorphoses*, Libro, VIII, pp. 267-546.

³⁹ L. Biondetti, *Dizionario di mitologia classica*, Baldini & Castoldi, Milano, 1997, pp. 80-84.

⁴⁰ S. Sakari Telenius, *Athena-Artemis*, Omakirja, Helsinki, 2005, pp. 50-60.

the city of Dyrrah, not forgetting the interesting aspect of how he created connections with two other very prominent Illyrian kings, Glauk and Klit. King Monun transmits his reign history through the symbols of Meleager's myth, of course according to a context, metaphorical interpretation, logic and semiotic language of the Illyrian world.

Naturally arises the question: Why did the Illyrian king Monun chose to borrow (use) Meleager's myth?

[it]

«Ella dunque, stirpe divina, l'Urlatrice, irata, gli mandò contro un feroce cinghiale selvaggio, zanna candida, che prese a conciar male la vigna d'Oineo; molti alberi alti stendeva a terra, rovesci, con le radici e con la gloria dei frutti. L'uccise Melèagro, il figliuolo d'Oineo, chiamando cacciatori da molte città e cani, ché vinto non l'avrebbe con pochi mortali, tant'era enorme, e gettò molti sulle pire odiose.».

[en]

«So she, of divine descent, furious shouter, sent against him a ferocious boar, powerful paws, which destroyed the vineyard of Oineo (Oeneus); many high trees fell down on the ground, knocked down with roots and glorious fruit. Killed by Meleager, son of Oineo, calling hunters from many cities with dogs, there wouldn't be any victory with just few mortals, that huge it was, and many he threw over burning wood piles.».

(Homer, Iliad, book IX)

There are many reasons.

- Firstly, Monun used force to come to power on the city of Dyrrah.

In order to achieve his goal he certainly led a bloody battle. The fact he won against the city defenders makes me think that Monun was militarily much more superior than the locals. Thus the allegoric personification with Meleager's myth who defeats and kills the Calydonian boar is reasonable. The boar's jaw represents in a symbolic way Monun's victory against the people of Dyrrah.

- Secondly, through this allegory and a very important figure of the antique mythology, Monun aimed to leave his mark as a central figure who wrote Illyrian history in the IV century BC. The comparison to the mythologic hero, Meleager, made him a cult figure, as a victorious and indomitable sovereign. Similar attitudes of making cults is often found during the Hellenistic period. Atypical example of raising and personifying with historical figures of the antique mythology is Alexander the Great who identified himself with *Amnone* (the god of war, silent and mysterious; his iconography is the body of a man with a ram head or a falcon head

as it is found in the Egyptian mythology) Amon Zeus⁴¹.

The personification of king Monun with Meleager's myth can also be explored from the in this point of view *ἔτυμος ἐτύμος λόγος λόγος*^[el] (*Etynos-true, real, Logos-conversation, what studies the origin of a word. This explanation way is even found in the dialog between Socrate, Ermogne and Cratilo in "Socratico Cratylus" of Platon, 360 BC*) – etymologic⁴², because "M" is the first letter of the names of both these figures, king Monun and Meleager.

- Thirdly, the boar's jaw had another symbolic in the time when Monun reigned in Dyrrah. It has to do with the Helen settlers in Dyrrah who often strongly opposed the Illyrian king and time after time used to attack him considering him as a barbarian and evil man. In that period this kind of mentality about Monun was common among locals. According to them Monun was a threat for Dyrrah and its strong economical-cultural position. They compared Monun to the boar sent by goddess Artemis to destroy the Calydonian fields. At that time this comparison definitely addressed to the adaptation of the meaning and political designation that king Monun had given to himself. So the dangerousness of Monun during his reign is identified with that of the Calydonian boar. Exactly for *triumphus*^[la] (*victory, triumph*) the triumph of invading Dyrrah, Monun used the boar's jaw over the previous symbol in the coins where used to be the engraved figures of the cow and the calf drinking milk. This semiotic analysis makes sense completely when it comes to the coins of Monun.

However, on the back side of the coins there are other symbols still unexplained that are of big interest of study. After many studies I've done as I have explained before in this scientific research it results that the adornments and the geometric decorations inside the quad on the back of the coins represent the garden of Alkino, while the other two stars personify the two heroes, the Dioscuri twins⁴³. The Illyrian coins of king Monun are a rich "encyclopedia" full of symbols and mythological figures, where part of this diverse composition is aslo the father of all divinities, Hercules, legendary founder of Dyrrah⁴⁴. It is the reason why the Illyrian coins of

⁴¹ R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Roma. La fine dell'arte antica*, L'ERMA-di BRETSCHNEIDER, Roma, 1988, pp. 203-210.

⁴² G. Trogu, B. Belardini, P. Barbini, *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, L'ERMA- di BRETSCHNEIDER, Roma, 2000, pp. 337-341.

⁴³ A.B. Bosworth, *Alessandro Magno. L'uomo e il suo impero*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2004, pp. 220-243.

⁴⁴ F. Brezzi, *Dizionario dei termini e dei concetti filosofici*, Newton Compton, Roma, 1995, p. 50.

Dyrrah we find engraved Hereules' weapons making it a unique evidence for the coins of the IV century B.C. The symbolic of Kurill bird remains still unexplained.

Monun's coins are of primary importance in a historical-anthropological optic as well as in the cultural-political one because in them we can read the unwritten history and we understand the triumph of this great king who created the first cuts of autonomous coins. They were made with great imagination, using the figures of the biggest myths in antique mythology⁴⁵. The semiotics analysis explicates some of symbolics on these coins. So, on the cow's figure is engraved the boar's jaw that maybe is read as a totem of the dynasty of another Illyrian king, Glauk⁴⁶. Part of the groups are aslo the cuttings in bronze which belong to the III century B.C and they are divided into six types:

In front the figure of Ἡρακλῆς^[el]-Heraklès-Hercules (name composed by Ἡρα^[el] "Erë, fllad^[sq]" – κλέος^[el], "Wind", breeze and -Glory-Glory of wind, Greek mythological figure)⁴⁷ and on the back we find his weapons.

1. Zeus in front and the tripod symbol in the back.

2. Ἥλιος^[el] Hélios – Hēliūs,-i or Sol, is^[la] – Helio^[sq] – Heli'o (Greek mythological figure, the god of sun) in front along a ship in the back. It is a god that Homer himself would cover in praises in his "Iliad":

[grc]

« Ζεῦ πάτερ Ἴδηθεν μεδέων κῦδιστε μέγιστε,
Ἡέλιός θ', ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούεις,
καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ γαῖα, καὶ οἱ ὑπένερθε καμόντας
ἀνθρώπους τίνυσθον ὅτις κ' ἐπίορκον ὁμόσση,
ὕμεῖς μάρτυροι ἔστε, φυλάσσετε δ' ὄρκια πιστά.»

[en]

«Father Zeus, Ida's Mr, great and glorious,
Sun that sees all and hears all,
rivers and land, and You that in the underground
condemn to death all those who swear a lie,
Be you witness and protect pacts/ deals (agreements)»⁴⁸

⁴⁵ G. De Marinis, G. M. Fabrini, G. Paci, R. Perna, M. Silvestrini, "I processi formativi ed evolutivi della città in area adriatica", *Bar International Series 2419*, 2012, pp. 2-16.

⁴⁶ O. Picard, S. Gjôngekaj, "Drachmes d'Apollonia et de Dyrrachion dans les Balkans", *Revista Studia Albanica*, 1/2005, XXXVIII année, Tirana, pp. 139-154.

⁴⁷ B. Rossignoli, *L'Adriatico greco: Culti e miti minori*, L'ERMA-di BRETSCHNEIDER, Roma, 2004, pp. 290-291.

⁴⁸ H. Hidri, *Shtatë mbretërit taulantë*, Globus R, Tiranë, 2008, p. 72.

(Homer, *Iliad*, Book III, 276-280 B.C, pg. 91)

3. *Ἀφροδίτη*^[el] – *Afërdita*^[sq] – Aphrodite (a figure of Pelazg mythology, Goddess of love, beauty, sensuality, sex and gardens/ yards) in front of the coin and an eagle in the back⁴⁹.

4. *Νίκη*^[el] – *Nike*^[sq] – Niike (a figure of Greek mythology, Goddess of Victory) placed in front of the coins and palm branch engraved in the back.

5. A woman's bust in front and kadiceum in the back.

These coins belong to the period we king Mytil reigned (another glorious Illyrian king, successor of king Monun) which date in 270 B.C.

In these coins there was incised the name of king *Μύτιλος*^[el]-*ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΙΤΥΛΟΥ*, Bazileos Mytilus with his symbols such as: ax/ mace, bow and arrow⁵⁰.

The symbology reflected in Illyrian coins was very rich, just as those shown in the coins of picture 22, 23. As we can see in the background of the front side of the coins there is the symbol of the tripod. What was the meaning of the Tripod in that period of antiquity? The tripod was a symbolical gift for the Gods, so it was considered as one of the most precious and sublime of gifts (it was offered to guests or to the winners in sport races etc) In the coins of the last period the Tripod is presented with another symbol "swastika" or the rugged cross, which as know from different articles or studies, is a simple, abstract and primitive reflection from the esthetic aspect and it has symbolized the sun radiation, so it the symbol of the sun. In these coins we have a confirmation related to these two symbols that have been closely connected to each other⁵¹.

The "swastika" (卐) symbol wasn't just a sing or esthetic reflection but it also had an etymological meaning which is explained through a decoding I have done to these signs. They are translated into significant words and became an incoming key for a mysterious world of iconographic reading of the Illyrian coins. Through this decoding I managed to achieve an impressive result. In fact it has to do with a union of words *ΔΑΜΑ*^[el] – *GAMA-KËMBË*^[sq] – Gama-Foot, *ΝΩΝ/ΔΙΟΒ*^[el] or *ΔΙΟ*^[el] *DION-ZOT*^[sq] – God (*ΔΑΜΑ ΝΩΝ/ΔΙΟΒ*^[el] – *KËMBA e ZOTIT*^[sq] or *KËMBËT e ZOTIT*^[sq] is in plural form). Interesting is even the fact that when we see the so called Greek letter "gamma" it has a foot shape. Even the word mentioned above

⁴⁹ P. Holt, "The End of Trachiniai and the Fate of Heracles", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Athina, 1989, pp. 69-80.

⁵⁰ Omeri, *Iliade*, Libro, III, 276-280 p.e.re, p. 91.

⁵¹ P. De Vecchi, E. Cerchiari, *I tempi dell'arte*, vol. I, Bompiani, Milano, 1999, p. 77

in the beginning of my reasoning and explanation of the inscription just means KAMA-(Y) LRINON^[sq], Apollo's foot; Sun, Zeus, Dias foot.

Conclusions

Analyzing these two social-anthropological aspects, the archaic ceramic and the Illyrian numismatics in the city of Dyrrah, was certainly a courageous as well as impressive challenge. The travel (journey) through the ancient pentagrams of the Illyrian history was a total immersion in the antiquity world. A world full of surprises were through a semiotic reading filtration I managed to point out very important elements, starting my scientific research with the thesis which is an entrance in the history of establishment and development of the cultural-anthropological and social-political life in Dyrrah.

The ongoing of the research aimed the absorption of all the written information from other authors on this topic and the creation of a space for a confrontation of metaphysical ideas, thoughts and discoveries made so far on the archaic ceramic and the Illyrian numismatics in Dyrrah. During the research, always being based on thesis and antithesis, I was able to explain many particular elements of reflections and symbolics carried by the ceramic and Illyrian numismatic. They come today to us as a clear and complete evidence of the powerful development of the Illyrian tribe of Taulants from the VII to the III-II century BC. The most intense and significant part of this research obviously was the iconographic dismounting of decorative subjects in ceramic and above all in the autonomous coins cuttings of King Monun who thanks to his power succeeded to produce for the first time autonomous local coins. All this is information that I have discovered by decoding antique inscriptions engraved on these coins, I remind you of the cow and the calf drinking milk reflection, a typical Illyrian symbol, but not the only one, because these coins were an encyclopedia full of figures borrowed from the Pelazg-Illyrian and Greek-Roman mythology.

In the end of this scientific research I was able to bring to light some new facts about the existence and the phenomenology that the Illyrian king Monun brought with his rule in Dyrrah.

Mythological figures and thematic subjects reflected in the ceramic and coins of Dyrrah

The names of the Gods

1. Aphrodite
2. Artemis
3. Atalanta
4. Athena
5. Dionysos

6. Dioscuri
7. Eros
8. Gaia
9. Helios
10. Medea
11. Meleager
12. Moire – Atropa, Lakesi, KLathes
13. Nikes
14. Zeus Ammon
15. Zeus

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Linguistic abbreviations

[el]-Greek

[en]-English

[fr]-French

[grc]-Ancient Greek

[la]-Latin

[sq]-Albanian

VICTIM/TRAUMA AS A MEDIAPRODUCT IN BIOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF CULTURE

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Abstract: *This paper offers an attempt to conceptualize the specificity of a cultural trauma and victim as media constructs. The first part discusses the role of media technologies in the contemporary biopolitical context. It is emphasized that the control over communication within the new power paradigms is exercised by the netocratic elite, a new element of cybertechnological superpanopticism. The significance of mediology in the new system of worldview models and social relations is analysed. The second part explores the features of mediating trauma and victim processes, built in accordance with media environment laws. It is shown that in the context of deep mediatization, cultural trauma and victimhood are primarily the products of information technologies designed to reproduce biopolitical imperatives. It is emphasized that the mass media form of collective body representation intensifies the victim status attractiveness in a liberal democratic society. The nature of the fight for the right to be called a victim is determined by the increasing uncertainty of modern economic, political, environmental and other processes.*

Keywords: *digital control culture, mass media communication, trauma discourse, victim, collective identity.*

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Introduction

In the early XXI century, humanity has entered the era of multimedia and transmedia communication, where the leading role is played by "new media", social media, interactive resources, customized platforms, etc. They are firmly incorporated into social everyday life and are able to successfully mould patterns of human behaviour in accordance with biopolitical imperatives. Depending on the purpose of a communicative act, a modern person is in demand as a function, or as an object, or as an attribute, or as a consumer.

In control societies, the main mechanism of biopower impact is emotional management. The biopolitics of emotions relies on media technologies that can deliberately influence perception, feelings, and reactions. Given stories combined with given metaphors contribute to the narrative construction of a new digital biosociality. One of these stories is that of a trauma/victimisation as a factor of social consolidation. Trauma causes a powerful affect, which makes the community experience itself as a collective body.

Today, amidst numerous conflicts, disasters, and the post-Covid state, the question of how modern communication technologies and the experience of trauma/victimization are interconnected in the context of biopolitics and deep mediatisation requires in-depth theoretical understanding.

Theoretical basis

The new digital era has transcended institutional boundaries and encompassed the entire social landscape. Disciplinary societies exercised control through closed, mediated environments – family, school, army, hospital, or prison. Today, these institutions are gradually losing their function, yielding to "ultra-fast forms of free-flowing control"¹ in predominantly "horizontal networks of multimodal communication"².

Following the comprehension of the media reality, a new research area of media philosophy has emerged. It aims to fundamentally understand the phenomena of digital media culture. Many scholars qualify the contemporary media space as a factor in the general deontologization of being, where reality itself is perceived as a construct, a mass media effect, a fragmented and fundamentally multiple space that has no connecting centre. Thus, a typical feature of contemporary cyberculture is the coexistence of marginal "patchwork" understandings of the self and the world, within which the meaning of traditional communication is lost.

¹ G. Deleuze, *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, October, 1992, 59, p. 4.

² M. Castells, *Communication Power*. Oxford: University Press, 2013, pp. XXII, XXIV.
<https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editionsmssh.10551>.

Talking appears to be a mere connection check, the discursive polarity is replaced by "information digitality" and "total arrogance of networks"³.

Digital technologies and media have reinforced cultural dialectics, which consists in the simultaneous growth of universality and specificity, in the interconnection of positive and negative effects. For instance, digital and social media, on the one hand, compensate for the lack of social cohesion in the non-virtual environment, offer users a high degree of self-selection and self-determination⁴, while on the other hand, they increasingly fuel the self-enclosure of users, adding imaginary to the symbolism and promoting the former's autonomy⁵. Furthermore, new media technologies, while creating elements of the global media landscape, are becoming virtually the only means of its representation. This situation poses significant challenges for navigating the media space of the information society and creates the need to differentiate the quality criteria for the information that circulates in the media environment⁶.

Over the past few years, a number of works dealing with the relationship between media technologies and commemorative practices have been published⁷. Their main emphasis is made on the study of the emotional or affective perception of the phenomenon of *difficult heritage* – public recollection by nations of their past atrocities in the context of shame for them. These studies consider emotions/affects as an inseparable part of everyday practices embedded in certain socio-cultural contexts. This allows us to argue about the transition to a performative culture of memory, enabling individuals to appropriate the past in order to make it meaningful for their own present.

The problem of the connection between the contemporary cultural preoccupation with trauma and the technical ability to record and replay

³ Ch. Espinoza, *Millennial integration: Challenges millennials face in the workplace and what they can do about them*, Antioch University, 2012.

⁴ S.H. Chaffee, M.J. Metzger, *The end of mass communication? Mass communication & Society*, 2001, Vol. 4(4), pp. 365–379.

⁵ J. Dean, *The Real Internet*, *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, 2010, Vol 4(1), pp. 13–14.

⁶ O. Danilyan, O. Dzoban, Y. Hetman, Y. Kalynovskyi, *Features of information war in the media space in the conditions of russian aggression against Ukraine*, *Cogito*, 2023, Vol. 15(3), pp. 55–71.

⁷ G. Campbell, L. Smith, M. Wetherell, *Nostalgia and Heritage: Potentials, Mobilisations and Effects*, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2017, Vol. 23(7), pp. 609–611; J. Eckel, J. Ruchatz, S. Wirth, *The Selfie as Image (And) Practice: Approaching Digital Self-Photography*. Exploring the Selfie: Historical, Theoretical and Analytical Approaches to Digital Self-Photography. London, New York, Shanghai: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 1–23.

events⁸ is being widely discussed in the context of the representation of extreme events and traumatic memories in modern media. The theoretical and political connection between media and trauma has been retrospectively examined⁹. The extent to which traumatic temporality is linked to technologies of information recording, storage, and retrieval has been studied¹⁰. Traumatic effects have been considered as those that modulate mediation and are modulated by it¹¹. Overall, scholars proceed from the general premise that cultural trauma is closely related to mass media technologies.

The paper aims to explore the specifics of cultural trauma and victimisation as media constructs of deep mediatisation, considering the philosophical and anthropological dimension of biopolitics.

Results and Discussion

Electronic media in the new power paradigms system

For the modern society, the cyber power of Internet has become a significant communicative factor. The high flexibility and efficacy of cyberspace allow it to penetrate the real environment¹². Owing to cyberspace, communication runs in the so-called netocratic* superpanopticon, a system with no walls, windows, towers, or guards, where the wave, orbiting person is constantly online¹³ and is capable of avoiding rigid power dispositions.

Compared to Michel Foucault's panoptic system¹⁴, the super-panoptic system of control monitors the individual and society, archiving all social

⁸ A. Pinchevski, M. Richardson, *Trauma and digital media: Introduction to crosscurrents special section*, Media, Culture & Society, 2023, Vol. 45(1), pp. 178–180.

⁹ A. Meek, *Trauma and Media: Theories, Histories, and Images*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

¹⁰ A. Pinchevski, *Transmitted Wounds: Media and the Mediation of Trauma*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

¹¹ M. Richardson, *Radical absence: Encountering traumatic affect in digitally mediated disappearance*, Cultural Studies, 2018, Vol. 32, pp. 63–80.

¹² A.P. Getman, O.G. Danilyan, A.P. Dzeban, Yu.Yu. Kalynovskyi, *Modern ontology: reflection on the continuity of cyberspace and virtual reality*, Revista de Filosofía, 2022, Vol. 39(102), pp. 78–94.

* The post-capitalist concept of *netocracy* refers to a new ruling class of the information age – a post-industrial elite capable of controlling and exploiting information and communication networks. Netocrats seek to establish new governance mechanisms that, in the context of mass culture and media power, will effectively standardise physical and verbal behaviour of actors on a global scale, thereby strengthening superpower control.

¹³ G. Deleuze, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ M. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.

interactions in cyberspace as information. Today, the "transparent society"* concept is firmly entrenched in the scientific discourse, which is generally similar in meaning to the concept of "control society": the exercise of control over an object implies access to information about it, which, in turn, means mutual transparency of the controlled and the controlling. Yet, it is worth noting that "the regulation of information processes taking place between a person and the state as well as between a person and a social entity is quite practical. At the same time, the daily information processes such as the information exchange covering family issues and at hobnobs, etc. are much harder to control"¹⁵.

Media technologies play a major role in the paradigm shift from a imprisonment space society to a surfing society in the dynamic space of open borders, due to their impact on both the vertical and horizontal levels. The vertical level provides public media communication and allows interested actors to increase their public capital. At the horizontal level, private media communication (interpersonal, group, individual) is carried out primarily to satisfy the full range of socially important needs. The combination (or replacement) of these is frequently observed**. Collectively, they ensure the fullest possible coverage of the audience by media communication channels and mediated information flows.

Sl. Žižek emphasizes that the Internet and cyberspace are not conventional means of communication. It is communication through the Other, a symbolic structure that frames the perception¹⁶. It is a form of communication that regulates intersubjective relations and decentres the subject. The paradox lies in the fact that cyberspace threatens fundamental virtuality and reduces symbolic effectiveness. The Other no longer stabilises the meaning, binds together the chains of signifiers, or prevents their tendency to float in uncertainty. The Other, for example, can act as a talking picture with which it is impossible to enter into an active gift exchange. At the same time the world itself disintegrates into thousands of unrelated observations.

* Italian philosopher G. Vattimo, who coined the concept, defines transparent society as the unlimited communication society, or mass media society.

¹⁵ O.G. Danilyan, A.P. Dzeban, Y.Y. Kalinovskiy, E.A. Kalnytskyi, S.B. Zhdanenko, *Personal information rights and freedoms within the modern society*, Informatologia, 2018, no 51(1-2), p. 28.

** In particular, media content (its modality, represented scenes and images) accidentally (due to technical errors) or deliberately (hacking, pranking, trolling) may spread at an inappropriate level, thus generating risks for the actors who have a certain social credit of trust.

¹⁶ S. Žižek, *Cyberspace or the unbearable closure of being. The Plague of Fantasies*. London: Verso, 1997.

https://issuu.com/clog_unlp/docs/cyberspaceunbearableclosureofbeing.

Mediology is of particular relevance in building a new system of social connections and interactions. It is genetically affiliated with the cognitive approach, in which the format self-determination of media products based on framing is of utmost importance¹⁷, and the semiotic approach, which allows us to substantiate the mediatized process of transmitting cultural signs, codes and endowing them with special meanings.

Mediology is designed to construct media events in order to create the necessary meanings, codes, and symbols. By setting the format framework, mediology determines the incorporation of news into the social everyday life, and its perception identical to social reality. The consistent construction of a media event is achieved through the creation of an informational occasion, the inspiration of *event action* technology, the establishment of the agenda, and the cultivation of media effects, including moral panic. Besides, mediology is aimed at constituting media rituals – «exceptional and performative media phenomena that serve to sustain and/or mobilize collective sentiments and solidarities on the basis of symbolization and a subjunctive orientation to what should or ought to be»^{18*}.

Among the main components of mediology (visualization, personalization, dramatization, etc.), a special role is played by narrative communication, which is based on the principles of drama and scriptwriting. For this purpose, a special narrative social language is used. In addition to verbal language, it contains extra- and paralinguistic means, its "grammar" enables to reduce spatial and temporal boundaries, ensure visual rhythm, shift the emphasis from dialogues to action, and focus attention on programmed details.

Mediology mitigates the ambivalence in the perception of a media event, sets a clear and strict direction for its interpretation, and gives the resulting media picture an enhanced status compared to everyday life. The audience, in turn, gains new emotional experience and meets its information needs. In general, media logic is perceived as a sustainable, universally recognized technology of producing and ranking media events, as well as their subsequent incorporation into the agenda, which involves clear implementation and compliance with regulations and laws. These features of media logic turn it into a tool for legitimizing the social order,

¹⁷ P. Lopez-Rabadan, *Framing Studies Evolution in the Social Media Era. Digital Advancement and Reorientation of the Research Agenda*, Social Science, 2022, Vol. 11(1), p. 9. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/11/1/9>.

¹⁸ S. Cottle, *Mediatized rituals: Beyond manufacturing consent*, Media, Culture & Society, 2006, Vol. 28(3), p. 415. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443706062910>.

* While participating in the rituals' performance, the media infuse them with specific values. For example, live televised reports from scenes of disasters not only convey social values (solidarity with victims), but also emphasize the value of resilience associated with the media.

which is supported by all participants in socio-communicative relations – media controllers, the ruling elite and media products consumers.

Modern media communication practices have also produced significant transformations in everyday life. Everyday life is directly related to the individual experience, which, while being personalised by nature, is becoming increasingly *mediated* and constructed through the conventional mass and new social media. On the one hand, individuals have certain opportunities to meet their information and communication needs; on the other, individualization and segmentation of media content, typical of the modern media space, intensify media manipulation, and program the audience to achieve the expected reactions. This trend is reinforced by the growing importance of Internet products in everyday life. In turn, the Internet provides its consumers with opportunities for self-representation and helps them shape their own identity. Information media users have new interests, motives, goals and attitudes, as well as new forms of network social and communication activity*.

Individuals' everyday experience is primarily centred on consumption. In this regard, the consumer society in the new media communication realities can be redefined as a society of consumption through media, where material and socio-cultural needs jointly ensure the harmony of the individuals' life**. Social practices are reproduction rather than production

* An impressive overview of the social effects of spreading information and communication technologies was given by Howard Rheingold in his "Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution". The key concept of the book is the concept of a *smart mob*, whose coordinated action is ensured not by real interpersonal connections, but by individual mobile devices. Rheingold considers a mobile situational social network to be a type of smart mob, a new form of social organisation enabled by a combination of computing, reputation and location-based communication. The mobility of such an entity is ensured by wearable ICTs (information and communication technologies); their situational nature is associated with the informality of the organisation; "social network" means that every person in a smart mob is a "node" with social connections to other people. Another type of smart mob is a *flash mob*. This technology allows organising a mob in a big city: uniting anonymous users on the Internet, developing an idea (action scenario), setting a date and place for the action. According to Rheingold, smart mob activity has at least three possible negative consequences: first, it is a threat to freedom, since omnipresent computerisation goes hand in hand with total control; secondly, it is a threat to the quality of life, since new technologies potentially undermine the established social order; and thirdly, it is a threat to human dignity, since symbiotic communication with machines destroys the very human nature and personality. The first threat stems from the already traditional considerations about the emergence of a disciplinary society, where control and monitoring practices penetrate the social fabric so deeply that it is no longer clear where the source of control is. The other two threats are mostly existential in nature: it is assumed that due to technological evolution, humans lose certain physical, mental, and social traits

** Media practices are regarded not only as well-established social patterns of media consumption (naturally, they are of the primary significance), but also those of media

outcomes, they are social regulation mechanisms that allow us to explicate social reality phenomena based on the soft power principle. They are harmoniously perceived by society and acquire the status of knowledge.

The modern mass media system inspires "hyper-reality," simulates dialogicity, and thus intensifies its virtualization. Today media information about the world is becoming a more significant phenomenon than the world itself; the virtual representation of reality shaped by TV channels proves to be more important than reality itself. The absence of information means the absence of a phenomenon (country, city, person), and it disappears from the information world map. In fact, the mass media manage the mass production of the "reality effect": they create this reality, package it and promote it to a mass consumer.

One consequence here is the emergence of media mentality, which is inherent in those who are fully immersed in media reality. Media mentality subjects are highly dependent on the media space and the phenomena created in it. They are deprived of the ability to receive information and understand the world around them beyond the existing agenda. Along with this, the new media reality gives rise to the global issue of deanthropologisation of the modern human being as a result of "total virtualisation". The "addiction to the Real" manifests itself in a variety of symptoms, including desperate strategies to return to bodily reality – in this often painful way, people want to tear down life's "scenery," strip away the illusion of the world, and experience the reality of their own existence¹⁹. Humans' "fusion" with modern means of communication has had a paradoxical effect: technological progress in communication, generating increasingly sophisticated ways to improve living conditions, does not promote personal spiritual development, but rather serves people's most archaic and primitive instincts and needs. The expansion of information and communication technologies causes the destruction of the privacy zone, turning people into users, subscribers who are afraid of losing the "completeness of being" in the absence of a phone and at the same time feel tired because of total "traceability" in space and time.

Thanks to the communication and technological revolution, myth is firmly embedded in virtual space, consumer culture, and political communication²⁰. Today, it has moved beyond the art of rhetoric and is

production, when every individual becomes a medium – they create a unique (frequently opposite by modality) media content, which is later posted on their own pages in social media or blogs, potentially allowing to make such an actor an influencer.

¹⁹ S. Žižek, *Welcome to the desert of the real! Five essays on september 11 and related dates*. London: Verso, 2002.

URL:http://www.rebels-library.org/files/zizek_welcome.pdf.

²⁰ I. Kovalenko, Y. Meliakova, E. Kalnytskyi, K. Nesterenko, *On conspiracy thinking in the phenomenology of modern culture*, Cogito, 2021, Vol. XIII, No 3, pp. 67–83.

rather a viral manipulative phenomenon within the superpanoptic control system²¹. Within the framework of virtual communication, myth reinforces the symbolic rhetoric of the masses, helps manipulate reality, and promotes the simulation of freedom and power games, which is one of the priorities of the superpanoptic system²². That way, cyberpower establishes a rhizomatic set that ensures easy control in the context of digitisation and computerisation of biopolitics.

As mentioned previously, the cyber-mythical pyramid is headed by the netocratic elite. It shapes and controls political discourses, directing symbolic communication towards "behavioural and ideological panchoreography"²³. Social myths are similarly interpreted by individuals, shared by them, thus amplifying meanings embedded in them.

The modern myth works at the level of facts, gives a naturalistic interpretation of events, touches and manipulates the collective consciousness through hypertextual nodes, especially when it comes to the facts of violence or suffering. Myth drifts towards stereotypes, simulacra, and denotative distortions of meaning. In hyper-reality, the netocratic elite filters the communication network so that truly valuable information turns into a transactional field of restriction or exclusion. As a result, the information palette is provided second-hand, which, in turn, reinforces simulacra and the reality collapse. Through communication and gadgets, information is moving from the dimension of knowledge to the dimension of simulacra. Knowledge no longer lies in the true-false paradigm, it is transferred to the paradigm of hyperreal symbolic communication; information moves from the realm of truth to the simulacral myth perimeter.

However, the mythological dimension of communication cannot be eliminated due to the rhizomatic nature of cyberspace itself. Such a rhizomatic system, according to Sl. Žižek, means the omnipresence of cyberspace and the Internet – it is another commodity, and therefore, a new means of consumption and manipulation²⁴. Thus, superpanoptism will manifest itself not only in relation to certain categories of the population (as in M. Foucault's panoptic theory²⁵), but also in global cyberspace, the arena of political communication and information manipulation. In fact, cyberspace has become the myth embodiment as a symbolic violation of the reality principles that regulate everyday human life.

²¹ T. Jordan, *Cyberpower*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

²² A. Bard, J. Söderqvist, *The Futurica Trilogy*. Stockholm: Stockholm Text, 2012.

²³ A.-E. Schussler, *The Cyberspace Myth and Political Communication, Within The Limits Of Netocracy*, Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies, 2017, Vol. 16(48), pp. 65–78.

²⁴ S. Žižek, *The Ideology of the Empire and its Traps. Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri*. New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 255–267.

²⁵ M. Foucault, *op. cit.*

Given the possibilities of virtual environments where "an interface corresponds to the intuitive understanding of a person"²⁶ mass media build communicative bridges, fulfilling the Deleuzian ideal of the rhizomatic multitude. The consequences of deep mediatization are controversial and interconnected. Their constructive nature lies in the wide availability of information for the whole society; media devices are portable and easy to use; the level of public awareness is constantly growing as the scope of media application expands. The destructive nature is manifested in the conditionality of media freedom, their control by the netocratic elite, imposition of content, insecurity of communication links in the virtual space, increased immersiveness, and replacement of reality with media reality.

Victim shaping in media communication realm. As noted above, the digital screen universe is becoming more and more ephemeral, illusory, marked by the "erosion of the very principle of reality"²⁷. Its main feature is reflected in the metaphor of the world's compression, in which the nature of the new media reality is redefined, the objective world and its subjective experience are intertwined. These media play a key role in the development of *homo digitalis* – a digital person, a human user, for whom the latest technologies purposefully seek to create the most credible sensory illusion of the artificial world reality. "As a result, "spherical" space of instantaneous relationships, which absorbs everything that happens on the TV screen is constantly formed and reproduced in the mind of modern man"²⁸.

Online broadcasts, streaming, and real-time filming create a sense of electronic omnipresence. Thanks to the media, it is possible to "attend" the Nobel Prize ceremony, "attend" a meeting of the UN Security Council, or "find yourself" in a war zone in Ukraine or the Middle East while staying at home. The ability to experience "here and now" what is happening "there and then" is provided by the new media*. However, distance remains an indispensable condition for knowing about the other through what is directly given. Obviously, it is not merely spatial but rather mental distance that constitutes meaning**.

²⁶ A.P. Getman, O.G. Danilyan, A.P. Dzeban, Yu.Yu. Kalynovskyi, *Modern ontology ...*, p. 88.

²⁷ G. Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992. https://doubleoperative.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/vattimo-gianni_the-transparent-society.pdf.

²⁸ O. Danilyan, O. Dzoban, Y. Kalynovskyi, *Digital man as a product of the information society*, Cogito, 2023, 15(1), p. 152.

* The key qualifying feature of new media is digital technologies that ensure communication that encompasses generation, reproduction and replication.

** Nearly a hundred years ago, Fritz Heider, having realised the nature of distorted, "hardware" vision (looking through a lens, a filter of a telescope or microscope), suggested

Medial distance is, particularly, a condition for designing trauma. Even a small-scale media signal about a traumatic event can trigger media distance with all its potential for creating trauma, which is due to the fact that it contains biopolitical values in a condensed form. A person who has suffered from external circumstances or has been deprived of their rights to integrity is recognized as a victim. In this case, the victim is placed in the victim register – they are understood as something that should not happen again.

The number of outgoing signals is not essential; one signal that can be recognized and transmitted to other addressees is enough. Thus, the process of mediation of trauma and victimization is launched, based on the media environment laws. The speed and scale of media technologies make it possible to spread the impact of traumatic experiences to almost everyone. An unprecedented number of people may encounter, in particular, a war trauma "processed" by the media*. Contrary to the directly experienced war that may be of limited intensity, war trauma presented by the media is much

a structural model of "perception-through-the-lens", where the two extreme positions are "world-thing" and "human", as connected (proximally) as separated (distally) by the distance of the lens (B. Wolf, Fritz Heider and Egon Brunswik. Their lens models. Origins, similarities, discrepancies. *Nineteenth Annual International Meeting of the Brunswik Society: 100th Anniversary of Brunswik's Birth*. Vancouver, 2003). In this sense, the medium is both a connection and a gap between a person and the objectified, alienated world as a thing-in-itself. This paradox was later aptly emphasized by J. Baudrillard who stated that the "bias of the world" is most evident through the "objectif", or lens (J. Baudrillard, *La Photographie ou l'Écriture de la Lumière: Litteralite de l'Image*. L'Échange Impossible. Paris: Galilee, 1999, p. 175).

* Indeed, the predominant interpretation of the war in Ukraine by some Western media was the hierarchisation of victims, contrasting European refugees with civilians fleeing war in African and Middle Eastern countries. Commenting on the conflict in Ukraine, French journalist Philippe Corbet said: "We're not talking here about Syrians fleeing the bombing... We're talking about Europeans leaving in cars that look like ours to save their lives." ITV reporter Lucy Watson emphasized: "this is not a developing, third world nation, this is Europe". In response, researcher Mustafa Bayoumi said: "These comments point to a pernicious racism that permeates today's war coverage and seeps into its fabric like a stain that won't go away. The implication is clear: war is a natural state for people of colour, while white people naturally gravitate toward peace." The Arab and Middle Eastern Journalists Association (AMEJA) believes that Western journalism is characterized by the mentality of normalizing tragedies in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Reporter Nadine White acknowledged that while the media "is often a force for good," it can also "also sanction racial disparities under the guise of 'putting it in context'". CBS News correspondent Charlie D'Agata emphasized that by drawing distinctions between Ukraine (according to him, a relatively civilized, relatively European country) and countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan, the media are trading in dehumanising stereotypes thus spreading myths in order to maintain the status quo (S. McCloskey, *The War in Ukraine Has Revealed a Hierarchy of Victims*, Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, 2022, 34. <https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-34/war-ukraine-has-revealed-hierarchy-victims>).

broader and even overwhelming: news reports about war are available 24/7 and try to cover all possible aspects and perspectives, from anxiety to demoralisation.

As a collective or individual experience, trauma appears when the media distance to the proto-event is filled with the vectors of humanisation and legal reflection that define the damages caused, the perpetrators, and outline the ways of compensation. Given these circumstances, it is difficult to disagree with J. Alexander's opinion that not every traumatic event can become a trauma, just as not every fact of human death is recognised by society as a victim²⁹. A victim is the product of information technologies. It is not where the blood flows, but where the collective affect reaches certain intensity, where a specially arranged affective community body emerges.

The condition for the body solidarity to unite around an event is in the indispensable presence of universal anthropological constants, which, in turn, are proportional to the media. In other cases, the victim as an offline event may go unnoticed: not being involved in the media, it seems to be non-existent.

The media context of trauma awareness is significantly different from a speech act. It is characterised mainly by non-linear features of the virtual domain. Events hash tagged "victim" are formed by network waves that are not limited to speech – they contain many signs, data flows, memetic information, and ostensive definitions that migrate between communication nodes and are subject to constant changes in the course of shaping something that will be clearly recognised as a victim. This semantic intensity can be described as construction, a concept close in meaning to the term of *design**.

Any event that reveals a crisis or even a breakdown in biopolitical structures causes a surge in online activity and is inevitably accompanied by strongly charged emotional reactions. Formal one-click condolences are also possible, including emojis, reposts, etc. The corresponding online rituals simplify and facilitate the gesture of grief, hiding it behind signs that perform a commemorative function. Such signs are rather naïve – virtual candles, an eye with a tear, flowers, angels, RIP** variations, and short rhyming obituaries, generously marked with emoticons. They are reminiscent of professional mourners who technically perform their ritual mourning role. Their main task is to increase the intensity of the reaction,

²⁹ J.C. Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 239.

* The English terms of *design* stands for constructing and developing. Unlike a speech act, design is more closely connected with the collective and joint development.

** This popular abbreviation (from Lat. Requiescat in Pace, "rest in peace") is used as the final farewell to a deceased.

to engage users in the information wave of new media signals. The set of mourning signs is sometimes complemented with victims' archive photos, links to the details of the accident with separate comment threads. The same role is played by numerous news platforms, which, according to their specifics, increase the intensity of the event and rebroadcast it with "professional" attributes, such as conciseness, visual expressiveness and mostly ethical neutrality, which ensure the message has a wide reach. As we can see, the communicative trajectories that outline the contours of a traumatic event involve *τέχνη*, a craft approach to the victim as a construct. *Τέχνη* mobilises the forces of the collective body in the right way, protects it from the "stupor", and avoids prolonged, detrimental moments of silence for the community. Such an attitude instils victim's cynicism and teaches the fake etiquette (at least the ability to portray grieving faces in one click).

As any suffering is always nearby, according to biopolitical globalism, the victim is always the closest, leaving no chance to stay indifferent. To recognize, accept, and respond is a social duty of the biopolitical era society and the main tuning fork of humanity.

We cannot ignore the purely pro-sumerist willingness to create or support a media wave, thereby contributing to victim construction. It is traumatic events that entail particularly enthusiastic user activity. The *Τέχνη* is ahead of the user: the impulse to grab a camera and film a terrorist attack or disaster is dictated by the pathos of witnessing, the privilege of creating a media event, a promising information injection that can attract attention. The urge to be the first to post a video of a terrorist attack is quite sincere - this is how the ethical imperative of biopolitics works. Consequently, since the user environment has ceased to be predominantly passive, an average user has been delegated the right to contribute to the network, and most people actively use it, consciously or not, thus transforming information flows.

Suppose that the process of bringing a sacrifice currently equals its design, construction, and engineering. Information trajectories and movements of the collective network body are wound around each other, forming a significant event – a Victim with a capital V. The online resonance is able to modify the original traumatic event, endow it with new qualities, and "rethink" all its components. This is a strength test for both the event and the community: the online resonance can subside, and the event will cease to exist. Or, on the contrary, the resonance will intensify and give the victim a new status. Thus, by the way, an ordinary victim can go through the path of secondary sacralisation to a saintly, holy victim (or vice versa, and repeatedly). There is an interesting parallel with the archaic: the traditional sacrificial ritual is replaced by design and, while maintaining a sacred distance from the victim, turns design into a priestly practice – endowing

the object with the best qualities, raising its status to the best sacrifice, *sacrificium**

The network merges the victim and performance, making them ambivalent, blurring the line between the victim's creator, its transmitter, and its recipient. This shift of functions, relevant to the structures of the post-information consumer society, is reflected, in particular, in the concept of *produsage*. In this neologism, passive consumption is replaced by *production* and active *usage*. The main idea of *produsage* is that any user produces something that can be used by others according to their requests. The network, in turn, offers enough tools to produce something and then use it.

The construction of any phenomenon of the network culture must follow certain rules. The victim as a media product is subject to user requirements: thanks to personal gadgets and social media, it must be mobile and private in all its collectivity. Anyone can join and participate while staying in their chairs.

Produsage successfully describes the nature of data recursion in the network: decentralization minimizes authoritarianism. Everyone can create a product, everyone can destroy it. An important prerequisite for the success of a media product is user's empathy. It works if the creation of a tragic media event generally resembles the technology of common media products – blockbusters, landing pages, logos, etc. Their structure includes brevity, mobility, and scalability. Brevity focuses attention on one thing, facilitates perception, relieves the tension of choosing a meaning/action, and communicates only the essentials. The priority here belongs mainly to visual information, and fascination is actively used to shock and capture attention. Mobility is designed to ensure user attention anywhere and from any medium. Scalability refers to the product ability to retain its properties when scaled up. Ideally, a media product should be able to withstand the potential pressure of the entire network. The compliance with these rules guarantees a high conversion of accidental viewers into active users and, accordingly, increases the capital of a specific media event. It is to be kept in mind that there are bonuses (increased views and likes, comment feeds, and multiple reposts) that encourage online activity and pay good dividends.

This leads to the concept of a victim as an economic unit whose value is determined by relevant factors. In particular, resonance fading and gradual loss of interest in the victim causes its inflation. Modern technologies make it possible to forecast the "shelf life" of victims and compensate its inflation externally using various techniques. Normally, user's attention is kept up-to-date by fascinating – throwing new shocking information into old

* From Latin *sacrificium* is literally translated as “making sacred”, “blessing”, i.e. a ritual in the relations between the secular and sacred, which overlap and diffuse.

content. The taboo "bare life"³⁰, with its special biopolitical status, is used here. Respectable citizens easily succumb to a wave of emotional involvement in events when they see shocking footage of victims' bodies with the sauce of "it can happen to anyone." A cozy home and the surrounding *dolce vita*, as the antithesis of Agamben's concept of *nuda vita* ("bare life"), do not guarantee security any longer. *Dolce vita* traditionally supports the resource of public attention; it is a marker of the biopolitics prestigious zone, an acme of biopolitical values*.

The instant connection of a large number of users raises the pace of victim construction, as well as its capitalization. The victim as a media construct becomes capitalised, since it can define the boundaries of a prestigious consumption zone. The exploitation of the pathos of compassion makes it easy to turn it into an ideal transcultural superbrand. In fact, if we consider public attention as capital, then the benefits of having victims are obvious: whoever has more of them, has greater rights and preferences.

The complex processes of victim construction are dynamic and difficult to systematize. However, we will attempt to outline some important trends.

The inert historical distance to the victims of the past is overcome through the techniques that allow us to experience the trauma here and now, to reanimate the victims of the past in the present. The technique of demonstrating the witnessing trauma was first used in Claude Lanzmann's film "Shoah" (1985). The camera closely showed the numbing shock of those who managed to survive the camp, turning the testimony into broadcasting victim's experience. The fact of representation was perceived as a historical act, and story itself was presented as an event happening here and now. Close-up shots and the narrative formation from a series of witnesses' interviews emotionally involved the viewer in the characters' experiences. The camera turned the viewer into an actor, a tragedy memory carrier here and now.

The intensity of the victims' representation is achieved by reducing the distance between the victim and the viewer, and sometimes by replacing them. An example of this is Alejandro González Iñárritu's "Flesh and Sand" (2017), a film shot using virtual reality technology. Owing to special equipment, the viewer/actor is actually immersed in the story, which shows the tragedy of Mexican migration to the United States. During the film screening at the Cannes Film Festival, real things belonging to the victims were laid out in the pavilion, including a pile of shoes, just like in Auschwitz.

³⁰ G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

* Usually, a terroristic act in a prestigious area gains a high resonance and coverage (it was so in numerous cases, including the one in Nizza on 14 July 2016 during the Bastille Day celebrations).

This VR installation was also based on the testimonial experience: the filmmakers had long conversations with refugee survivors, and they agreed to share their experiences on camera. For the first time in history, VR technology was used not as an entertainment attraction, but as a real experience for the viewer, as the experience that allows them to feel the whole tragedy of a refugee. The traumatic experience of witnessing was complemented with the victim's own experience: the viewer/actor is shot in the face, and people are dying helplessly nearby. Such a symptomatic attempt to bridge the distance through the media indicates lowering of the viewer's sensitivity threshold, which is nevertheless does not yet prepare them to leave the guaranteed security zone.

The large-scale film industry that produces stories about the victims of disasters, political repression, and World War II serves a similar public demand. They make a pronounced emotional and aesthetic presentation of the material here: compared to earlier films on similar topics, contemporary films highlight shocking photographic and video materials, and necessarily clichéd dyslexic interviews, inspired by Lanzmann's style. *Yolocaust*, a photographic project by the Israeli satirist Shahak Shapira, is symptomatic in this context. *Yolocaust* includes over ten thousand selfies posted on social media, where visitors to the Berlin Holocaust Memorial are practicing yoga, skateboarding, or just sitting with a happy expression on their faces. The project's author combined these photos with real photographs of Holocaust victims, placing the two polar points of the biopolitical theme in a common frame. The resulting collages bring back the distance to the "naked life," push the naïve vitality of the selfies out of the frame, and demonstrate a narrative failure. A loophole was left for those selfie authors who felt "uncomfortable" with the design that approximates the victims' experience: if someone feels ashamed of their photos after viewing the collages, the author promises to remove them from the project. This action is a direct recognition of the biopolitical ethics and the creator's skill in the *Yolocaust* project, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to make a person who has grown up in the environment of sophisticated media fascination feel uncomfortable.

The construction of victims is a highly competitive field that requires professional handling of the materials and resources. The representation of victims' experiences involves non-standard solutions designed to weaken the individual's resistance. Provocative genre hybridisation and obligatory reference to "factuality" via photographs, testimonies, and documents are the ways in which documentary victim poetry works. It is the synthesis of the creative and victims' experience, shown through reports, testimonies, protocols, etc., as a certain "truth" about the traumatic event. For example, in the wake of a large-scale resonance around victims of prison violence,

Philip Metres' artistic text-experiment "Sand Opera" dedicated to the victims of torture in Abu Ghraib prison emerged. Being a special privileged type of appeal to reality, these texts, as individual traumatic experiences, have a significant potential and they reset the wave of constructing traumatic meanings.

However, it is unlikely that the mere availability of the media distance and compliance with the rules of media product design guarantee the emergence of a victim/trauma online. The media distance can accumulate resistance, obscure or completely conceal the effect of "*bare life*". This happens when the media itself become an object of attention and are subject to manipulation. In this case, given the stochastic nature of network's response, it is rather difficult to predict the outcome of the victim's network construction, as the outcome as such is continuously changing. Professional design techniques of creating a high-profile video, similar to the one made by the dubious "White Helmets"* organization, are, oddly enough, too strict and correct, in demonstrating war porn objects, to be true**.

This kind of media products traditionally draws a lot of interest, but the affect itself is no longer related to the victim's own experience, but rather to the profanation of the latter. This results in a certain design know-how – the flickering status of the video materials' authenticity, which effectively triggers *produsage* algorithms for collecting evidence/refutations, developing conspiracy theories, etc. Although this technique pushes the victim construct into the background, it perfectly fits into the system of biopolitical mechanisms.

* The White Helmets is the name of a Syrian volunteer civil defence unit. Its activities had extensive photo and video footage in media, which was considered staged. It was symptomatic that the "White Helmets" documentary (2016), directed by Orlando von Einsiedel, was awarded with an Oscar.

** In this regard, two extended quotations from Jean Baudrillard's work "War Porn" may be given: «From now on and forever we will be uncertain about these images. Only their impact counts... There is no longer the need for 'embedded' journalists because soldiers themselves are immersed in the image – thanks to digital technology, the images are definitively integrated into the war. They don't represent it anymore; they involve neither distance, nor perception, nor judgment. They no longer belong to the order of representation, nor of information in a strict sense. And, suddenly, the question of whether it is necessary to produce, reproduce, broadcast, or prohibit them, or even the 'essential' question of how to know if they are true or false, is 'irrelevant'. For the images to become a source of true information, they would have to be distinct from the war. They have become today as virtual as the war itself, and for this reason their specific violence adds to the specific violence of the war. In addition, due to their omnipresence, due to the prevailing rule of the world of making everything visible, the images, our present-day images, have become substantially pornographic. Spontaneously, they embrace the pornographic face of the war. There exists in all this ...an immanent justice of the image: those who live by the spectacle will die by the spectacle.» (J. Baudrillard, *War Porn*, Journal of visual culture, 2006, Vol. 5(1), p. 86).

The victim with no explicit addressee has the greatest resonance. The obviousness of narrative failure, the fascinating nullification of meanings, can hardly be summed up in clichés like "never again". Numerous *trauma studies* offer different trauma reflection types, but they only exacerbate the situation. The victim's body as a communicative body requires an immediate non-reflexive response.

One of the techniques suggested by the network itself is *hype*, a vivid phenomenon accompanying all communication intensity points^{***}. The modern victim emergence is impossible without hype. Hype can absorb a community at any scale. This feature makes it instrumental for constructing large-scale structures, including a collective trauma. The slang word hype, which originally emerged in the field of commercial promotion, now belongs to the broader domain of active online communication related to the promotion of a common idea or attitude. Hype is essentially about sharing and participating, transmitted instantaneously. This phenomenon makes it possible to clearly feel the physicality of the online community, muscles contraction in the whole body in response to a stimulus. A user who starts to hype a certain topic always counts on the power of collective affect, the virtual force of support. The users' response to the hype wave confirms the identity of their affect with the collective one and also shapes their identity. The appeal of the hype is that it anticipates the collective body affect, it is spontaneous; and its self-organisation points are multiple and situational. The wave reaction is triggered with wide amplitude – from small memes to large-scale ideas.

The rapidly growing response waves are composed of the cumulative flow of comments and signs in any quantity and scope. As such, they are the most powerful media signal, a cumulative data set formed by private accounts, which, in particular, involve certain monetization given that the victim is an economic unit.

The chain reaction of discrete communication ensures extra-linguistic communication. Each individual statement, insignificant in itself, becomes meaningful as a sign of belonging to a community. The total of all utterances does not form a linear narrative, as the meanings remain distributed across all participating nodes. In the absence of a narrative, a swarm affect arises: it is responsible for the collective behaviour of a decentralised self-organised system. This network practice exists only in its current phase – hype cannot be archived, nor can it be tracked post factum. It is a kind of cross-platform communication limited only by the resource of its own intensity. The intensity is not proportional to the original media signal; hype as a practice

^{***} The word *hype* is an online slang neologism that means intrusive advertising, fuss and agitation. The converted verb "hype" stands for "promoting, inflating and making trendy".

is based on an hollow centre – what counts is the affect itself, and it, as any experience, is real no matter what the trigger is.

These functions of hyping enable to effectively organise interaction including that with traumatic destructive experience, and also to shape trauma itself as collective intensity. Being involved though hype, relieves the burden of the subjective responsibility and transfers it to the community. Hype projectivity is accidental by nature. For instance, hype may result in a petition as shortcut to reach trauma compensation. However, the aim of hype is to create the collective affect, experience a wave of new embodiment, thus encouraging users' self-identification.

The hype medium makes it possible to distinguish between us and them. The universal anthropology models are created and naturally selected here. The wave fades unless being met with resonance – this way, hype triggers are verified for their efficiency. In turn, the biopolitics civil duty urges to respond, accepting guilt as an a priori civil duty, and shaping the universal humanity tuning fork.

The internal design of the most ergonomic victim image is aimed at a specific goal: to develop and create a victim that will penetrate the largest number of social strata, make them listen and resonate. This explains the presence of a huge amount of alarmist online materials. The totality of various resources devoted to global trauma (wars, terrorism, genocide, pandemics, environmental disasters, etc.) resembles a collection of spectacular backgrounds that can quickly design a victim, both real and imaginary. A striking example of the latter is the BBC television show "Could We Survive a Mega-Tsunami?" (2013). A hypothetical project of collapsing a large part of the Canary Islands into the ocean demonstrates a model of a potential disaster caused by a tsunami wave. The film is fully in line with the survivalist trend and serves the popular apocalyptic fantasy. Interestingly, the film is based on eyewitness accounts of a non-existent event in the best Lanzmannian genre traditions (dyslexia, tears, recollection of painful moments, etc.). This programme is not built around a seismic tsunami model, but around the victims of this wave: the viewer is presented with a specific mockumentary, a carefully crafted design of the victims. The fact that victims are taken out of time and space references, and force majeure circumstances as a cause of suffering, expose the very structure of the victim in the context of biopolitics, while the consumer demand for this kind of entertainment points to an obsession with trauma.

Conclusion

Media technologies are a powerful driver of social development, a tool and a sign of modern culture. Today the world image goes beyond personal privacy boundaries. The worldview is shaped by ideas and experiences that

are decreasingly inherent in the individual, but are rather intended for everyone. The experience is replaced with feelings, and narrative is being replaced with discrete information.

Media space constitutes media reality that regulates the full range of social and communication relations. New media are playing an increasingly important role among online resources. They not only support communication, but also frequently become the object and means of information influence.

In the superpanopticon, the control over the biopolitical discourse belongs to netocratic elites. The netocratic model transfers people to the hyper-reality of events and simulacra of meanings, attributes certain roles to subjects, and organizes social practices in accordance with biopolitical imperatives. Thus, an "inappropriate" event (as a cause of cultural trauma and victimised discourse) is considered worthy of human space, as it allows applying the arsenal of biopolitical ethics, shaking up the intra-community ties and test its unanimity. In this context, a victim and a trauma become almost synonymous concepts: a victim is a traumatized body (individual or collective), while a trauma is the status of a victim in the biopolitical realm.

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US-CHINA RELATIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD POLITICS IN THE POST-CRISIS PERIOD

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Abstract: *The relevance of the stated problem is explained by the fact that currently, the study of modern US-China relations is an urgent scientific task. Due to the integral role played by the United States and China in global political and economic processes, US-China relations can be recognised as the most important interstate relations in the world. The purpose of the study is a theoretical and comparative analysis of US-China relations and their impact on the development of world politics in the post-crisis period. The subject of this research can be called the provisions of international law. The study is a new comprehensive research of US-China relations in the context of the transformation of the international system. Based on the analysis, it is planned to develop scientifically sound proposals and recommendations to improve the efficiency of the organisation of research of administrative procedures.*

Keywords: *US-China relations, world politics, international politics in the post-crisis period, geopolitics, international relations, China, USA, Xi Jinping.*

Introduction

The scientific originality of the study lies in the fact that for the first time in Russian and foreign political science, a comprehensive study of modern US-China relations in the post-crisis period was conducted, covering the interaction of the two countries at the bilateral, regional, and global levels and considering these bilateral relations through the prism of foreign policy

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interests and strategies of the United States and China.^{1,2,3} A distinctive feature of the thesis is that the evaluation of US-China relations is presented as the result of an analysis of foreign policy concepts and practices on both sides of the interaction, not only the influence of the foreign policy of the United States, as is typical for most previous studies on this issue.^{4,5}

Considerable research results that have scientific originality are:

– systematically identified by the US and Chinese experts developments that consider China's rise and its consequences for the world community, changes in the positions of the US and China in the international system, features and trends in US-China relations in the 21st century;

– a conceptual model of modern US-China relations was developed as a set of interactions between the two states at three levels: bilateral, regional, and global. Within the framework of the conceptual model: it is established that there are fundamental contradictions between the foreign policy goals and national interests of the United States and China; the author's interpretation of the problems and contradictions existing between the United States and China at the bilateral level is proposed; the strengthening of the beginning of the 21st century is substantiated. China's regional positions about the United States in Southeast Asia, Tropical Africa, and Latin America are studied; the relationship between the cooperation of the United States and China in solving global and regional problems of modern times, the state of the US-China contradictions, which are focused on the bilateral level around the "interests of China" are examined;

– for the first time in political science, the US-China contradictions and errors centred around the issues of religious freedom and Internet freedom in China were comprehensively studied, for the first time in Russian, political science systematically examined the problems of the South China Sea as a new place of US-China contradictions and the problem of regional rivalry between the US and China in Latin America;

– a large number of new theoretical developments by American and Chinese researchers of international relations, statistical data and documentary sources characterising US-China relations, have not been presented in the Russian scientific literature;

¹ M.V. Belov, & D.A. Novikov, *Methodology of complex activit* (Moscow: Lenand, 2018).

² A.M. Novikov, & D.A. Novikov, *Methodology of scientific research* (Moscow: Librocom, 2009).

³ A.M. Novikov, & D.A. Novikov, *Methodology* (Moscow: SYNTEG, 2014).

⁴ O.A. Timofeev, "Sino-American relations in 2021: a complex succession", *China in World and Regional Politics. History and Modernity*, 26, (2021), 23-25.

⁵ How does Biden feel about China?, 2020;

<https://view.inews.qq.com/a/20201112A039CV00>, accessed on 01.05.2024;

– strengthening China's role in world politics and its economic stability growth is considered by the US political elite a strategic call. Therefore, regardless of who wins the elections to power, the foreign policy of the Chinese leadership is focused on priority attention.^{6,7,8,9}

US-China relations are currently being studied by American and Chinese researchers, Russian historians and political researchers. The foreign policy of the United States towards China considers several important factors: the interdependence of the economies of the two powers; and the growing influence of China as the dominant regional power. Its main goal is to restrain China's growth so that it does not emerge as a superpower and continue to dominate both the global economy and the oceans.

The study aims to offer a comprehensive examination of contemporary US-China relations in the post-crisis era, encompassing bilateral, regional, and global interactions. The primary focus is on the assessment of these relationships in the context of the foreign policy objectives and strategies of both the United States and China.

Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of the study consists of general scientific dialectical methods of cognition, including the principles of objectivity, consistency, historicism, induction, deduction, etc. Along with general scientific methods of cognition, private scientific methods were used: formal-legal, descriptive, linguistic, Aristotelian, historical, system-legal, comparative-legal, etc. The leading method of studying this problem is modelling, therefore, this problem can be considered as a purposeful and organised process. The complexity of the research predetermined the application of a wide range of scientific, political, sociological, and historical methods and principles. Relying on a systematic approach and modern structural functionalism, the author presented the US-China relations as a set of different types of interacting relations, as a system with a complex structure and as certain integrity. In the study of the decision-making process regarding the vector of the Chinese policy of the United States, the area of US policy in Beijing was based on an institutional approach, while

⁶ Virtual Remarks at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Multilateralism, 2021; <https://www.state.gov>, accessed on 01.05.2024;

⁷ K. Campbell, & J. Sullivan, "Competition without catastrophe: How America can both challenge and coexist with China", *Foreign Affairs*, 98, 5, (2019), 96-110.

⁸ The secret Chinese team behind Biden, 2020;

<https://dy.163.com/article/FR1V4Q3L0516JCVA.html>, accessed on 01.05.2024;

⁹ Without a healthy and stable Sino-American relationship, the post-Covid world will not be stable, 2020; http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/202012/04/content_5567015.htm, accessed on 01.05.2024;

the evolution of US-Chinese relations was based on historical approaches. The chapter of the study devoted to the main US-China contradictions at the bilateral level is based on a problematic chronological principle. When comparing the political and economic positions and foreign policy strategies of the United States and China in certain regions of the world, conducting an extensive cross-country statistical analysis, the dissertation was based on the requirements of the comparative method. The spatial-analytical paradigm used in the study allowed evaluation of the prospects for the development of US-China relations, based not only on general models but also on the specific features of China's political processes. In the conclusions of the paragraphs of the study, the actualisation method was used.

The empirical basis of the study consists of various documents. They can be divided into several main groups: national security strategies 1. allow identifying the basic principles, goals, and priorities of the foreign and defence policy of the United States, covering the tools for the fulfilment of US national interests. The documents of the Ministry of Defense, presented in theses of regular reports, such as "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China", "Quadrennial Defense Review", and "Nuclear Posture Review", characterise the state of the Chinese armed forces, its military strategy and doctrine, identify possible threats related to China's forced military modernisation, evaluate China's ability to compete militarily with the United States. These reports allow evaluation of the position of this body about China, which is one of the participants in making foreign policy decisions in the United States.

The research was conducted in several stages: first, a theoretical analysis of existing methodological approaches in the scientific literature, the US-China relations and their impact on the development of world politics in the post-crisis period were studied; the problem, purpose, and methods of research were identified, a research plan was developed, within which research was conducted. In the second stage, a set of conditions for the effective study of US-China relations was identified and substantiated; experimental work was conducted, the conclusions obtained during the experimental work were analysed, verified, and clarified. At the third stage, the experimental work was completed, theoretical and practical conclusions were clarified, the results obtained were generalised and systematised.

Results

The COVID-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst for substantial changes in the global geopolitical landscape, particularly in the context of the relationship between the United States and China. The global health crisis has further complicated this intricate bilateral relationship, which was

already strained by strategic rivalries, technological competition, and trade disputes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on US-China relations, exacerbating existing tensions and creating new areas of conflict. From the onset of the crisis, both nations engaged in a heated blame game regarding the virus's origin and management. The United States criticized China's initial handling of the outbreak in Wuhan and alleged a lack of transparency, while China accused the US of politicizing the pandemic and deflecting from its own shortcomings in virus control. This rhetorical battle quickly evolved into a competition for global influence. China sought to position itself as a leader in combating the virus, offering aid to other countries and promoting its governance model as effective in crisis management. The United States, meanwhile, attempted to maintain its role as a leader in global public health while simultaneously working to counter China's narrative and information campaigns.

The pandemic also accelerated trends towards economic decoupling, particularly in critical sectors and high-tech industries. Both nations have prioritized achieving greater self-reliance in key areas, recognizing the vulnerabilities exposed by their deep economic interdependence. This push for autonomy has been especially evident in supply chains for essential goods and advanced technologies. Moreover, the crisis intensified the already fierce technological rivalry between the two nations. The race for vaccine development and the implementation of digital solutions for pandemic management became new arenas for competition, further straining bilateral relations.

The Taiwan issue remains one of the most delicate and potentially unstable facets of US-China relations. In recent years, tensions regarding Taiwan have intensified markedly, serving as a litmus test for the overarching relationship between the two powers. The United States upholds a policy of "strategic ambiguity" regarding Taiwan, supplying arms and diplomatic backing to the island while formally adhering to the "One China" policy. This strategy has grown progressively contentious as China more assertively asserts its claim over Taiwan. The United States persists in enhancing its informal diplomatic relations with Taiwan and has sanctioned multiple substantial arms sales in recent years, actions that China views as direct intrusions into its domestic matters.

China has escalated its military operations near Taiwan, executing extensive exercises and augmenting the frequency of aircraft intrusions into Taiwan's air defence identification zone. These actions have elicited apprehensions regarding the possibility of military conflict and have compelled the US to reiterate its dedication to Taiwan's defence. Prominent visits by US officials to Taiwan have exacerbated tensions. These visits,

perceived by China as breaches of the status quo, have resulted in vehement diplomatic protests and heightened military posturing.¹⁰ The circumstances regarding Taiwan have transformed into a perilous flashpoint, with the potential for miscalculation or inadvertent escalation posing a significant threat to regional stability.

The Taiwan issue embodies the overarching challenges in US-China relations: reconciling competition with the necessity to avert direct conflict, addressing differing interpretations of established agreements, and manoeuvring through the intricate dynamics of economic, diplomatic, and security interests in the Asia-Pacific region. The ongoing assertions of interests and influence by both nations render the situation regarding Taiwan a pivotal element in determining the trajectory of US-China relations and the overarching geopolitical dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region.

The Table 1 presented below offers a comprehensive overview of the current state of US-China relations in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. It is designed to provide a structured analysis of the multifaceted relationship between these two global powers across several key domains.

Table 1. Structural and functional model of US-China relations in the post-crisis period

Aspect	US	China	Implications
Diplomatic Stance	Critical of China's handling of the pandemic; Promotes transparency	Presents itself as a global leader in pandemic response; Offers aid to other countries	Increased diplomatic tensions; Competition for global influence
Economic Relations	Pushes for supply chain diversification; Seeks autonomy in critical sectors	Promotes its economic model; Aims to reduce dependence on US technology	Accelerated economic decoupling; Reshaping of global supply chains
Technology	Restricts Chinese tech companies; Invests in domestic innovation	Pursues technological self-reliance; Increases R&D spending	Intensified tech competition; Potential for parallel tech ecosystems

¹⁰ Haenle, P., & Sher, N., (2022), How Pelosi's Taiwan visit has set a new status quo for U.S-China tensions. <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2022/08/how-pelosis-taiwan-visit-has-set-a-new-status-quo-for-us-china-tensions?lang=en> accessed 03.09.2024.

Military/Security	Maintains "strategic ambiguity" on Taiwan; Strengthens alliances in Asia-Pacific	Increases military presence around Taiwan; Modernizes military capabilities	Heightened risk of conflict; Arms race in the region
Soft Power	Emphasizes democratic values; Promotes leadership in global health	Highlights efficiency of its governance model; Expands cultural influence globally	Ideological competition; Divided global perception
Trade	Maintains tariffs and trade restrictions	Seeks to diversify trade partners; Promotes Belt and Road Initiative	Ongoing trade tensions; Shift in global trade patterns
Climate Change	Re-engages in global climate efforts	Continues to invest in renewable energy; Sets ambitious climate goals	Potential for cooperation amid competition

The intricacy of US-China relations has been exacerbated by political sanctions concerning the situation in Xinjiang. Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's assertion that China upholds a "Marxist-Leninist regime" and "totalitarian ideology" highlighted the escalating tensions. The transition in the US administration elicited measured optimism among Chinese politicians and experts concerning prospective bilateral relations.¹¹

The departure of such politicians as M. Pompeo, P. Navarro, and M. Pottinger to Beijing was received with satisfaction. According to Chinese political researcher Xin Qiang, 3 factors will influence the normalisation of bilateral relations in the future: 1. Biden intends to strengthen coordination with other Western countries to create clearer and more transparent global rules on trade, production, and the environment, which is generally beneficial to Beijing. 2. The United States intends to cooperate more actively with China in such areas as ecology, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the fight against epidemics. 3. Therewith, the Biden administration will seek to prevent China's leadership in the field of high

¹¹ Welcome speech at the opening of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Sino-American Ping-Pong Diplomacy, 2021; <http://www.chinaembassy.org/chn/zmgx/zxxx/t1868144.htm>, accessed on 03.05.2024.

technology. Yan Xuetong, one of the most authoritative Chinese experts, is also of the opinion that the main area of the new "cold war" between China and the United States is already becoming high-tech, not military-political control.¹²

Notably, the new senior director for China at the National Security Council, R. Doshi, has published a series of papers on the PRC's information security policy in recent months which has caused jubilation.¹³ Another member of the White House China expert group, M. Hart will have to optimise the policy of opposition of the Chinese company Huawei to introduce fifth-generation mobile communication standards in the world. Hart previously worked as a senior researcher at the Center for American Progress and in October 2020 co-authored a fundamental report on the policy of the US authorities towards a Chinese corporation.¹⁴

Among the possible positive changes in China-US relations, Xin Qiang noted the restoration of strategic and economic dialogue, the work of which was curtailed by D. Trump.¹⁵ Chinese experts pay great attention to the views of China on key figures in the new US administration. Specifically, Chen Zheng of the Peking University of Foreign Languages notes that the new Secretary of State A. Blinken is a supporter of the creation of the so-called democratic coalition, yet it advocates strict compliance with internationally recognised trade rules.¹⁶

K. Campbell and J. Sullivan believe that the policy of involvement has already exhausted itself, however, in relations with China, it is impossible to use the model: "Firstly, according to the Global Times, in the new conditions, having the status of a country that most successfully tackles the problem of the epidemiological COVID-19, China seeks to restore the so-called academic rights, which implies a more active dialogue with the United States, strong resistance to any attempt by the United States to interfere in China's internal affairs".

Admittedly, the US interference in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of China in Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang will continue to be an

¹² R. Doshi, & K. McGuiness, *Great Powers and Communications Risks, 1840-2021* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2021).

¹³ R. Doshi, *China as a "Cyber Great Power"* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2021).

¹⁴ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Remarks on Yang Jiechi's Meeting with US Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, Foreign Ministry of the PRC, 2020; https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1789798.shtml, accessed on 03.05.2024;

¹⁵ M. Hart, & J. Link, *There is a solution to the Huawei Challenge*, (Center of American, 2020).

¹⁶ K. He, "Rethinking revisionism in world politics", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, no. 4, (2021), 1-28.

additional irritant in bilateral relations, but any sanctions from Washington can only cause retaliatory sharp actions and statements in Beijing. Therefore, the tough tone in the Anchorage negotiations was not entirely new. Before Biden's arrival, the Chinese authorities, within the framework of bilateral dialogue, were also actively exploiting not only national (the inadmissibility of the possibility of interference in internal affairs) but also global behaviour.¹⁷

The Chinese media and the expert community are dominated by the opinion that all future negotiations between the two countries will now be difficult in form. Professor at the Jin Kangzhong People's University explains this by the fact that the PRC and the United States have entered a long-term stage of competition.

In the long term, the character of the confrontation is also indicated by the fact that the United States is seeking to strengthen the broad anti-Chinese coalition in the Indo-Pacific region, giving this initiative a legislative platform. The latter is evidenced by Menendez Risch's bill submitted to the Council of Europe, which became the largest anti-Chinese legislative initiative in the entire period of bilateral relations. In turn, President of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) Yuan Peng is of the opinion that relations between China and the United States will become more stable.

Firstly, the parties will promote dialogue in the fields of strategic security, military contacts, economy, trade, and climate change. Environmental issues are currently being considered in the two countries as one of the main "drivers" of bilateral relations shortly. At the end of April, Xi Jinping, at the invitation of J. Biden, took part in the Earth Day Summit, initiated by Washington. In general, Beijing shows considerable interest in normalising relations with the United States, as evidenced, for example, by the scale of anniversary events dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the so-called ping pong diplomacy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China published a large speech by the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the United States, Cui Tiankai, in which he named the fight against the pandemic, solving environmental problems, and restoring the world economy the main promising areas.

Beijing's intentions to normalise relations with the United States also indicate that Beijing generally ignores the Biden administration's decision to continue Trump's course to intensify ties with Taiwan, including at the official level. In the Chinese media and analytical publications, such facts as the liberalisation of the regime of contacts between American diplomats and

¹⁷ New Guidelines for U.S. Government interactions with Taiwan counterparts, 2021; <https://www.state.gov/new-guidelines-for-us-government-interactionswith-taiwan-counterparts>, accessed on 06.05.2024;

representatives of Taiwan and the retention of the deputy position went unnoticed. Assistant Secretary of State for the Pacific Region, S. Oudkirk, one of the most active advocates of Taiwan's full diplomatic support, actively used the term "multilateral approach" in the political language to the leaders of the People's Republic of China since 2003. Since then, multilateral organisations and forms of dialogue have consistently been defined as an "important platform" of the country's foreign policy. In words, adherence to so-called multilateralism was also expressed by the leading representatives of the B. Obama and J. Biden administrations, however, many of the recent actions of the United States indicate exclusively a transition to a multilateral approach in the strategy of containing China, the foundations of which remain unchanged. K. He, H. Feng, S. Chan, and W. Hu are certain that the United States is moving towards "institutional rivalry" as a form of so-called soft (institutional) revisionism. The purpose of such a strategy is to undermine the level of international legitimacy of existing international institutions and even replace them with new ones, to which countries demonstrating an alternative development model will not be admitted.¹⁸

The United States and its allies, regardless of opinion, will pay considerable attention to such new and isolated multilateral security structures. Recent UN Security Council meetings have witnessed mutual accusations from both parties regarding the subversion of the democratic nature of the current global order. US Secretary of State Blinken underscored the necessity of multilateralism in contemporary international relations, whereas Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi advocated for the renunciation of hegemony and coercion.¹⁹

In conclusion, the dynamics of US-China relations in the post-pandemic period exhibit a complex interplay of competition, collaboration, and strategic manoeuvring. The COVID-19 crisis has acted as a catalyst, intensifying existing tensions and generating new opportunities for rivalry and potential collaboration.

The pandemic has had a complex effect on bilateral relations. It has expedited trends of economic decoupling, especially in vital sectors and advanced technology industries. Both nations have prioritized attaining enhanced self-sufficiency, acknowledging the vulnerabilities revealed by their profound economic interdependence. The crisis has exacerbated the

¹⁸ Communist China and the free world's future. Remarks at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library, 2020; <https://2017-2021.state.gov/communist-china-and-the-free-worlds-future-2/>, accessed on 06.05.2024;

¹⁹ Secretary Antony J. Blinken, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Director Yang and State Councilor Wang Remarks at the Top of Their Meeting, 2021; <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-chinese-director-of-the-office-of-the-central-commission-for-foreign-affairs-yang-jiechi-and-chinese-state-councilor/>, accessed on 08.05.2024;

technological rivalry between the two powers, with the competition for vaccine development and digital solutions for pandemic management emerging as new arenas of contention.

The Taiwan issue persists as a significant flashpoint, with heightened military activities and diplomatic tensions underscoring the fragile equilibrium of power in the region. The United States' policy of "strategic ambiguity" and China's assertive posture persist in influencing this delicate facet of their relationship. Notwithstanding the obstacles, there exist avenues for potential collaboration. Climate change and environmental concerns have arisen as potential catalysts for bilateral engagement. Both nations have expressed interest in discussions regarding strategic security, military relations, economic matters, and trade. Beijing's engagement in international forums and the observance of historical diplomatic milestones signify a pursuit of normalized relations.

Nevertheless, the trajectory ahead is fraught with challenges. The United States endeavours to bolster anti-Chinese coalitions in the Indo-Pacific region, alongside China's opposition to perceived intrusions in its domestic matters, indicate persistent tensions. The notion of multilateralism has emerged as a significant point of dispute, with each side alleging that the other is subverting the current global framework. The change in the US administration has generated measured optimism alongside new challenges. Although there is potential for renewed dialogue and collaboration in specific domains, fundamental disparities in ideology, governance frameworks, and strategic interests remain.

Discussion

The COVID-19 outbreak has only strengthened the anti-Chinese course. In the United States, China is directly responsible for the emergence and spread of this disease. China's approaches to the United States have undergone radical ideologisation in spirit – "communist China against the democratic United States."

For its part, China has always preferred to avoid open provocations. It refrains from harsh rhetoric against the United States and the West and is well-versed in the retaliatory actions of a hostile person. China's policy is not characterised by the export of its ideological model. Undoubtedly, Chinese leaders are aware that the actions of the United States are not only about raising the stakes for advantageous positions in negotiations and reaching compromises in the future. The worst-case scenario is becoming increasingly obvious: the isolation of the People's Republic of China, the country's withdrawal from high-tech supply chains, the slowdown in economic growth, arms race, and marginalisation in international affairs. China, for its part, has also not established an anti-Western coalition. Russia and China are listed in

American doctrinal documents as enemies separated by commas. But there is no military-political alliance between them, although the partnership is deep, and the level of trust is unprecedented. Another important feature is the maintenance of close economic ties between China and the United States. The same can be said for most of the US allies. The rupture of their economic ties will have global consequences for the world economy. Along with the US tariff policy, restrictions on sanctions were aggressively imposed. The authors of last year's report on the sanctions war between Beijing and Washington noted that the range of measures applied by the United States has expanded. In addition to tariffs, they discussed the strengthening of export controls, restrictions on Chinese investments, financial sanctions, restrictions on imports of Chinese goods, etc. The brunt of the sanctions against China fell on the telecommunications sector.

On May 15, 2019, President D. Trump signed an executive order "On the protection of information and communication technologies and supply chains" and declared a state of emergency due to the threat this sector poses from foreign governments. The state of emergency gives the President the right to impose sanctions as a means of solving the problem. On the same day, the US Department of Commerce included Huawei, the largest manufacturer of telecommunications equipment in China, in its Entity List. The sanctions of the Ministry of Commerce have considerably restricted American companies in the supply of components and technologies to the Chinese company. On the same day, the Ministry of Commerce issued a general license, which allowed exceptions to continue transactions. Yet Huawei's partnership with American companies is now in limbo. Subsequently, the pressure on the company increased. A year after Huawei was included in the sanctions list of the Ministry of Commerce, the department announced new restrictions. Currently, they apply to semiconductors for Huawei, manufactured overseas using American technologies and software.

In August 2020, new restrictions for foreign suppliers followed. The list of Huawei subsidiaries has been expanded. In other words, the company was unable to buy components, for example, from Taiwan, if US technologies and programmes were used to produce them. Democracy and human rights are separate areas of American policy towards China. Two main topics are outlined in this regard: the problem of Hong Kong and the situation in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China (XUAR).

As for Hong Kong, the United States proceeds from the fact that China systematically violates the spirit and the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the transfer of Hong Kong from 1984. The declaration implied that the restoration of China's sovereignty over Hong Kong would preserve its broad autonomy in internal affairs. It referred to the concept of "one country, two

systems", that is, the preservation of the system of power and economic organisation in Hong Kong, different from that of China. The turning point was a series of protests by Hong Kong residents in 2019-2020. The reason for this is the draft of the so-called "extradition law", but the protests reflected a wider range of problems of political and economic autonomy. The United States expressed its full support for the protesters and criticised China's policy. In 2019, Congress passed and the President of the United States signed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act.²⁰

The law obliged the President to apply blocking and visa sanctions against those involved in human rights violations and undermine democracy in Hong Kong. It also recommended that the administration review the conditions for exporting goods to Hong Kong that could be used to monitor or disperse demonstrations. In 2020, after China adopted a new law on Hong Kong's self-government, all sanctions expanded. Article 7 defined the sanctions against foreign financial institutions that are responsible for transactions with persons that violate the provisions of the 1984 Declaration. This is quite a serious addition since Hong Kong's large banks are at risk of being blocked or sanctioned. Given their strong integration into the global financial system, blocking can lead to huge losses. In response to the protests and the open support of the West, Beijing has tightened national legislation against Hong Kong. The US President, in turn, revoked the status of Hong Kong as a special partner of the United States and exercised his under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA, 1977)²¹, that is, at the executive level, he approved sanctions due to the situation in Hong Kong. During 2020, the US Treasury Department imposed blocking sanctions against several Chinese officials who in Washington are considered to be involved in the suppression of protests, amendments to legislation, etc.

Conclusions

The study provides a thorough examination of US-China relations in the post-crisis era, assessing the interactions between the two nations at bilateral, regional, and global dimensions. It offers a distinctive viewpoint by analysing the foreign policy strategies of both the United States and China, transcending the conventional emphasis on US foreign policy influences. The research systematically identifies key developments from

²⁰ Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, 2019;

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1838/text>, accessed on 13.05.2024;

²¹ International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 1977;

https://ru.abcdef.wiki/wiki/International_Emergency_Economic_Powers_Act, accessed on 13.05.2024;

American and Chinese expert perspectives, emphasizing the changing positions of the two powers in the international system and the implications of China's ascent for the global community. The study's primary contribution is the formulation of a conceptual model that categorizes US-China relations into three distinct levels: bilateral, regional, and global interactions. This model exemplifies the inherent contradictions between the foreign policy objectives of the United States and China, especially concerning their national interests and geopolitical aspirations. The study conducts a thorough analysis of these contradictions across multiple regions, including Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa, where China has reinforced its regional influence on the United States.

The study highlights substantial challenges in US-China relations while also pinpointing potential avenues for collaboration, especially in tackling global and regional issues like climate change. The dynamic characteristics of multilateralism, serving as both a source of contention and a possibility for cooperation, are examined, focusing on the United States strategy of institutional rivalry and China's counteraction through global engagement initiatives. Despite the two countries contending with entrenched contradictions, especially concerning national security, trade, and regional hegemony, opportunities for cooperation in tackling global challenges persist. The future course of US-China relations will likely hinge on how both nations manage these contradictions while pursuing avenues for dialogue and collaboration.

Future research on US-China relations should focus on the regional implications of their rivalry, especially in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America while analysing how smaller nations manoeuvre within these dynamics. The ramifications of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing on global governance and international norms require thorough examination. Non-traditional security concerns, including cybersecurity, climate change, and public health, warrant exploration as potential avenues for US-China collaboration. Moreover, the function of international institutions in conflict management and promoting cooperation between the two powers requires further examination, particularly regarding potential reforms.

Declaration

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PROSPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ROBOTISATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR ACCOUNTING OF FINANCIAL OPERATIONS OF THE ENTERPRISE

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Abstract: *The article considers the need to study the issues of robotic process automation (hereinafter - RPA) and the use of artificial intelligence (hereinafter - AI) in the accounting system for financial (cash) operations. The necessity of using RPA and AI for cash operations through the introduction of robo-cash registers is substantiated. The main tasks and duties that will be performed by the robo-cash register based on RPA and AI, as well as the accountant who will be responsible for this area of accounting, are outlined. Approaches to the technological arrangement of the robo-cash register are disclosed. The prospect of increasing control over financial transactions with the use of AI is revealed due to the possibility of prompt detection of criminal acts and fraudulent schemes, processing of large data sets, the ability of the AI system to update and learn. It is noted that some processes in accounting are quite difficult to automate, because they require a creative approach. The need to make changes to the legal framework in connection with the wide introduction of RPA and AI in the socio-economic development of society, as well as for operations related to cash circulation, is outlined. It is noted that the use of RPA and AI systems is associated with the threat of cyber attacks and requires strengthening of the cyber protection of the entire accounting system of the enterprise, including the financial one. The advantages and disadvantages of using RPA and AI for cash operations are identified. The prospects for the development of the accounting profession and the need for accountants to acquire a new set of skills and competencies to meet today's requirements related to the rapid development of RPA and AI are outlined.*

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Keywords: *robotic process automation (RPA), artificial intelligence (AI), accounting, cash register, robo-cash register, cash operations, finance, control.*

Introduction

At the current stage of the development of society, technologies related to the use of RPA and AI in the field of accounting, management accounting, auditing, control and taxation are becoming more and more widespread. The implementation of RPA and AI in the accounting and management accounting system is extremely important and requires active research to develop their great potential in this area. Of course, an enterprise investing in RPA and AI is a financially costly step, but at the same time it is an investment in innovative technologies that will take the enterprise to a new level, save time and resources.

Analysis of recent research and publications

Ocean Tomo notes that the race to develop artificial intelligence and calls for its regulation are heating up around the world. In November 2023, Union representatives from 28 countries, including the US, UK, China and Europe met to work together to address and contain the potential problems of harmful risks from the use of AI. These countries are setting guidelines for risk management while balancing the benefits of this emerging new technology¹.

As noted in the history study AI, Michael Haenlein and Andreas Kaplan (2019b) «The word Artificial Intelligence was then officially coined about six years later, when in 1956 Marvin Minsky and John McCarthy (a computer scientist at Stanford) hosted the approximately eight-week-long Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence (DSRPAI) at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire»². From this it follows that in the 68 years since the research project at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and the subsequent formulation of the interpretation of AI, there has been a significant leap in the development of this system in all spheres of human activity, in the research of which significant financial resources have been invested. We observe the results of the rapid development of AI today and there are many fears from the heads of states, experts in the field of IT technologies, about getting out of control of the development of AI, because this system can learn by itself.

¹ Ocean Tomo. Retrieved from: https://www2.oceantomo.com/l/710293/2024-02-01/9qpr97/710293/17068443543mw45Hh9/2024_JS_Held_Global_Risk_Report_Artificial_Intelligence.pdf

² A.-M., Kaplan and M., Haenlein, “A Brief History of Artificial Intelligence: On the Past, Present, and Future of Artificial Intelligence”, *California Management Review*, 61/4 (July 2019), 1-10.

In the context of technology regulation AI Michael Haenlein and Andreas Kaplan (2019b) raise relevant issues, namely: «But how do we regulate a technology that is constantly evolving by itself and one that few experts, let alone politicians, fully understand? How do we overcome the challenge of being sufficiently broad to allow for future evolutions in this fast-moving world and sufficiently precise to avoid everything being considered as AI? »³.

Cooper et al. conducted a study on the benefits, opportunities and challenges of implementing RPA in accounting, which was supposed to be a catalyst for stimulating future research in this field. Also, this study examined the use of RPA software in the form of bots in the field of public accounting and determined their effectiveness⁴.

Considering the high scientific level of publications on RPA and AI implementation issues, including in accounting, there are still many aspects that require further study and development. Aspects need to be developed that will make it possible to use the full power of RPA and AI systems for all accounting processes in the enterprise.

The purpose of the study is to improve and develop approaches to the implementation of the RPA and AI system in the company's accounting, in terms of financial (cash) operations.

Presentation of the main research material. Improvement and development of approaches to the implementation of the RPA and AI system for financial (cash) operations in the article, first of all, covered the following areas of research: substantiation of the importance and necessity of using RPA and AI for cash operations; outlining the tasks that will be performed by RPA and AI, and which by the accountant; the basics of the technical arrangement of the robo-cash register; information that can be generated using AI at the checkout; control of financial transactions; the need to change the legal framework regarding operations related to cash circulation; cyber protection; advantages and disadvantages of using RPA and AI for cash registers; prospects for the development of the accounting profession. Presentation of the main research material. Improvement and development of approaches to the implementation of the RPA and AI system for financial (cash) operations in the article, first of all, covered the following areas of research: substantiation of the importance and necessity

³ A.-M., Kaplan and M., Haenlein, "A Brief History of Artificial Intelligence: On the Past, Present, and Future of Artificial Intelligence", *California Management Review*, 61/4 (July 2019), 1-10.

⁴ L.A., Cooper, D.K., Holderness, T.L., Sorensen and D.A., Wood, "Robotic process automation in public accounting", *Accounting Horizons*, 33 (4), (2019), 15-35. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2308/acch-52466>

of using RPA and AI for cash operations; outlining the tasks that will be performed by RPA and AI, and which by the accountant; the basics of the technical arrangement of the robo-cash register; information that can be generated using AI at the checkout; control of financial transactions; the need to change the legal framework regarding operations related to cash circulation; cyber protection; advantages and disadvantages of using RPA and AI for cash registers; prospects for the development of the accounting profession.

Van der Aalst et al. robotic process automation - is the automation of service tasks that reproduce the work performed by humans. With the help of this technology, standardized, repetitive tasks and actions are automated based on established rules according to a defined model, with the aim of obtaining the best results from data or information processing.⁵

For example, the RPA system in accounting can copy and paste data, open and extract documents from e-mail, generate primary documents (invoices, cash documents, etc.), process incoming primary documentation, create reports, automatically send documents, etc.

Interpretation of artificial intelligence by scientists Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein is revealed as «a system's ability to interpret external data correctly, to learn from such data, and to use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation» For example, the RPA system in accounting can copy and paste data, open and extract documents from e-mail, generate primary documents (invoices, cash documents, etc.), process incoming primary documentation, create reports, automatically send documents, etc.

Interpretation of artificial intelligence by scientists Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein is revealed as «a system's ability to interpret external data correctly, to learn from such data, and to use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation».⁶

RPA and AI are closely related and can be used separately or together. Of course, when they are used together, it is a more powerful tool.

As stated in the study Jorge Ribeiro et al., «Industry 4.0 - the revolution we are experiencing today - lives on the fusion of the Internet of Things, intelligent automation, intelligent devices and processes and cyber-physical systems. The combination of all these concepts and technologies brings a significant change in industrial processes, affecting the workflow of digital

⁵ W. M., van der Aalst, M., Bichler and A., Heinzl, "Robotic Process Automation", *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, (2018), 60, 269–272. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-018-0542-4>

⁶ A.-M., Kaplan and M., Haenlein, "Siri, Siri, in My Hand: Who's the Fairest in the Land? On the Interpretations, Illustrations, and Implications of Artificial Intelligence," *Business Horizons*, 62/1 (2019a), (January/February 2019), 15-25.

processes throughout the company. Nowadays, and to improve these processes, they are incorporating automation of some steps through robots (RPA). In addition, RPA nowadays incorporates, intelligent techniques and algorithms (AI), which allows to reach levels of intelligence in the automation of processes within a company».⁷

In this study, the attention is mainly focused on the accounting of financial and settlement operations of the enterprise, namely cash, because fraud often occurs in this area of accounting. Cash is the most liquid asset that requires increased control. The use of RPA and AI in the cash register is necessary, because the work of the cashier is not difficult, does not require a creative approach, and it should be robotic in the first place. Practice shows that there are days when no one uses the services of the cashier at the enterprise, due to the lack of cash transactions, and the salary of the accountant-cashier for these days will have to be paid. Also, an employee may get sick and need to find a replacement.

To develop an effective and efficient RPA system using artificial intelligence, it is necessary to take into account a wide range of factors that affect the functioning and development of the enterprise's financial system.

The main tasks and duties that will be performed by the robo-cash register based on RPA and AI are outlined, as well as the accountant who will be responsible for this part of the accounting.

1. The robo-cash register carries out operations related to the acceptance and issuance of cash in different currencies, stores all accepted values.

2. The accountant receives cash from the bank and fills the robo-cash register. The robo-cash register in electronic mode records in the Journal of registration of revenue and expenditure cash documents and the Cash Book transactions for receiving and issuing funds for each revenue and expenditure cash document at the time of the transaction.

3. The robo-cash register electronically checks the availability and establishes the authenticity of the signature of the manager, the chief accountant (it can be an electronic digital signature). On expenditure documents, the presence of a permission letter of the manager (persons authorized by him) is similarly checked, and the presence of other details on income cash orders and expenditure documents is established. The availability of all attachments specified in these documents (invoices, invoices, statements, certificates, etc.) is checked. If the robot finds non-compliance with the requirements for document design, or the absence of

⁷ J., Ribeiro, R., Lima, T., Eckhardt and S., Paiva, "Robotic Process Automation and Artificial Intelligence in Industry 4.0 – A Literature review," *Procedia Computer Science*. Volume 181 (2021), 51-58. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2021.01.104>

attachments, it will return the documents to the accounting department for revision.

4. The robo-cash register issues a receipt after depositing cash in the cash register.

5. An employee of the accounting department electronically creates an expense cash order, which is signed by the head of the enterprise and the chief accountant or an authorized person (electronic signatures). In the event that additional supporting documents (loan agreement, statement, invoice) bearing the manager's signature are attached to the disbursement cash order, then his signature on the disbursement cash order is not mandatory. The robo-cash register forms an expenditure cash order in its final version for the issued amount, certifying the identity and receiving the electronic signature of the recipient of the funds, and simultaneously registers it in the Journal of registration of revenue and expenditure cash documents.

6. At the end of each working day, the robo-cash register withdraws the available balance of cash and electronically submits the cashier's report to the accounting department of the enterprise, which is confirmed by profitable cash orders and expenditure documents.

7. The accountant scans all necessary documents and uploads invoices, invoices, statements, certificates, orders, orders, contracts into the electronic accounting system, and the robo-cash register checks the document and based on it performs revenue and expense cash operations.

8. The robo-cash register can store monetary documents, securities, etc.

A wider range of possibilities, in addition to its immediate functions, that the robo-cash register can perform is described below in the study.

From the above, it is clear that the duties of a cashier can be performed by a robo-cash register based on RPA and AI. This will free the accountant's time from the monotonous manual work of processing cash documents. It is predicted that a total of 85% of operations related to cash flow should be performed by the robo-cash register, and the accountant - 15%.

The technological development of the robo-cash register should be based on technologies that already work in the banking system, namely the use of ATMs and self-service payment terminals. The technological functions of these devices should be taken as a basis and improved as much as possible to create a robotic cash register. Technically, the robo-cashier should look like a deposit ATM, but with much wider functions. The robo-cash register will be a complex device, because it must perform operations of a different nature (from receiving and issuing cash, processing documents, issuing documents confirming the operation, etc.) that take place in the cash register, in order to ensure the high-quality performance

of all cashier functions and at the same time generate information at the request of users. Also, the robo-cash register should have departments for keeping securities and monetary documents.

It should be an electronic software and technical complex with a built-in computer, intended for the implementation of automated operations of issuing and receiving cash in various currencies, transferring electronic documents to the accounting department about operations performed with cash. The cash register is built on the basis of RPA systems and supplemented with AI. This complex provides for the automated compilation of documents confirming the relevant operations with the issuance of paper supporting documents. It must be equipped with an optical character recognition system, a camera. Optical character recognition systems and a sufficiently flexible hierarchical approval and exception system are necessary to meet the needs of the accounting industry (EY 2016a)⁸.

The robo-cash register must be equipped with technology that will optically recognize text in printed or manually generated documents, extract information, record, store and transmit it and, if necessary, create the necessary document. The robo-cash register should be arranged in such a way that primary documents can be sent to a special e-mail, where the RPA and AI system will extract all the necessary information. This will make it possible to reduce routine work.

A robo-cash register can be equipped with a chatbot that will use AI to answer standardized (same) questions, which will free up the time of employees. A chatbot can be configured to respond to both voice and text messages, providing standardized responses to queries. Processing of voice commands by the AI system will speed up the process of serving customers and employees and make work with the robo-cashier more convenient.

The chatbot will be able to recognize the customer's request, give an answer immediately or suggest the necessary course of action to solve the user's need. The order of actions should be described step by step to obtain the required result. Also, the robo-cash register should be equipped with a webcam, which will increase the level of control, it should provide for biometric authentication (recognition of the face or fingerprints) to confirm the identity of customers and employees. The camera can be arranged in such a way that it can recognize the features of the human face to compare the obtained result with the database of the robo-cash register.

⁸ EY (2016a). Robotic process automation in the Finance function of the future. Retrieved from: [https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY__Robotic_process_automation_in_the_Finance_function_of_the_future/\\$FILE/EY-robotic-process-automation-in-the-finance-function-of-the-future-2016.pdf](https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY__Robotic_process_automation_in_the_Finance_function_of_the_future/$FILE/EY-robotic-process-automation-in-the-finance-function-of-the-future-2016.pdf)

The robo-cash register must be equipped with an interactive touch panel, where it will be possible to display several documents on the screen at the same time in one user interface. For example, if you go to a specific page of the cash book by the required date and touch the tape with the entry where the expenditure cash order (VKO) No. 15 «A loan was issued to the employee Boyko M.P.» will be indicated, the document will immediately open - Loan agreement to the employee, on the basis of which funds were issued, which will be valuable during ongoing control and conducting external and internal audits.

According to Ernst & Young, digitization, and especially machine learning, must be increased to fully unlock potential and create value (EY 2018b)⁹. We agree with this statement, digitalization and machine learning in the field of cash operations will speed up the process of robotization and its application in other areas of accounting. In general, this will make it possible to cover the entire accounting system at the enterprise with the RPA system with AI.

With the implementation of the use of robo-cash registers, the equipment of the cash register premises will be different. There will be no need for furniture for the cashier's workplace, no need for computer equipment, a printer, a safe for storing cash and monetary documents. The common thing is that the robo-cash register must also be located in a separate room, which must be equipped with a video camera and must be locked from the middle for replenishment operations or withdrawal of cash from the robotic cash register.

In the special literature on the organization of accounting, the document flow charts of cash transactions, which are schematically similar to each other, are described in detail. The cashier must adhere to the document flow schedule for the proper and step-by-step processing of cash documents and their transfer to the accounting department. The document flow schedule should hang near the cashier's workplace and be included in the general document flow schedule of the enterprise. With the introduction of the robo-cash register, all cash register documents will be generated automatically, displayed almost simultaneously in all registers, journals, information, and the Cash book. The order of document circulation will be prescribed in a computer program and performed in an automated mode. Therefore, with the introduction of technologies related to the use of RPA and AI, the document flow schedule of cash operations will mainly concern the accountant in the part of hours that are needed to replenish the robo-cash register with cash and withdraw it for delivery to the bank.

⁹ EY (2018b). Intelligent automation Reshaping the future of work with robots. Retrieved from: [https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY_intelligent_automation/\\$FILE/EY-intelligent-automation.pdf](https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY_intelligent_automation/$FILE/EY-intelligent-automation.pdf)

Implementation of the robo-cash register requires the inclusion in the job description of the responsible accountant of the duties that he will perform for the efficient functioning of the robo-cash register. The responsible employee will manage his area of work, and if necessary, spend a small part of the time to replenish the robo-cash register with cash, or deposit cash in the bank.

As noted in Investory. News, now a number of countries (for example, China, India, the Netherlands, Malaysia, the UAE, Indonesia) are popularizing the rejection of cash and the complete transition to cashless payments. In these countries, the electronic payments sector is growing rapidly. In general, there has been an increase in the number of digital transactions in many countries around the world due to the Covid-19 pandemic¹⁰.

In our opinion, despite the active implementation of electronic payments for the transition to a cashless society, cash remains an important method of payment. The complete rejection of cash circulation and the transition exclusively to cashless payments will introduce inconvenience and restrictions in the activities of enterprises and people. We must take care to meet the needs of each individual, and a wide range of different payment options will contribute to this. Non-cash payments must be ensured by the availability of such components as a smartphone, computer, plastic card, Internet, electricity, etc., which will not work in blackouts or massive cyber attacks. It should be taken into account that in today's unstable conditions (wars, ecological cataclysms) such situations can occur. There is also a category of people who do not know how to use even plastic cards, or live in an area where there is no Internet. A complete transition to cashless circulation will also severely limit a person in case of blocking all his accounts. The above-mentioned justifies the need for the development of the direction of robotization of cash operations.

With the simultaneous application of RPA and AI, it is possible to process significant volumes of data obtained during the entire period of use of the system, which will allow the formation of versatile and useful information for selected periods of the enterprise's operation. With the help of AI, a wide range of answers can be generated to various questions related to the cash flow of the enterprise for a set period, namely:

- what is the average cash turnover per day in the established period (month, year)?
- which counterparty carries out the most cash transactions through the cash register?
- what types of cash transactions have the largest specific weight?

¹⁰ Investory. News. Retrieved from: <https://investory.news/bez-paperovix-groshej-yak-rik-pandemii-stav-poshtovxom-do-perexodu-na-bezgotivkovi-rozrazunki/>

- what is the turnover of different types of currencies in the cash register for a certain period?
- on which days of the week are the most (least) cash transactions?
- where during cash transactions the most errors occur (for example, in generated invoices or invoices, in work with a specific counterparty, certain types of cash transactions, etc.).

Of course, the range of questions that AI can answer can be much wider.

Control over financial transactions. With the help of AI, possible fraudulent operations can be registered in the software, which will allow to quickly detect criminal activities, block the system in time and report a danger to the security service. An important advantage of AI is that it can quickly process large amounts of data, which is valuable for detecting fraudulent schemes. The AI system is able to update and learn, learning new fraudulent activities for prompt detection.

The specificity of the cash register is that the cashier deals with cash in different currencies and cannot always detect fake bills. Therefore, the robo-cash register must be equipped with a special system for checking funds in national and foreign currency. In the robotic cash register, the serial numbers of bills and the hours when they were deposited can be recorded, which is necessary to identify the person who deposited the fake money.

With the introduction of the robo-cash register, the inventory of the cash register will be simplified, the need for sudden checks by the cashier will disappear, access to the necessary information about the presence of cash and other valuables in the cash register will be available throughout the working day.

Of course, the introduction of RPA and AI in the cash register will require significant changes to the legal framework for regulating the circulation of cash transactions. It is necessary to develop new documents in which a balance will be observed between ensuring the proper protection of all categories of data and the procedure for accessing this data, its processing and use. The result of the activity of the cash register will also be the collection and accumulation of data, which will be processed and used by AI in further activities, which must also be described by law. The development of legislation at the international and national levels regarding the use of AI for the socio-economic development of society today is an extremely important task, the failure of which is associated with a number of risks for ensuring information security and cyber security.

Cyber protection. The modern world conducts business under the threat of cyber attacks, which requires strengthening the cyber protection of the entire accounting system of the enterprise, including the financial one. The use of AI for financial transactions is of particular importance, because

in the case of a cybercrime, not only a system failure is possible, but also the loss of financial resources.

The danger of using RPA and AI systems is related to how sophisticated the system is and whether it will be possible to fraudulently manipulate or hack it. The enterprise should introduce an increased level of control over those employees who will work with the RPA and AI system.

Scholars Cooper et al. also emphasize that there are concerns related to the protection of business processes and the flow of information between different jurisdictions¹¹.

The benefits of using RPA and AI for checkout. The most important issue regarding the decision to implement RPA at the enterprise will be the calculation of the benefits that the enterprise should receive and the costs incurred. When conducting such calculations, there will be errors, because the real benefit from such an innovation can be calculated only after RPA will be used in the company's activities for a certain period.

When it becomes necessary during work with the RPA system to modify work processes, it will be enough to change the script by rewriting the work rules for the robot. This is much more effective than retraining workers.

The robotization of the cash register will contribute to the reduction of paper circulation in the accounting department. The receipt of funds from the counterparty and the issuance of cash will be accompanied by the issuance of a confirming document, and the documents that were previously stored in the cash register (for example, the Cash book or the Journal of registration of income and expenditure cash documents) will be generated in electronic form.

It will not be possible to rewrite cash documents in case of making a mistake or for committing fraudulent actions. Each operation at the cash register will be instantly recorded by the robo-cash register, which will significantly increase the level of control and without proper documentation, the operation cannot take place.

The use of RPA and AI for cash operations will allow you to free up the accountant's time, save money, and expand the opportunities for the formation and use of various generated information, which are the main advantages of implementing this technology.

When implementing the RPA and AI system at the enterprise, managers expect that these measures will greatly facilitate the work of accountants and increase the efficiency of working with monetary resources and strengthen the level of control.

¹¹ L. A., Cooper, D. K., Holderness, T. L., Sorensen and D. A., Wood, "Robotic process automation in public accounting," *Accounting Horizons*, 33 (4), (2019). 15-35. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2308/acch-52466>

Disadvantages (problem points) of using RPA and AI. Of course, there are accounting tasks that require the professional judgment of the accountant, a creative approach, quick identification (fulfillment) of priority (non-standard) tasks or decision-making under the influence of factors that may be unknown to RPA and AI. Such processes are rather difficult to automate. You should also treat the results of answers generated by AI with caution without losing critical thinking. Artificial intelligence can make mistakes in cases where the answer is based on insufficient or poor-quality data. Therefore, at the current stage of technology development, it is necessary to clearly outline the tasks that can be solved with the help of RPA and AI, and which require human intellectual work. A valuable human quality for effective teamwork is emotional intelligence, which robots do not possess.

Emotional intelligence means the following Savchuk «it is an integrative personal property that is determined by the dynamic unity of affect and intelligence through the interaction of emotional, cognitive, conative and motivational features and is aimed at understanding one's own emotions and the emotional experiences of others, provides management of the emotional state, subjugation of emotions mind, promotes self-knowledge and self-realization through the enrichment of emotional and social experience»¹².

The presence of a sufficient number of employees in the team with a high level of emotional intelligence makes it possible to create a harmonious environment in the company, which will make it possible to increase the level of efficiency in the performance of tasks.

The problem is the human factor, which consists in the fact that many employees have a negative perception of various innovations that require spending intellectual resources on mastering the latest technologies.

Prospects for the development of the accounting profession. Accountants are anxiously awaiting the adoption of RPA and AI, but they fear that these innovations will put them out of work, which may prompt them to create artificial barriers to slow down this activity. A modern accountant must master, strengthen and develop a set of new skills and competencies. According to some scientists, the accounting profession may lose its relevance in the future and disappear due to rapid technological development where robots with built-in AI will allow to completely replace a person. In our opinion, the accounting profession will not disappear, it will become more complicated in connection with modern requirements, which will expand its influence on business decisions and bring it to a new level,

¹² M. R., Savchuk, "Theoretical basis of the research of emotional intelligence," *Efficient economy*, 5, (2017). doi: <http://www.economy.nayka.com.ua/?op=1&z=5608>

where the accountant will engage in more analytical and predictive work, applying a creative approach and performing more complex tasks .

Regarding the skills that modern accountants should possess in connection with the introduction of RPA and AI in accounting, we agree with Bowen et al., who note the following «nowadays increases the role of accountants, but is more important to improve skills like analysis, critical and strategic thinking. Workers will need to adapt, the relationships with customers and suppliers need to be improved, costs will be reduced. The functions of accounting will relate to the functions of a financial controller and CFO»¹³. Feleaga and Dumitrascu зазначають «There will be new competences and skills that must be improved, such as: learning to learn; long life learning; self learning; openness for new opportunities; analytic skills; creativity; ability to adapt to new applications»¹⁴.

If the accountant does not acquire new skills and competencies related to the development of RPA and AI in a timely manner, he will lose his job, and his place will be taken by a more qualified employee. Also, the accountant will need to master an important part of the work, such as controlling the work of RPA and AI. Robotization will contribute to the emergence of new professions related to the maintenance of robots and their improvement.

Conclusions

1. The implementation of RPA and AI in the accounting system should be continued, which is an investment in innovative technologies that will take the company to a new level, save time and resources. RPA and AI are closely related, they can be used separately and together, their use together is a more powerful tool. The application of RPA and AI to cash operations is necessary due to the presence of a significant number of the same type of operations, the possibility of unscrupulous actions in this area of accounting, because the cashier's work is not difficult and does not require a creative approach.

2. A clear outline and delineation of the main tasks and responsibilities that will be performed by the robo-cash register based on RPA and AI, as well as the accountant who will be responsible for this area of accounting will make it possible to effectively organize the process of robotization of

¹³ R., Bowen, J, Jollineau and L, Margheim “Irobot Corporation’s Intellectual Property: Accounting for Research and Development Under U.S. GAAP Versus IFRS”, *Journal of Business Case Studies*, (July/August 2013) Vol. 9, No. 4, 321-331.

¹⁴ L., Feleaga and L.-M., Dumitrascu, “Robot, the orchestra conductor in accounting”, *In Proceedings of the 13th International Conference Accounting and Management Information Systems AMIS*, Bucharest, Romania, 2018, 245–253. Retrieved from: <https://amis.ase.ro/2018/docs/AMIS2018Proceedings.pdf>

this area of accounting. With the introduction of the robo-cash register, all cash register documents will be generated automatically, displayed almost simultaneously in all registers, journals, information, and the Cash book. The order of document circulation will be prescribed in a computer program and performed in an automated mode. This will free the accountant's time from the monotonous manual work of processing cash documents. It is predicted that a total of 85% of operations related to cash flow should be performed by the robo-cash register, and the accountant - 15%.

3. The technological development of the robo-cash register should be based on technologies that already work in the banking system (ATMs, self-service payment terminals). Technically, the robo-cash register should look like a deposit ATM with wider functions (perform cash receipt and withdrawal operations, document processing, issuing documents confirming the operation, etc.) and simultaneously generate information on user requests. It must be equipped with an optical character recognition system, a camera, compartments for storing monetary documents and securities. The robo-cash register should be equipped with a chatbot that will use AI to provide answers to standardized questions, which will free up the time of employees. The robo-cash register must be equipped with an interactive touch panel, where it will be possible to display several documents on the screen at the same time in one user interface.

4. The use of AI will make it possible to generate a wide range of answers to various questions related to the flow of cash in the enterprise for a selected period, which will make it possible to make effective management decisions. When working with AI, one should treat the answers generated by it with caution due to the possibility of errors due to the use of insufficient or poor-quality data.

5. The active implementation of electronic payments for the transition to a cashless society should not completely exclude cash. It should remain an important payment method that will satisfy the needs of different categories of users. A complete rejection of cash circulation in today's unstable conditions (wars, environmental disasters, blackouts, massive cyber attacks) will bring inconvenience and restrictions to the activities of enterprises and people.

6. The advantages of using RPA and AI for the cash register are as follows: when modifying the work processes of the RPA system, it will be enough to change the script by rewriting the work rules for the robot, which is more effective than retraining workers; reduction of paper circulation in accounting; elimination of the possibility of rewriting cash register documents, without proper documentation the operation will not take place, which will increase the level of control; freeing up the accountant's

time; savings of monetary resources; formation, accumulation, use of various generated information, etc.

7. Increasing the level of control over financial transactions will be implemented through possible fraudulent transactions recorded in the software, study and constant updating by the AI system of new possible fraudulent actions, processing of large data sets, equipping with a special system for checking funds in national and foreign currency (fixing the serial number of bills and hours of entry), simplification of cash register inventory, which will contribute to prompt detection of crimes.

8. Difficulties in the implementation of RPA and AI include the impossibility of performing some priority (non-standard) tasks or making decisions under the influence of factors that may be unknown to RPA and AI. Robots lack emotional intelligence, which is an important component of effective teamwork. Many employees have a negative perception of various innovations that require spending intellectual resources on mastering the latest technologies.

9. The introduction of RPA and AI in the cash register will require changes to the legal framework for regulating the circulation of cash transactions. The observance of the balance between ensuring the proper protection of all categories of data and the procedure for accessing this data, its AI processing and use in further activities to ensure information security and cyber security should be legislated. For financial operations, the strengthening of cyber protection is of particular importance, because in the case of a cyber crime, not only a failure in the system is possible, but also the loss of financial resources. The danger of using an RPA and AI system is related to its level of perfection, that is, whether it can be fraudulently manipulated or hacked. Employees who will work with the RPA and AI system need increased control.

10. The application of RPA and AI requires the accountant to master, strengthen and develop an additional set of skills and competencies. The accounting profession will not disappear, it will become more complicated in connection with modern requirements, which will expand its influence on business decisions and bring it to a new level, its work will become more analytical and predictive with the use of a creative approach. Robotization will contribute to the emergence of new professions related to the maintenance of robots and their improvement.

The above-mentioned proposals will contribute to the improvement of the accounting of financial transactions at the enterprise, as well as the reduction of accounting routine work, saving resources, speeding up business processes and can be used in foreign practice.

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EVOLUTION OF MOLDOVAN FOREIGN TRADE IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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Abstract: *This study presents the analysis of the Moldova's foreign trade evolution with the European Union for the period 2017-2023. The purpose of this study is to analyse the trends of the Moldova's foreign trade during this period and to reveal the place of the Republic of Moldova between the EU-countries and to elaborate the forecast of external trade for the current year. The study is based on the statistical data from the National Bureau of Statistics and also, the data from international databases, including database of Comtrade (www.comtrade.com). The following research methods were used: analysis of relevant documents and publications, analysis of the statistical data, synthesis, logical, modeling, econometric analysis. Informational support includes specialized publications from this domein. Econometric modeling of the external sector was applied for the forecasting. This forecast is the essential tool for government, business and researchers. The main conclusion is that efforts should be made to diversify the export base to reduce dependence on a few products or markets. This will help stabilize export revenues and mitigate the impact of external shocks.*

Keywords: *foreign trade, import, export, EU market, tariff quota valorization, Republic of Moldova.*

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Introduction

The Republic of Moldova faces a number of long-term challenges at national and international level, which will have significant consequences in the coming decades. Uncertainty and unpredictability are on the rise and therefore new development paradigms need to be applied, taking into account domestic capacities and limited environmental resources. While there are many development challenges, there are also many opportunities that can and should be realized. Bridging the economic gap to large regional markets and reaping the benefits of openness is key to overcoming Moldova's structural constraints and stimulating export-led growth, and becoming a real participant in the World Market.

Thus, the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova, on the one hand, and the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, on the other hand, is a comprehensive international treaty, a document with clear legal effects, setting out the relations between the parties and the reforms to be implemented by the Republic of Moldova. The agreement also aims to establish the Common and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (CCFTA) - in fact, one of the most important parts of the whole agreement. Beyond trade liberalization, however, the agreement aims to modernize Moldova by aligning it with EU rules and standards in all areas, and these rules and standards generally correspond to international best practice¹.

At the same time, on 27 June 2023, the Free Trade Agreement was signed with the countries of the European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland). The conclusion of the Agreement will strengthen economic cooperation between the countries, facilitate trade in goods and services, eliminate customs duties on imports of industrial products and grant market access concessions for agricultural products. The document also includes provisions on electronic commerce. As the Minister of Economic Development and Digitization noted, the signing of the Free Trade Agreement with the European Free Trade Association opens the doors for Moldovan products in a high-quality trade environment, providing access to a diverse

¹ *Moldovan products will reach the world's biggest markets: the Republic of Moldova and EFTA have signed the Free Trade Agreement. Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization. Available at: <https://mded.gov.md/produsele-moldovenesti-vor-ajunge-pe-cele-mai-bogate-piete-ale-lumii-r-moldova-si-efta-au-semnat-acordul-de-liber-schimb/>*

consumer segment willing to pay premium prices for high-quality goods. This offers huge growth potential for Moldovan exporters and can generate significant revenue for the country's economy².

The Protocol of Amendment between the Republic of Moldova and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was also signed, which provides for the extension of trade liberalization with the Republic of Moldova by the complete elimination of customs duties on the import of agricultural products originating in the Republic of Moldova into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for a period of 5 years. Products subject to quantitative limits under the Strategic Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreement are: table grapes, fresh apples, cherries, plums, plums, grape juice, tomatoes and garlic. In addition, the initiative also provides for the abolition of the provisions on entry price ceilings for the agricultural products listed in the Agreement, such as cucumbers, pumpkins, pears, apricots, peaches, etc.

The agreement will help to increase trade, expand economic cooperation between the states, as well as provide new opportunities for the development and reorientation of Moldova's foreign trade in the context of the crisis in the region. This will directly help Moldovan producers to cope with the loss of its main markets and transit centers for these key agricultural products.

In this paper the authors aim to research the relationship between the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the foreign trade of our country, as well as to identify the evolution of foreign trade since the signing of the agreement. Trade relations between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union are a fundamental element in the process of development and consolidation of our country. Bilateral trade between the Republic of Moldova and the EU has developed rapidly recently, due to the European Union's decision in 2008 to open its market unilaterally to the Republic of Moldova within the Autonomous Trade Preferences.

Literature review

There is no doubt that foreign trade bring benefits to countries and civilizations. It contributes to increased productivity, exchange of knowledge and technology, diversification of markets and resources, and improved international relations. It also facilitates access to goods and services that are not available locally, stimulates innovation and

²V. Nica, *How much wine, fruit and vegetables does the Republic of Moldova export to the East and how useful is the free trade agreement with the CIS?* Available at: <https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/cate-vinuri-fructe-si-legume-exporta-r-moldova-in-est-si-cat-de-util-mai-este-acordul-de-liber-schimb-cu-csi-/32498577.html>, 2023

competitiveness, and can lead to higher living standards for the population. External trade plays a key role in sustainable economic development and the integration of countries into the global economy.

Foreign trade analysis and forecasting are indispensable tools for any modern economy, helping to create a clear and well-informed view of global economic dynamics and to develop effective strategies for growth.

Econometric modeling is a frequently used tool in the process of analyzing a country's external sector. One of the purposes of such type of analysis is to determine the factors influencing exports and imports, including the quantitative determination of this influence in the form of short-term and long-term elasticity coefficients. In this case the logarithmic form of the regression is indicated, and the determination of the long-term elasticity coefficient implies the inclusion of the endogenous lag factor in the regression, if this form is confirmed by econometric testing. The logarithmic form of the regression mitigates heteroskedasticity³, which is usually present in econometric models estimated on the basis of time samples.

Econometric models are used to forecast foreign trade indicators⁴. Techniques such as ARIMA, VAR, and cointegration models are used to improve forecast precision and accuracy, often incorporating methods to deal with seasonality, trends, and other data characteristics. Cointegration analysis suggests⁵ that there is a long-term equilibrium relationship between economic growth and foreign trade. The Granger causality test allows to determine the cause-effect relationship and as a result analyze economic impulses.

In analyzing and forecasting bilateral trade it is indicated to use the gravity model⁶, which is a powerful tool⁷, providing a thorough

³ M.R. Ullah, "An econometric analysis of export and import on economic growth of Bangladesh". *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management United Kingdom* ISSN 2348 0386 Vol. VIII, Issue 1, 2020. pp.178-208. Available at: <https://ijecm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/8112.pdf>

⁴ S.P. Ghauri, R. R. Ahmed, D. Streimikiene, J. Streimikis, "Forecasting Exports and Imports by using Autoregressive (AR) with Seasonal Dummies and Box-Jenkins Approaches: A Case of Pakistan". *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*, 2020 31(3), pp. 291-301. Available at: <https://inze.ktu.lt/index.php/EE/article/view/25323>

⁵ M.El. Kotbi, F.Z. Achour, "Trade openness and Moroccan economic growth: econometric modeling". *International Journal on Optimization and Applications*, Vol. 03 Issue No. 02, 2023, pp. 1-10. Available at:

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⁶ E.D. Viorica, "Econometric Estimation of a Gravity Model for the External Trade of Romania ". *Journal of Eastern Europe Research in Business & Economics*. Vol. 2012, Article ID 854058, DOI: 10.5171/2012.854058, Available at:

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⁷ N. Lypko, "The gravity model of trade: the case of Central and Eastern Europe". *LEXONOMICA* Vol. 14(2), 2022, DOI: 10.18690/lexonomica.14.2.187-212.2022. pp. 187-212. Available at: <https://journals.um.si/index.php/lexonomica/article/view/2537/2095>

understanding of the factors influencing trade and helping to formulate effective trade policies.

Foreign trade is a component part of all econometric macro models⁸, used to analyze and forecast macroeconomic indicators. An important step in the process of estimating regressions are the determination of exogenous factors, which are theoretically based and econometrically significant. In most works published in this area it has been demonstrated, that the factors that influence both export and import is economic development⁹. Domestic and foreign prices or the ratio between these magnitudes are other factors that can contribute to the development of export and import of goods. The appreciation of the national currency can influence negatively the export development¹⁰ and positively the import evolution.

Foreign trade analysis and forecasting are essential for understanding economic dynamics and developing effective economic strategies. The use of econometric modeling allows a qualitative forecasting of foreign trade indicators, identifying the factors influencing exports and imports and determining their short- and long-term elasticities. Econometric models, provide an in-depth understanding of the determinants of trade and contribute to the formulation of effective trade policies. Exogenous factors, such as economic development and price fluctuations, play a crucial role in the evolution of foreign trade.

It should be noted that this topic – external trade, is the scientific interest of the authors of this article during many years¹¹.

Methodology

The purpose of the research is to analyze the evolution of foreign trade in the Republic of Moldova, to identify the changes that have took place in the recent period and to develop the forecast for the current year. The

⁸ K. Johansson, “Exports in the Econometric Model KOSMOS“, *Working Papers* 62, 1998, National Institute of Economic Research. Available at:

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⁹ L. Prendi., D. Lika, E. Velaj, “Evaluation of Albanian exports to European countries”, *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*. United Kingdom Vol. VIII, Issue 1. 2015 ISSN 2348 0386, pp. 157-168. Available at: <https://ijecm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/31111.pdf>

¹⁰ M. Pagliacci, C. Anghelache, A. Manole, M. Anghel, “Econometric Model for the Economic and Financial Analysis of Romanian International Trade”. *Romanian Statistical Review* nr. 3. 2016, pp. 53-66. Available at: https://www.revistadestatistica.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/RRS3_2016_A3.pdf

¹¹ T. Colesnicova, T. Iatisin, L. Savga, “Foreign trade of the Republic of Moldova: analysis, evaluation and perspectives”. *Journal of Research on Trade, Management and Economic Development*, Category B. Volume 10, nr. 2(20), 2023. pp. 52-66. ISSN 2345-1424. DOI: 10.59642/JRTMED.2.2023.05, CZU: 339.5(478),

Available at: <https://journals.uccm.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/5.pdf>

macroeconomic model elaborated at INCE in Moldova, which is a system of simultaneous equations converted to recursive form, was used to estimate the evolution of foreign trade.

For the theoretical research on the identifiability conditions of models with simultaneous equations, the form in which the balance equalities have been excluded is convenient. $BY_t + CX_t = \Delta_t, \quad t = 1, 2, \dots, n,$

where $B = (\beta_{ij})$ matrix of size $\overline{m} \times m_y$, – number of coefficients m_y , endogenous variables $Y_t = (y_{t1}, y_{t2}, \dots, y_{tm_y})^T$ in \overline{m} equations; $C = (c_{ij})$ – matrix of size $\overline{m} \times p$ – number of coefficients of predetermined variables $X_t = (x_{t1}, x_{t2}, \dots, x_{tp})^T$ in \overline{m} equations. The vector of residual variables satisfies the following conditions $E\Delta_t \equiv 0$; covariation matrix of residuals $\Sigma_\Delta = E(\Delta_t \Delta_t^T)$ is positive definite and does not depend on t ; $\text{cov}(\Delta_{t_1}, \Delta_{t_2}) = 0$ for $t_1 \neq t_2$ and $E[\delta_{ii}(x_{ij} - Ex_{ij})] = 0$, for $i = \overline{1, m}$ and $j = \overline{1, p}$, which means that the random factor in each equation does not correlate with any of the predetermined variables. The coefficients of matrix B are normalized according to the condition $\beta_{ii} = 1$. Thus, a model consisting of \overline{m} equations with m_y endogenous variables and p predetermined variables.

A particular case of simultaneous equation models are recursive models. In contrary to simultaneous equation models, which allow the description of interdependence relationships between endogenous variables of an economic process or system, recursive models consist in the construction of equations that are logically chained, endogenous variables in the previous equations become exogenous variables in the following equations, i.e. endogenous variables follow a certain rule, a certain order, in their transformation into exogenous variables. This property of recursive models allows the estimation of the simultaneous equation model by using M.C.M.M.P. for each regression separately. Recursive models are considered the simplest in terms of the estimation problem. For this reason, in practical work, these types of models are most often used and most of them are considered to be of this type. In the publications of econometricians, it is argued¹², starting from the essence of economic phenomena, to use specifically models with simultaneous recursive equations.

¹² C. A. Aivazyan, “Fundamentals of Econometrics”. Volume 2, Moscow: Unity-Dana; 2001. 432 p. ISBN 5-238-00305-6

Obtained results and discussions

Foreign trade has a significant impact on the country's economy, as it contributes to changes in the material structure of total gross output, the growth rates of gross domestic product and its value volume. Thus, the total volume of international trade expresses the ability of a country to produce certain goods or provide services beyond national needs. International trade is a country's total external trade (exports, imports and re-exports) with the rest of the world. The Republic of Moldova, like other countries, is co-interested in expanding foreign trade. Export-import operations are the main form of foreign trade.

The basic factors influencing the evolution of international trade in goods in 2022 are the highly productive agricultural year 2021, the increase in international prices of energy resources and food products, the maintenance of growing domestic demand, the capitalization of opportunities offered by cooperation agreements, the war in Ukraine. The significant rise in the price of energy resources and the war in Ukraine, started by Russia, have brought about a number of changes in Moldova's foreign trade.

Thus, the total value of international trade in goods in 2023 amounted to 12722.3 mln USD, decreasing by 6.1% compared to 2022, both exports and imports decreased in this period. Thus, exports decreased by 283.3 mln USD and imports by 545.3 mln USD¹³ (Figure 1).

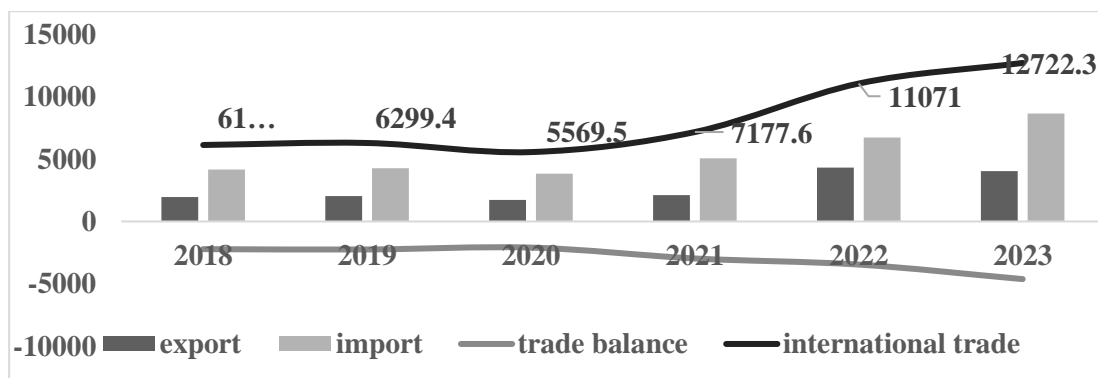


Figure 1. Trends in export, import and trade balance in 2018-2023, mln USD

Source: elaborated by the authors using the data from the National Bureau of Statistics

¹³ T. Iatisin, T. Colesnicova and all., Chapter IV: "External sector". In: Moldovan Economic Trends. Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, National Institute for Economic Research. Chisinau, 2024, nr. 50 (sem. II, 2023). 114 p. ISSN 1857-3126. <https://doi.org/10.36004/nier.met.2024.50> Available at:

<https://rses.ince.md/items/81d4a3f3-9e7d-4819-9ff3-a35b18a47209> (Accessed: October 30, 2024)

The basic factors influencing exports are the decrease in external demand, the decrease in export potential, largely driven by declining industrial production and the reduction in external prices. Thus, exports of goods in 2023 decreased by 6.5% compared to 2022, constituting 4048.6 mln USD.

For the first time Moldova's merchandise exports exceeded the 3 billion USD threshold in 2021. Imports and trade deficit also reached record levels.

Moldova is situated between two big markets: The EU, which absorbs more than half of Moldova's exports, and the Russian Federation. Thus, exports of goods to EU countries in 2023 amounted to USD 2646.8 million, 4.3% more than in 2022. Exports of goods to EU countries account for 65.4% of total exports, 6.8 p.p. more than in 2022 (Figure 2). Exports of goods to CIS countries amounted to 896.9 mil. USD, 14.0% less than in 2022, which equals a share of 22.1% in total exports and 2.0 p.p. less than in 2022. To the group of other countries, the exports of goods amounted to 12.5% of the total, which was down compared to the same period of the previous year¹⁴.

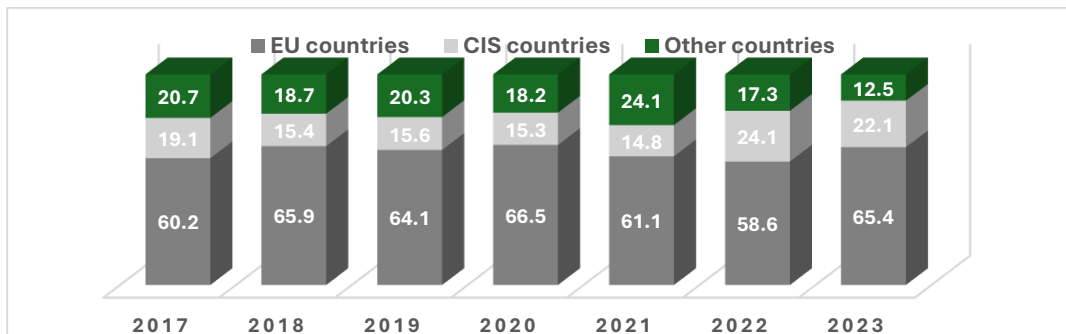


Figure 2. Structure of goods exports by country groups, %

Source: elaborated by the authors using the data from the National Bureau of Statistics

The top 10 partner countries of destination of merchandise exports in 2023 accounted for about 80% of total exports of which Romania with 35.1%, Ukraine with 14.7%, Italy with 6.4%, Germany with 5.5%, Czech Republic with 4.0%, Russian Federation with 3.6%, Turkey with 3.5%, Poland with 3.3%, Bulgaria and Belarus with 2.1% and others (Figure 3).

¹⁴ External trade. National Bureau of Statistics. Available at: https://statistica.gov.md/ro/statistic_indicator_details/19

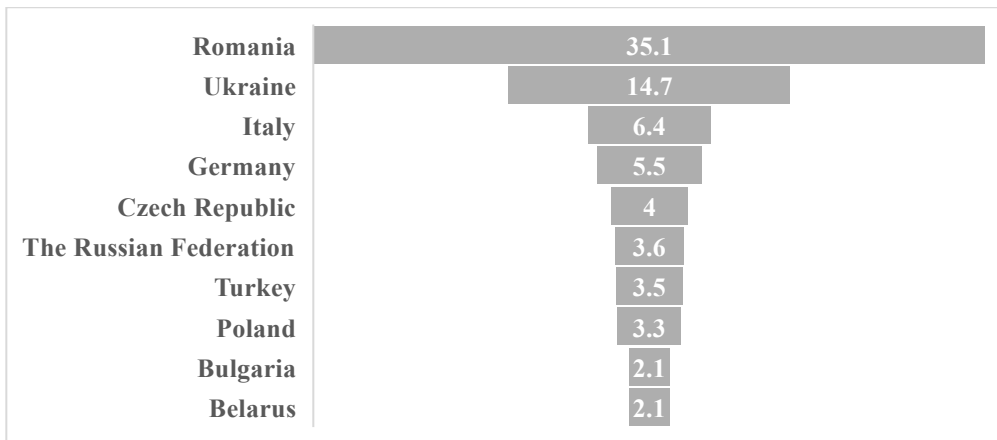


Figure 3. Main partner countries of the Republic of Moldova in 2023, %

Source: elaborated by the authors using the data from the National Bureau of Statistics

Romania being the main trade partner of the Republic of Moldova, with a share of 35.1% (1420.8 mln USD) in total exports. Exports to Romania were up by 14.5%. The largest share of 19.9% in exports to Romania was the export of insulated wires, cables and other insulated electric conductors. The export of sunflower seed oil made up 13.4% of the total value of exports to Romania. The physical volume of exports of wheat and meslin increased significantly by about 5.7 times, contributing 10.5% of the total value of exports to Romania. A significant increase in quantity of about 3.1 times was recorded for rapeseed exports. At the same time, there were decreases, in natural terms, in the exported volumes of sunflower seeds by 17.7%, and maize - by 22% compared to 2022.

Thus, Romania remains the main market, while Ukraine comes second. To Ukraine, the second major importer of Moldovan production, more than 14% or 595.3 mln USD of total exports were delivered.

The analysis of the evolution of exports by country in 2023 compared to 2022 shows a reduction in deliveries of goods to Turkey by 53.3%, Ukraine by 17.3%, Italy by 21.5%, Bulgaria by 39.4%, Bulgaria by 39.4%, Russian Federation by 24.2%, Switzerland by 50.0%, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by 35, 9%, the Kingdom of the Netherlands with 26.4%, Portugal with 69.0%, Iraq with 70.5%, Germany with 4.1%, Hungary with 12.2%, Slovakia with 26.2%, the Syrian Arab Republic with 98.5%, Belgium with 19.9%, Canada with 23.9%, which influenced the decrease in total exports by 13.7%. At the same time, exports of goods to Romania increased by 14.5%, the Czech Republic by 54.6%, Kazakhstan by 44%, Egypt by 2.6 times, Spain by 28.6%, Poland by 9.2%,

the USA by 19.7%, Lebanon by 54.8% and other countries, thus mitigating the decrease in total exports by 8.5%.

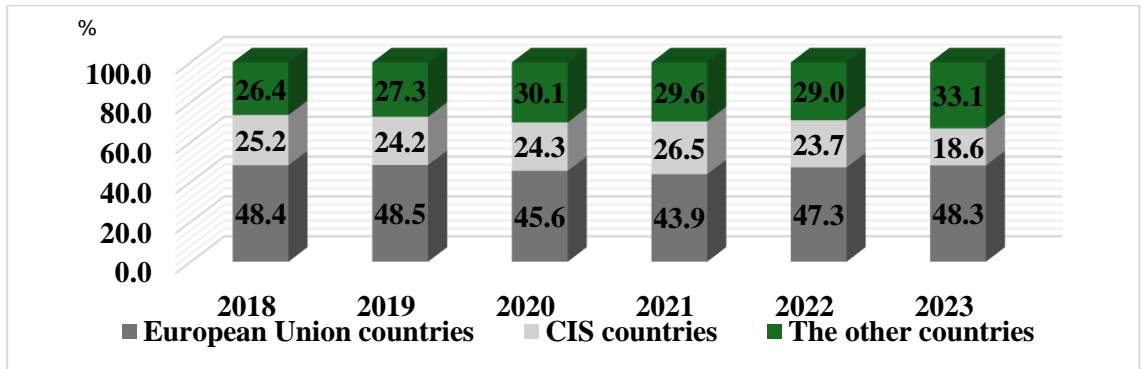


Figure 4. Imports of goods by country groups, 2018-2023, %
Source: elaborated by the authors using the data from the National Bureau of Statistics

Moldova's top 10 trading partner countries accounted for 76% of imports, with imports increasing compared to 2021. About 59% of the increase in merchandise imports was provided by imports from 3 countries: Romania, Ukraine and India (Figure 5).

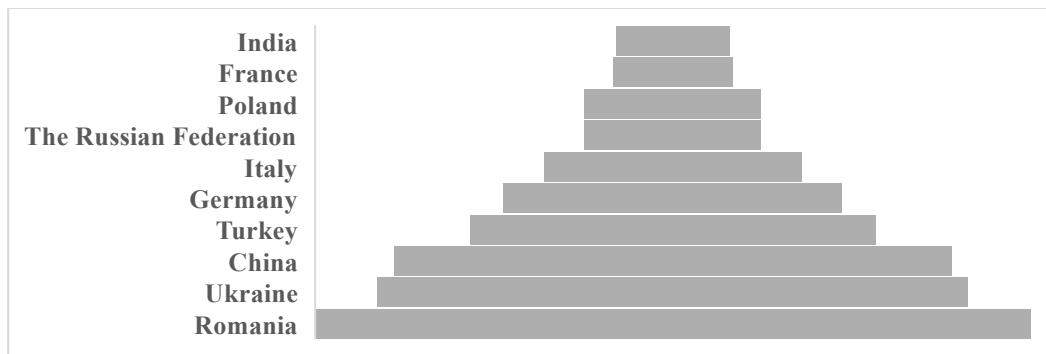


Figure 5. Main trading partners, share in total imports in 2022, %
Source: elaborated by the authors using the data from the National Bureau of Statistics

According to the analysis performed, we observe that in the last 5 years there has been an increasing trend in exports to EU countries, from 57.6%

in 2017 to 65.4% in 2023 and a decrease in CIS markets - from 20.7% in 2017 to 22.1% in 2023, of which about half is export to Ukraine¹⁵.

Despite the war and the disruption of logistics and transport chains to Eastern markets that faced our country due to the war in Ukraine, as well as the excellent management of the unprecedented refugee flows that Moldova has faced, have increased Moldova's visibility regionally and generated new partnerships in international trade. As a result, Moldova's merchandise exports have been redirected from the markets of the Russian Federation and Belarus to European countries. Particular support was given by the EU to Moldova to extend the duty-free and quota-free export regime for certain agricultural products for another year, i.e. from 25 July 2024 to 24 July 2025, together with the introduction of protection mechanisms for "sensitive agricultural products", namely poultry, eggs and sugar.

The EU approved Regulation 2022/1279 of 18 July 2022 which aims to significantly increase export quotas to the EU market for seven agricultural products: tomatoes, garlic, table grapes, cherries, plums and grape juice. Thus, Moldova has negotiated an increase in the duty-free tariff quota for table grapes (a double increase) and a 50% increase on the current volume for plums, as well as a new duty-free quota for cherries of 1500 tones. Quotas increased significantly for plums and grapes and doubled for other products¹⁶:

- ❖ plums - from 15,000 to 40,000 tones (+25,000 tones)
- ❖ grapes - from 20,000 to 58,000 tones (+38,000 tones)
- ❖ apples - from 40,000 to 80,000 tones (doubled)
- ❖ grape juice - from 500 to 1,000 tones (doubled)
- ❖ cherries - from 1 500 to 3 000 tones (doubled)
- ❖ tomatoes - from 2,000 to 4,000 tones (doubled)
- ❖ garlic - from 220 to 440 tones (doubled)

Thus, according to Customs Service data, Moldovan producers have not been able to cover these quotas offered for the export of Moldovan fruit and vegetables to the EU market (Figure 6).

¹⁵ External trade. National Bureau of Statistics. Available at: https://statistica.gov.md/ro/statistic_indicator_details/19

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) 2022/1279 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2022 on temporary trade-liberalisation measures supplementing trade concessions applicable to products from the Republic of Moldova under the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022R1279>

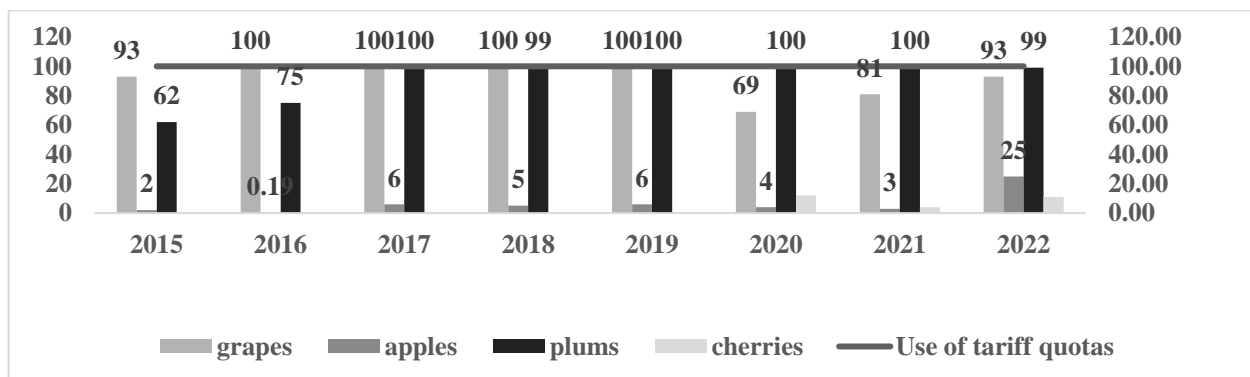


Figura 6. Valorization of tariff quotas for products subject to annual tax exemption, exported to the EU, 2015-2023 %

Source: elaborated by the authors using the data from <https://dcfta.md/valorificarea-contingentelor-tarifare>

In the context of the utilization of tariff quotas for fruit exports to the EU in 2022, exports of table grapes were recorded at about 93%, cherries 11% and for the first time about 27.6% of fresh apples were utilized. The non-utilization of tariff quotas for agri-food products remains a challenge for trade relations with the EU. This demonstrates the lack of capacity and resources among domestic producers to meet the quality and competitiveness standards required by the EU. At the same time, this situation is likely to be influenced by the level of competitiveness of local production. Secondly, it could be the lack of awareness of the existence of opportunities to sell products on a stable and secure market¹⁷.

Despite the embargoes imposed, more fruit and vegetables continue to arrive in the East than are sent to the EU, with the largest quantities going to the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine. The value of vegetables shipped to the EU has increased almost 17 times in a decade to 119.3 million MDL, while the value of fruit has almost doubled from 808.5 million MDL to 1.4 billion MDL¹⁸.

Thus, Moldova's vegetable exports in 2012-2022 were increasing. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine continues to have a negative impact on Moldova's ability to trade with the

¹⁷ Valorization of tariff quotas. Available at: <https://mded.gov.md/content/zona-de-liber-schimb-aprofundat-si-cuprinzator/> (Accessed: October 20, 2024)

¹⁸ C. Bolotnikov, "Green light for a one-year extension of " advantaged" exports to the EU for Moldova and Ukraine". /Undă verde pentru prelungirea cu un an a exporturilor „avantajate” în UE pentru Moldova și Ucraina. Available at: <https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/unda-verde-pentru-prelungirea-cu-un-an-a-exporturilor-avantajate-in-ue-pentru-moldova-si-ucraina/32830540.html> (Accessed: October 15, 2024)

rest of the world. Renewal of these measures will help maintain the conditions necessary to allow Moldova to continue its trade relations with the EU and the rest of the world through the EU," the EU Council's communique states¹⁹.

According to the latest data provided by the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitization, in the context of the utilization of tariff quotas on fruit exports to the EU on 29.06.2023, exports of plums were recorded at 35.14%, followed by grapes about 28.03% and at the opposite pole are cherries about 0.17% (Table 1).

Table 1. Valorization of tariff quotas for products subject to annual tax exemption, exported to the EU

Product	Initial value Contingent	Valorificare (tone) 31.12.2022	Valorificare (%) 31.12.2022	Valorificare (tone) situația la 29.06.2023	Valorificare (%) 29.06.2023
Grapes	38 000 tons	18 612 tons	93.0 %	10 650 tons	28.03%
Plums	25 000 tons	14 894 tons	99.3 %	8786 tons	35.14%
Appeles	40 000 tons	11 061 tons	27.6 %	1332 tons	3.4%
Cherries	1500 tons	161 tons	11.0 %	2590 kg	0.17%
Grape juice	500 tons	48 tons	9.6 %	0 tons	0
Tomato	2000 tons	0 tons	0 %	0 tons	0
Garlic	220 tons	0 tons	0 %	0	0

Source: elaborated by the authors according to <https://dcfta.md/valorificarea-contingentelor-tarifare>

Since 2009, the relations between the Republic of Moldova and Romania have significantly improved, being a strategic partner. The Republic of Moldova also has strategic investors from Romania and the European Union, which will contribute to the development of the business environment, foreign trade activity²⁰. At the same time, we can mention that

¹⁹ A. Ermurachi, I. Groza, et all, EU-Moldova Association Agreement: 8 years of implementation. Processes. Constraints. Priorities. / Acordul de asociere UE-Republica Moldova: 8 ani de implementare. Procese. Constrângeri. Priorități. Alternative report. Institute for European Policy and Reform. Republica Moldova, 2022. Available at: <https://ipre.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Raport-Alternativ-SaniAA-RO-25.11.2022-final-pentru-online.pdf> (Accessed: September 15, 2024)

²⁰ N. Enachi, "Trends in Moldova's foreign trade of goods with Romania. /Tendințele comerțului exterior de mărfuri a Republicii Moldova cu România". *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference "Competitiveness and Innovation in the Knowledge*

the relations between the Republic of Moldova and Romania have been on an upward trend in recent years. Thus, the Republic of Moldova counts on Romania's support in realizing its reform and European integration agenda.

Thus, we conclude that foreign trade is a powerful factor of economic growth, which balances the national economy contributing to raising the standard of living of the population, raising the level of consumer demands, obtaining goods that are not produced in the country. And the signing of these agreements between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova has positively influenced the course of our country's foreign trade, developing new markets with a much greater capacity and stable economic potential.

Econometric modeling of the external sector and forecast

Econometric modelling of the external sector is an indispensable tool for governments, businesses, and researchers. It provides a robust framework for understanding trade dynamics, making informed policy decisions, forecasting future trends, and ultimately enhancing a country's economic performance in the global arena. For a country like Moldova, with its strategic geographical location and growing economic potential, leveraging econometric models can significantly contribute to sustainable economic development and global trade integration.

Exports are a vital component of a country's economy, driving growth, creating jobs, and enhancing international competitiveness. By selling goods and services abroad, countries can earn foreign exchange, which helps in balancing trade and financing imports. For Moldova, boosting exports is crucial for economic development, as it enables the country to leverage its agricultural and manufacturing strengths, diversify markets, and integrate more deeply into the global economy. Effective export strategies can lead to sustainable economic growth and improved living standards.

Agricultural products are the most important exports for Moldova, playing a pivotal role in the country's economy. The fertile soil and favourable climate conditions make Moldova an ideal location for producing a variety of high-quality agricultural goods, including fruits, vegetables, grains, and wine. These products not only fulfil domestic needs but are also in high demand on international markets.

The export of agricultural goods provides significant economic benefits by generating foreign exchange, supporting rural livelihoods, and stimulating related industries such as food processing and transportation.

Economy", September 22-23, 2017, Chisinau, Vol.V. pp. 107-110. E-ISBN 978-9975-75-901-4. Available at:

https://irek.ase.md/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1234567890/409/Enachi_conf_septembrie_2017_vol_5.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Moldova's wine industry, in particular, has gained international recognition, contributing substantially to export revenues. Additionally, agricultural exports help diversify the economy, reducing reliance on any single economic sector and enhancing economic stability.

Export of goods. Given the described situation and in order to have a more accurate estimation of the export of goods, it was decided to divide the total export of goods into:

- the export of food products ($EXP_FOOD\$R$), which includes Section IV “Food products; alcoholic beverages, non-alcoholic vinegar; tobacco” according to the harmonized system;
- the export of other goods ($EXP_OTHER\$R$), which includes other types of goods

The regressions were estimated for the period 1995-2023²¹.

$$\ln(EXP_FOOD\$R) = 0.87 + 0.85 \ln(EXP_FOOD\$R(-1)) - 0.87 D99$$

(2.4)
(13.85)
(-5.38)

$$R^2 = 0.87, F = 100.4, n = 29$$

$\ln(EXP_FOOD\$R)$ represents the natural logarithm of the export of food products in the current period. Using the logarithm of the variable helps in stabilizing the variance and turning a multiplicative relationship into an additive one. The coefficient 0.85 of the $\ln(EXP_FOOD\$R(-1))$ indicates the relationship between past and current exports. A coefficient of 0.85 suggests that a 1% increase in the previous period's food exports is associated with approximately a 0.85% increase in the current period's food exports.

$D99$ is a dummy variable which equals 1 for the year 1999 and 0 otherwise. This variable is included to capture any significant effects or shocks in that particular year that could have influenced food exports. The coefficient -0.87 indicates the impact of the year 1999 on the food exports. A negative value suggests that in 1999, the food exports were significantly lower, potentially due to economic or other shocks.

According to economic theory, the export of goods should depend on the ratio of external prices to internal prices, external GDP (gross domestic product). However, econometric testing has determined the significance of the evaluation of the World GDP ($WGDP$).

²¹ The numbers in parentheses, are t-statistics for the respective coefficients

$$\begin{aligned}
& \text{Ln}(\text{EXP_OTHER}\$R) \\
& = \underset{(-4.56)}{-5.38} + \underset{(4.89)}{0.68}\text{Ln}(\text{WGDP}) + \underset{(11.83)}{0.72}\text{Ln}(\text{EXP_OTHER}\$R(-1)) \\
& \quad - \underset{(-3.29)}{0.44}\text{D99} \\
& R^2 = 0,97, F = 276.5, n = 29
\end{aligned}$$

Ln (WGDP) is the natural logarithm of World GDP. The coefficient 0.68 suggests that a 1% increase in World GDP is associated with approximately a 0.68% increase in the export of other goods for the short time, but for a long time the export will increase by 2.4%.

Import of goods: The demand for imports in an economy is of major importance and has significant implications for the country's economic development. Considering the hypothesis that the demand for imports is elastic with respect to changes in real income levels, an increase in income will be largely used for purchasing imported goods. This situation can lead to a deterioration of the trade balance and ultimately act as a barrier to the economic growth of the Republic of Moldova. Significant factors for imports may include: domestic demand for raw materials, energy, and consumer needs of the population, the ratio of import and domestic prices, the exchange rate, and customs policy.

Upon researching the statistical information provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, we can conclude that the import of mineral products holds a significant share of the total imported products, which are included in Section V "Mineral Products" according to the harmonized system.

The factor representing income for the demand for mineral products is the real GDP of the Republic of Moldova at factor cost prices (GDPREAL), converted into dollars – economic growth will inevitably lead to an increase in the import of these products. The coefficient 1.31 indicates that a 1% increase in real GDP is associated with approximately a 1.31% increase in the import of mineral products. This suggests a strong positive relationship between economic growth and mineral imports.

$$\begin{aligned}
& \text{Ln}(\text{IMP}_{\text{MIN}}\$R) \\
& = \underset{(-3.29)}{-3.03} + \underset{(5.19)}{1.31}\text{Ln}\left(\frac{\text{GDPREAL}}{12.43}\right) - \underset{(-4.3)}{0.71}\text{Ln}(\text{X}\$A) \\
& \quad - \underset{(-2.62)}{0,2}\text{Ln}(\text{PM}_{\text{MINERAL}}\$) + \underset{(3.41)}{0.40}\text{Ln}(\text{IMP}_{\text{MIN}}\$R(-1)) \\
& R^2 = 0,91, F = 66.4, n = 29
\end{aligned}$$

$\ln(X\$A)$ is the natural logarithm of the exchange rate of the dollar into Moldovan lei (MDL). The coefficient -0.71 indicates that a 1% increase in the exchange rate (meaning the MDL depreciates against the dollar) is associated with approximately a 0.71% decrease in the import of mineral products. This suggests that a weaker MDL (higher exchange rate) makes imports more expensive, thus reducing the quantity of mineral imports. $\ln(\text{PM_MINERAL}\$)$ is the natural logarithm of the price of mineral products. The coefficient of $\ln(\text{PM_MINERAL}\$)$ - logarithm of the price of mineral products - suggests that a 1% increase in the prices is associated with approximately a 0.2% decrease in the import of mineral products, indicating that higher prices reduce imports. This elasticity coefficients are for the short time. For long time the increase determinates by real GDP will be more than 2%, the MDL depreciates against the dollar will influence the decrease by 1.2% and the increase of prices influence the decrease by 0.3%

The specification of the regression for the import of other products includes the following factors: CONSPRIVR – real private consumption, which determines the demand for these products, MDL and $\text{PM_OTHER}\$$ - the deflator for the import of other products.

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(\text{IMP_OTHER}\$R) = & - \underset{(-5.81)}{3.76} + \underset{(17.03)}{2.05} \ln(\text{CONS_PRIVR}(-1)/12,43) \\ & - \underset{(-6.4)}{0,69} \ln(X\$A) - \underset{(-3.13)}{0,49} \ln(\text{PM_OTHER}\$(-1)) - \underset{(-6.04)}{0,97} d99 \\ R^2 = & 0.96, F = 182.6, n = 29 \end{aligned}$$

This regression model explains how the import of other products in Moldova is influenced by lagged real private consumption, the exchange rate of the dollar to the MDL, lagged prices of other products, and specific shocks such as those in 1999. The strong positive relationship with lagged private consumption highlights the dependency of imports on past domestic demand, while the negative relationship with the exchange rate and prices indicates factors that can reduce import levels. The significance of the coefficients indicates that the model is robust and provides valuable insights into the factors affecting the import of other products.

Forecast. The estimated regressions were used to forecast the evolution of external trade for the 2024 (Table 2).

Table 2. Evolution of the export and import of goods in the years 2020-2023 and forecast for the 2024

		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
		Effective				Forecast
Average exchange rate	MDL/USD	17.3	17.7	18.1	18.16	17.8
Export of goods	mil.USD	2467	3144	4332	4049	4340
Compared to the previous year	%	88.8	127.5	137.8	95.5	107.2
Import of goods	mil.USD	5416	7177	9219	8674	9192
Compared to the previous year	%	92.7	132.5	128.5	94.1	106
Negative trade balance	mil.USD	2949	4033	4887	4652	4852

Source: elaborated by the authors

The average exchange rate has shown a slight upward trend from 17.3 MDL/USD in 2020 to 18.16 MDL/USD in 2023, with a projected decrease to 17.8 MDL/USD in 2024. This slight depreciation of the MDL against the US dollar over the years indicates mild inflationary pressures and potential external economic influences. Exports have seen significant growth from 2467 million USD in 2020 to a peak of 4332 million USD in 2022, with a slight dip to 4049 million USD in 2023. The forecast for 2024 is 4340 million USD, indicating a recovery. The year-over-year growth rate peaked in 2022 at 137.8%, followed by a reduction to 95.5% in 2023, and a modest recovery to 107.2% in 2024. This suggests a volatile export environment influenced by external demand, global market conditions, and possibly internal production capacities. Imports have increased from 5416 million USD in 2020 to 9219 million USD in 2022, followed by a slight decrease to 8674 million USD in 2023, with a forecasted rise to 9192 million USD in 2024. The growth rate shows a strong increase up to 132.5% in 2021, followed by a decline in growth rates in subsequent years (128.5% in 2022, 94.1% in 2023, and 106% forecasted for 2024). This trend reflects the increasing demand for imported goods, which might be driven by higher consumer spending, industrial demand for raw materials, and possibly rising prices. The trade deficit has widened from 2949 million USD in 2020 to 4887 million USD in 2022, with a slight improvement to 4652 million USD in 2023, but it is forecasted to increase again to 4852 million USD in 2024. This persistent and growing trade deficit suggests that Moldova's economy is heavily reliant on imports, and the growth in exports is not sufficient to balance the trade. A widening trade deficit can be a concern as it may indicate structural issues within the economy, such as insufficient

domestic production capacity or competitiveness issues in international markets.

Conclusions

The analysis performed reveals the following aspects of Moldovan exports that are important for participants, experts and academics:

1. The EU is Moldova's main trading partner, accounting for about two thirds of exports. The signing of the Moldova-EU Association Agreement in 2014 has significantly contributed to this expansion, so that exports to the EU have steadily increased, totaling over 65.4% of national exports in 2023. In addition to trade liberalization and diversification, the Agreement has facilitated the modernization of the Republic of Moldova by aligning it with EU norms and standards in all areas. These norms and standards being in line with international best practices have benefited the country and business.

2. Romania is the main trading partner of the Republic of Moldova and agriculture and the agri-food sector remains the most important driving force of Moldova's foreign trade.

The country's economy has the potential to increase exports. This requires research into consumer markets and the demand of each trading partner. At the same time it is necessary to diversify the structure of Moldovan exports, to focus on other industries in which Moldova has reserves and which can be capitalized on. Diversification of both products and markets is an urgent requirement, since the export of agricultural products is largely influenced by climatic conditions: dry weather, spring frosts, etc. have been recorded quite frequently by farmers in recent years.

Similarly, it is necessary to inform producers about the advantages and opportunities of exporting to the EU, encouraging the marketing of high value-added products through appropriate instruments. State institutions, trade associations, NGOs and the academic community must be involved in this process.

3. In order to encourage the production of high value-added goods in demand on the external market, investment should be directed towards these sectors and policy measures should encourage innovative production associated with the implementation of new knowledge and technologies.

As the Republic of Moldova is a country with an economy in transition, with an insufficient level of investment and exports in which low value-added products play a major role, it is necessary to review policies and move towards sustainable development models in which exported products would make it possible to fully exploit both the country's natural advantages and the new opportunities offered by trade agreements.

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THE REBEL-TITAN PROMETHEUS IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY: TED HUGHES'S USE OF PROMETHEUS MYTH IN PROMETHEUS ON HIS CRAG¹

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Abstract: *Ted Hughes (1930–1998), who served as the Poet Laureate from 1984 until his death in 1998, incorporated nature, animals, and myths into his poetry. His primary concern, particularly in his poems from the 1960s and 1970s, is to use myths to illustrate how individuals challenge and subvert the authority of the established norms of the mid-twentieth century. Therefore, Hughes employs his mythic poetry to portray the struggles of individuals in the 1960s and 1970s against the social, political, and religious systems that restrict and influence human existence and exert dominance over people during these eras. Hughes creates his own version of the Prometheus myth to embody the subversive attitudes and values of the 1960s and 1970s, derived from the original Greek myth of Prometheus. This paper, thus, explores Hughes's use of the Prometheus myth in his Prometheus on His Crag within the historical context of the mid-twentieth century and contends that Hughes reinterprets the Greek myth of Prometheus to depict the people's rebellious attitudes, loss of hope, and recovery of hope in the mid-1960s and early 1970s.*

Keywords: *Ted Hughes, myths, Prometheus on His Crag, people in the mid-twentieth century*

Introduction

Ted Hughes can be regarded as a significant English poet of his era due to his extensive literary oeuvre. His family background, the places he lived, and the events of the 1960s and 1970s all influenced his writing. Ted Hughes, whose real name is Edward James Hughes, was born in Mytholmroyd, West Yorkshire, in 1930. Nevertheless, he was raised in both West and South Yorkshire. His early years were primarily spent in a rural setting. Moreover, Hughes grew up hearing war stories due to his father's military service. Consequently, Hughes observes that he was always struck

¹ This article is adapted from the second chapter of the author's unpublished master's thesis entitled "Ted Hughes's Use of Myths in *Crow* and *Prometheus on His Crag*," Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, 2017.

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by the feeling that the entire region was in lament for the First World War². During his school years, at about fifteen years of age, he began writing poems. After two years of service in the Royal Air Force, he attended Pembroke College, Cambridge University, in 1951. He began studying English Literature there, but then switched departments to archaeology and anthropology. After graduating, he moved to London and worked as a gardener, zoo attendant, night watchman, and schoolteacher, all of which provided him with excellent opportunities to observe animal behaviour and the natural world. Hence, his upbringing surrounded by war narratives, nature, and animals appears to have shaped Hughes into “war poet,”³ “nature poet,”⁴ “animal poet,”⁵ and a “mythic poet”⁶.

While working on *Orghast* in Persia in 1971, Hughes wrote *Prometheus on His Crag*, which was first published in 1973 as a Rainbow Press limited edition, including twenty-one short poems along with a drawing by Leonard Baskin. In 1979, it was assembled in Hughes’s *Moortown*, which comprises short sequences such as *Moortown*, *Prometheus on His Crag*, *Earth-numb*, and *Adam and the Sacred Nine*. Hughes wrote *Prometheus on His Crag* after leaving *Crow* and following the deaths of Assia Wevill, their daughter Shura, and Hughes’s mother⁷. In 1969, Wevill, the woman Hughes never married, committed suicide in the same manner as Sylvia Plath. She suffocated herself and the young Shura. Hughes’s discontent, sense of guilt, and upheavals in his life influenced his writing of the Prometheus sequence. In addition to his personal life, the psychological state of people in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the events that occurred during the period in which the collection was published appear to have been significant influences on the composition of *Prometheus on His Crag*. In this regard, he can be accepted as a representative poet of the 1960s and 1970s. During the first half of the twentieth century, significant events occurred, including the First World War (1914-18), the Great Depression (1930s), the Second World War (1939-45), and the invention of the atomic bomb, which was first employed in Hiroshima and subsequently in Nagasaki (1945). Nonetheless, the First and Second World Wars, often characterised as “total wars,”

² T. Hughes, “Ted Hughes, the Art of Poetry no. 71,” interview by Drue Heinz in *The Paris Review*, p. 1.

³ J. Meyers, “Ted Hughes: War Poet” in *The Antioch Review*, Vol. 71. no. 1, p. 30, 2013.

⁴ M. Styles, *From the Garden to the Street: Three Hundred Years of Poetry for Children*, London: Cassell, 1997, p. 253.

⁵ A. N. Bold, *Cambridge Book of English Verse, 1939-1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976, p. 230.

⁶ J. Moulin, “Ted Hughes’s Anti-Mythic Method” in *Ted Hughes: Alternative Horizons*, Joanny Moulin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2004, p. 89.

⁷ P. Bentley, *Ted Hughes, Class and Violence*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 119.

significantly impacted British society⁸. Consequently, several social, political, and economic issues emerged, resulting in a loss of hope for the future. Therefore, despair, grief, anxiety, suffering, and misery became inescapable in the lives of people throughout the twentieth century.

The Effects of Twentieth-Century Events on British Society

Furthermore, particularly the generations of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s grew up in a postwar environment “in which mass violence and death was a huge dark shadow of the past”⁹. It is evident that people comprehended the essence of pain as nearly everyone has experienced the demise of their spouses, family, or acquaintances. The Cold War began in 1950 as a result of a struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States. Tucker and Roberts characterise the Cold War as “the rivalry that developed between the two superpowers—the Soviet Union and the United States—as each sought to fill the power vacuum left by the defeat of Germany and Japan” in the Second World War¹⁰. The Soviet Union and the United States continued to quarrel one another for the following thirty years, during which time there was nuclear war. As a result, at this time, there was fear of being attacked by the opposing side. However, leaders on both sides disregarded the sentiments of the people, presuming that they were compelled to extend their national hegemony due to the “aggressive” actions of the opposing side, resulting in “[m]isunderstandings, bluff, pride, personal and geopolitical ambitions, and simple animosity between the two sides grew until the struggle became the Cold War”¹¹. The catastrophic consequences of the Cold War and the advancement of nuclear weapons significantly heightened the public’s anxiety around the possibility of another world war. Accordingly, in the 1950s, British university students conducted anti-war protests that unsettled the leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties, the predominant political forces of the era. It is evident that the protest attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s began to emerge in the 1950s.

In the 1960s and 1970s, social, religious, and political upheavals progressively grew, leading the British people to challenge established norms. The 1960s are referred to as the “Swinging Sixties” due to “the fall or relaxation of some social taboos”¹². During this time, radical developments happened in the domains of music, fashion, and art, allowing individuals more freedom. Furthermore, new issues arose in the social and

⁸ R. Pope, *War and Society in Britain, 1899-1948*, London: Longman, 1991, p. 1.

⁹ R. Bessel, and S. Dirk, *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History during the 1940s and 1950s*, Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2003, p. 13.

¹⁰ S. Tucker, and M. R. Priscilla, *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008, p. 17.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 17.

¹² B. Jay, *Sliding Down the Banisters of Life*, UK: Authorhouse, 2013, p. 138.

political realms. As a result, the 1960s might be characterised as a decade of change and challenge. Keniston posits that the potency of the emerging young culture derives from its endeavour to start a “revolution” that is simultaneously cultural and political, merging innovative lifestyles with essential social and political transformation¹³. Clearly, 1960s Britain attempted to establish an alternative society by promoting protest lifestyles. The 1960s society is referred to as a “permissive society,” indicative of the behaviours of a young generation¹⁴. In the permissive environment of the 1960s, “[h]ysteria, drugs, mysticism, meditation” offered “distinct qualities of release”¹⁵. Consequently, the decade of the “Swinging Sixties” experienced several advances and changes in social and political spheres that shattered traditional values and established systems.

The 1960s brought about a number of positive and negative cultural, social, and political changes that persisted into the 1970s as the established norms, systems, and beliefs were rebuilt. The 1970s, marked by a decline in values, respect, and tolerance, can be seen as the most remarkable decade of the twentieth century in this regard. Youth culture was successful in generating new cultural forms in the 1970s, just as it had been in the 1960s. Hippies’ rebellious views had a lasting impact throughout the 1970s. According to Black, “lawlessness” was especially prevalent among British youth in the 1970s¹⁶. Similar to the 1960s, individuals not only lost their faith in God and religious institutions but also their trust in the power of government during the 1970s. Therefore, as observed by Borstelmann, “the personal is political” and “the personal was spiritual” emerged as their founding principles in the 1970s¹⁷. Moreover, throughout the twentieth century, individuals sought to reclaim their independence by pursuing social revolution through alternatives such as sexuality, alcohol, and drugs. Consequently, as Beckett asserts, the 1970s represent the most terrible period for Britain since the Second World War, occurring between Edward Heath’s election in 1970 and Margaret Thatcher’s victory in 1979¹⁸. During the 1970s, Britain experienced the administrations of four prime ministers.

¹³ K. Keniston, *Youth and Dissent*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, pp. 143-44.

¹⁴ P. Rogers, *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001, p. 475.

¹⁵ R. Shaw, and G. Shaw, “The Cultural and Social Setting” in *Modern Britain: The Cambridge Cultural History: Vol. 9*, B. Ford (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992, p. 25.

¹⁶ J. Black, *Britain since the Seventies: Politics and Society in the Consumer Age*, London: Reaktion, 2004, p. 105.

¹⁷ T. Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2012, p. 247.

¹⁸ A. Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies*, London: Faber, 2010, p. 1.

Edward Heath, the leader of the Conservative Party, served as the first Prime Minister of the 1970s, governing from 1970 to 1974. The others are the leaders of the Labour Party: Harold Wilson, who served as Prime Minister from 1974 to 1976, and James Callaghan, who reigned from 1976 to 1979. Margaret Thatcher, the leader of the Conservative Party, was the last prime minister of the 1970s, having won the general election in 1979. Upon winning the general elections, these four prime ministers each promised to decrease inflation, reduce unemployment, and deal with various problems with the economy. Nevertheless, similar to Heath, none of them could significantly address these issues. Conversely, they triggered the emergence of new issues.

Clearly, during the 1960s, a permissive society emerged. The socio-cultural problems of the era prompted a revolt against the oppressive structures, norms, and beliefs. In the 1970s, individuals, similar to the rebellious Titan Prometheus, the central figure in Hughes's *Prometheus on His Crag*, challenged the established norms. Thus, as a rebel, Hughes's Prometheus symbolises the characteristics of individuals in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, while Zeus and the vulture, which devours Prometheus's liver nightly, signify the brutality and tyranny of prevailing authorities. In *Prometheus on His Crag*, Prometheus swings between hope and hopelessness in his quest for freedom. Similar to Prometheus, individuals in the mid-1960s and early 1970s faced similar situations due to the religious, social, political, and economic upheavals and obstacles in Britain. Consequently, events that took place in the mid-1960s and early 1970s set the socio-cultural context for his sequence, *Prometheus on His Crag*.

The Rebel-Titan Prometheus as a Representation of People in the Mid-Twentieth Century

Hughes depicts Prometheus as a symbol of the human condition throughout the mid-1960s and early 1970s. The Prometheus myth exemplifies themes of disobedience and progress. Although several versions of the Prometheus myth exist, the most significant narrative of its origin emerged in Hesiod's *Theogony*, composed circa 700 B.C. Hesiod's work narrates the creation of the universe, the genealogies of the ancient Greek gods, Zeus's conflict with the Titans, and the myth of Prometheus. Following the conflict with the Titans, Zeus entrusted Prometheus due to his fairness during the war and granted him immortality. Nonetheless, despite being neutral during the conflict, Prometheus was a dissident and he provoked Zeus. His contentious connection with Zeus is notable as he endures suffering due to his wrath towards Zeus and other deities. Prometheus did not overlook their destructive actions towards his ancestors. Therefore, Prometheus created mankind, namely the first man, Phaenon, from clay and

water, as an act of revenge against Zeus and the gods¹⁹. Subsequent to the fight, he persists in his deceptions, three of which are notably significant: tricking Zeus by pretending to offer an edible portion of the sacrificial meat, and purloining the fire that Zeus had retracted from humanity. Enraged with Prometheus and humanity, Zeus sent the smith-god Hephaestus (Vulcan) to create a stunning woman named Pandora, signifying “all-gifted”²⁰. The gods bestowed Pandora as a gift upon Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus. He embraced Pandora, whose box unleashed all the evils “that from then on have plagued humanity,” including conflicts, grief, sicknesses, and calamities across the globe, as his bride²¹. Mills asserts that the notion of evil entering the world due to a foolish woman evokes the biblical narrative of Eve’s temptation to consume the apple, which introduced death and other afflictions into existence²². Accordingly, Pandora may also be seen as “the Eve of Greek mythology”²³. Consequently, Zeus initially punished humanity by unleashing evil, after which he sought personal revenge on Prometheus. Zeus despised Prometheus not merely for stealing fire from the gods for humanity but also for Prometheus’s unwillingness to disclose the prophecy that Zeus was at risk of fathering a son who would usurp him²⁴. Consequently, Zeus bound Prometheus “to a rock on Mount Caucasus, where an eagle tore out his liver every day for 1,000 years (it grew back each night), until the hero Heracles [the son of Zeus] finally released him”²⁵. *Prometheus on His Crag* is characterised as “an expression of limbo [...] [a] numb poem about numbness”²⁶. Unlike Hesiod’s version of the Prometheus myth, Hughes’s interpretation commences with Prometheus’s condition following being chained to a rock. Xerr argues that Hughes’s sequence of Prometheus is “composed of Prometheus’s interior monologues, projecting forward the hero’s thoughts about his suffering and the meaning of his existence”²⁷. As a result, Hughes depicts the human figure. Similar to the individuals of the 1960s and 1970s who lost their belief in God, God likewise relinquished His hope for

¹⁹ D. Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005, p. 326.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 306.

²¹ Ibid, p. 306.

²² A. Mills, *Mythology: Myths, Legends and Fantasies*, Australia: Global Book Publishing, 2003, p. 29.

²³ D. Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005, p. 306.

²⁴ L. Feder, *The Handbook of Classical Literature*, New York: Da Capo, 1998, p. 359.

²⁵ D. Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005, p. 326.

²⁶ T. Hughes, and K. Sagar. *Poet and Critic: The Letters of Ted Hughes and Keith Sagar*, London: British Library, 2012, p. 29.

²⁷ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 155.

humanity. Consequently, rather of creating people, God fashioned a cultural hero similar to Prometheus. Nonetheless, Prometheus rebelled against God and liberated himself from control, constituting a form of accomplishment despite facing punishment. Scigaj asserts that “Prometheus’s liberation depends upon understanding the significance of what he has done and learning to mediate the opposites of aspiration and pain by developing his imaginative life”²⁸. Prometheus can be regarded as the first figure who assisted humanity in confronting authority. From this vantage point, he depicts the human condition during the mid-1960s and early 1970s.

The Analysis of the Prometheus Sequence: Rebellion, Loss of Hope and Recovery of Hope

Evidently, Prometheus embodies motifs of rebellion and independence. In this sense, *Prometheus on His Crag* might be accepted as a series of poems exploring themes of freedom, the loss of freedom, and its recovery. In a similar vein, Bassnett asserts that Prometheus illustrates that “[o]ut of pain and suffering comes hope and a sense of meaningfulness”²⁹. In *Prometheus on His Crag*, eight poems depict Prometheus’s hopeless condition, while thirteen poems illustrate his growing yearning for freedom. Thus, *Prometheus on His Crag* begins with an atmosphere of hopelessness. The initial poem depicts Prometheus bound on a rock, despairing about the possibility of acquiring his liberty again. Robinson states that first, “he is alone at night on a distant windy peak, and the driving of the blue wedge through him into the rock beneath has forced him first unconscious and now delirious with agony”³⁰. In this poem, his search of his situation begins, and his terrible pain leads to a sense of missed freedom; however, he persists in self-examination as he perceives his body, realising, “Something is strange / Something is altered”³¹:

‘What has happened to me, what has altered?’
He whispered and he lay frightened -
Letting his veins venture for him
Feeling his ice-burned lungs gulp huge clarity
Letting his laborious chest lift him
Like the wingbeats of an eagle and
‘Am I an eagle?’³²

²⁸ L. M. Scigaj, *Ted Hughes*, Boston: Twayne, 1991, p. 125.

²⁹ S. Bassnett, *Ted Hughes*, United Kingdom: Northcote House, 2009, p. 73.

³⁰ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p. 148.

³¹ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 71.

³² *Ibid*, p. 71.

Prometheus is unable to find out what has changed. Nonetheless, his lungs “gulp huge clarity” and his “veins venture for him” and his “chest lift him / Like the wingbeats of an eagle.” With this awareness, Prometheus recognises his fallen state in terror. Moreover, as Robinson asserts, Prometheus, who is motionless, “helpless, imprisoned and earthbound,” contemplates “if he might [...] have altered into the eagle, symbol of power and freedom of the skies”³³. Consequently, one possibility he contemplates after assessing his circumstances is that he is an eagle. Despite his capture, it is remarkable that he identifies with the eagle, a symbol of strength and freedom. Jung asserts that “[t]he alchemical vulture, eagle, and crow are all essentially synonymous”³⁴. Unaware of Zeus’s punishment, he is indifferent to the impossibility of his belief in being the eagle. He remains unaware of his true identity, uncertain if he is human or animal. A similar dilemma was encountered by individuals in the 1960s and 1970s who found themselves in a miserable environment. The 1970s were characterised by violent upheaval due to the Middle Eastern conflict, IRA bombings in Britain, and US bombings in Vietnam. Moreover, during that period, political and industrial turmoil caused a significant downturn in the British economy and difficulties in social life. Consequently, individuals perceived themselves as under siege, with their freedom endangered by unidentified forces that pushed them into profound misery. They endured hardship without understanding the cause of their pain, resulting in hopelessness.

The persistent hopelessness is seen in the fourth poem of *Prometheus On His Crag* as well. In this poem, Prometheus is in a condition of despair. His victimisation by the vulture symbolises the victimisation of people during the mid-1960s and early 1970s. In this poem, the vulture encounters Prometheus for the first time. Prometheus starts to comprehend his status as a victim and contemplates his fate:

Spotted the vulture coming out of the sun
The moment it edged clear of the world’s edge.
There was nothing for him to do
As it splayed him open from breastbone to crotch
But peruse its features.³⁵

Evidently, Prometheus endures constant suffering and is powerless to stop the vulture from tormenting him. However, Prometheus continues to

³³ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p. 149.

³⁴ C. G. Jung, “Psychology and Alchemy” in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, S. H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, and W. McGuire (eds.), Bollingen Series XX. Vol. 12. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 1968, p. 169.

³⁵ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 74.

observe the vulture, anticipating the moment when the vulture will assist in his release. However, Prometheus receives a different message from the vulture's feathers, which are described as "Black, bold and plain were those headline letters"³⁶:

Each one said the same:
"Today is a fresh start
Torn up by its roots
As I tear the liver from your body."³⁷

Upon encountering the vulture, Prometheus comprehends that his torment will persist due to the creature's daily mutilation of his liver. Every day, the vulture inflicts perpetual pain on Prometheus. The connection is that, like Prometheus, people in the mid-1960s and early 1970s experienced suffering as a result of the violence of dominating systems and the limitations on their liberties imposed by established standards. Significantly, inconsistency in British policy generated various problems. The British people entered the mid-1960s under the government of Harold Wilson (1916 - 1995), a Labour politician who governed Britain from 1964 to 1970 and again from 1974 to 1976. In the 1970s, Edward Heath, the Conservative Party's leader, became Prime Minister and governed the country until 1974. Neither Wilson nor Heath did much to avoid the economic downturn that resulted in hyperinflation and increased unemployment. Similarly, Heath's reign was marked by industrial turmoil, public dispute, and battles with trade unions, all of which contributed to people's dissatisfaction in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. Furthermore, Prometheus appears as a representation of hopeless victim. His ongoing pain resembles the suffering of individuals afflicted by unemployment, inflation, and poverty. Humanity, like Prometheus, is defenceless in the face of difficulties caused by dominant powers. According to Paterson, those most vulnerable were "the long-term unemployed, the low-waged, the elderly dependent on state pensions, the disabled and chronically sick, the welfare-dependent one-parent families and, more generally, children and ethnic minorities"³⁸. As a result, these challenges appeared to be endless.

In this sense, the ninth poem illustrates Prometheus's gradual recognition of his situation, indicating that his circumstances are the result of a superior force. Upon recognising his subjection to a superior authority, Prometheus relinquishes all hope of regaining his freedom:

Now I know I never shall

³⁶ Ibid, p. 74.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 74.

³⁸ R. Paterson, "Poverty" in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary British Culture*, P. Childs and M. Storry (eds.), London: Routledge, 1999, p. 424.

Be let stir.
The man I fashioned and the god I fashioned
Dare not let me stir.³⁹

Here, Prometheus's position appears to be eternal. Similar to Prometheus, individuals in the mid-1960s and early 1970s increasingly distanced themselves from God, as neither God nor any religious institution effectively alleviated their suffering. It is noted that only by own effort can they regain their independence. Prometheus understands that the existence of the vulture has a significant importance for his destiny, and he begins to question:

What secret stays
Stilled under my stillness?
Not even I know.
Only he knows - that bird, that
Filthy-gleeful emissary and
The hieroglyph makes of my entrails
Is all he tells.⁴⁰

As Xerr argues, Prometheus does not fully understand that “the suffering it [the vulture] is forcing him to undergo is the answer to his questions”⁴¹. However, the vulture's hidden power and secret are frightening. In Robinson's words, “[t]hat it [freedom] should seem to lie in the possession of the vulture, which brings him such pain and yet leaves things still so mysterious, is even worse”⁴². Nonetheless, in order to make headway in comprehending the meaning of the vulture, Prometheus speaks again and asks some questions while looking at it. However, there has been no change and extraordinary development in discovering his position.

In the ninth poem, Prometheus begins to regard the vulture with a sense of respect, recognising its mission:

It went on doing it
Swallowing not only his liver
But managing also to digest its guilt
And hang itself again just under the sun⁴³

³⁹ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 79.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴¹ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes' Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 162.

⁴² C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin's, 1989, p. 157.

⁴³ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 80.

Nonetheless, Prometheus's respect for the vulture swiftly devolves into melancholy and despair, as the vulture appears entirely unaware of the reason of Prometheus's agony:

Like a heavenly weighing scales
Balancing the gift of life
And the cost of the gift
Without a tremor
As if both were nothing.⁴⁴

The "gift of life" represents the fire stolen by Prometheus, while "the cost of the gift" symbolises Pandora's box, which unleashes various evils upon the earth, including pain, grief, disease, conflict, and tragedy. Zeus sends Pandora to Earth as retribution for Prometheus and humanity. The vulture unites these elements by instructing Prometheus to attain knowledge through suffering. Forster and Harper point out that the mid-1960s and early 1970s were "tough times for many people with strikes, threatened food shortages, financial hardship and blatant inequalities for various sectors of society"⁴⁵. Therefore, strikes were fundamental in the essence of British society during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1969, miners organised a significant strike due to lower wages and extended working hours. The strike resulted in enhanced working conditions, contributing to the social revolution.

The thirteenth poem depicts Prometheus as pessimistic about his destiny. In this poem, once Prometheus confronts the vulture, he realises that the vulture symbolises his penance for bestowing upon humanity the gifts of life and fire:

Prometheus On His crag
Heard the cry of the wombs.
He had invented them.
Then stolen the holy fire, and hidden it in them.⁴⁶

Even if he experiences unbearable agony, Prometheus, who is immortal, is unable to die. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that he has caused human suffering by granting him existence, and it is challenging for humans to endure such pain. Robinson asserts that "[d]eath appears to him with dark associations; and life is no blessing, just a reluctantly followed

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 80.

⁴⁵ L. Forster, and S. Harper, *British Culture and Society in the 1970s: The Lost Decade*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010, p. 5.

⁴⁶ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 83.

compulsion” and “[o]ne responsible for such pain must feel guilty, and that his own pains are a punishment”⁴⁷:

That his chains would last, and the vulture would awake him,
As long as there were wombs
Even if that were forever,
And that he had already invented too much.⁴⁸

Prometheus experiences guilt due to the shared punishment of himself and humanity. His regret that he ever gave man existence is crucial. He recognises that humanity, like himself, is consequently cursed. He wonders the merit of his suffering and feels hopeless due to the belief that his suffering is endless. Furthermore, Prometheus experiences remorse as a result of the punishment that both he and humanity endure. His regret for ever having given existence to a human being is significant. He comprehends that humanity is, in the same way, condemned as he is. Nevertheless, the notion that his anguish will endure indefinitely leaves him uncertain as to whether his suffering is justifiable and overcomes him with a sense of hopelessness. According to Taşkın, “with the recurrence of vulture and chains, Prometheus’s thoughts have recoiled towards his own fate”⁴⁹. Like Prometheus, British society in the mid-1960s and early 1970s was dissatisfied because people believed that their efforts to progress resulted in an eternal period of economic instability and corruption in all areas.

Similarly, in the nineteenth poem, Prometheus, engulfed in misery, recognises that words are frustrating as well:

For words are the birds of everything -
So soon
Everything is on the wing and gone
So speech starts hopefully to hold
Pieces of the wordy earth together
But pops to space-silence and space-cold
Emptied by words
Scattered and gone.
And the mouth shuts
Savagely on a mouthful
Of space-fright which makes the ears ring.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p. 160.

⁴⁸ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 83.

⁴⁹ S. Taşkın, “The Uses of the Promethean Myth in P. B. Shelley and Ted Hughes,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, 1999, p. 61.

⁵⁰ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 89.

According to Robinson, Prometheus commences “with a shout of words and ends dumb and terrified”⁵¹. He remains hopeless as all his efforts to reclaim his freedom are futile. As Scigaj argues, “Prometheus must learn to use them [his words] to become aware of deeper levels of being, not simply to scatter his thoughts into identifications of separate categories through ordinary analytic thinking”⁵². His employment of varied terminology to uncover meanings for the purpose of reclaiming his liberty symbolises the British people in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, who formed diverse groups to bring about positive change. Xerr states that Hughes’s idea is that reality is not made up of words and that other more substantial modes of action are the means to freedom, the most powerful of which is that of suffering”⁵³. Similar to Prometheus, these individuals must seek alternatives, since disruptive protests against restrictions may prove destructive rather than helpful in regaining their freedom.

Despite the fact that Prometheus’s anguish and frustration are the primary focus of eight poems, the remaining poems demonstrate a gradual resurgence of hope and relief. In fact, Prometheus’s hopelessness is transformed into hope as early as the second poem. Dawn arrives in this poem, and Prometheus is granted the opportunity to observe his state. Consequently, Prometheus, who is the passive victim, observes his own demise:

The blue wedge through breastbone, into the rock,
Unadjusted by vision or prayer - so.
His eyes, brainless police.
His brain, simple as an eagle.⁵⁴

Robinson posits that Prometheus “is passive, choiceless, mutely registering the sensations associated with his eternal fate,” which engenders in him a feeling of joy and triumph, again symbolised by “eaglehood”⁵⁵. He feels strong despite his pain and helplessness.

According to Xerr, “[i]t is this new paradoxical new sense of being that makes Prometheus feel like an eagle, which can be seen as the hero’s dream of power in the face of immurement”⁵⁶. Furthermore, this is the reason why “the Titan [Prometheus] feels his strength”⁵⁷ despite being “helpless”⁵⁸. The

⁵¹ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989. p. 165.

⁵² L. M. Scigaj, *Ted Hughes*, Boston: Twayne, 1991, p. 126.

⁵³ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 168.

⁵⁴ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 72.

⁵⁵ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p. 150.

⁵⁶ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 159.

⁵⁷ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 72.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 72.

narrative of Prometheus in Hesiod's *Theogony* suggests that Prometheus's endurance stems from his awareness that Zeus will eventually want his assistance, leading to his release in return for that aid; hence, Prometheus's punishment cannot be everlasting. Prometheus acknowledges that his strength is intertwined with his emotions, similar to an eagle, which symbolises triumph. This poem foreshadow Prometheus's restoration of freedom in the last stanza.

Similar to Prometheus, individuals in the mid-1960s and early 1970s preferred to embrace their agony, as it served to empower them rather than subject them to perpetual suffering. According to Marwick, despite several detractors asserting that the British people "had lost their appetite for work," life during the 1960s and 1970s was characterised as "good and all seemed far from lost" and "there was joy in the present, and hope for the future"⁵⁹. Similarly, people in the mid-1960s and early 1970s resolved to turn their hopelessness into optimism by defying all of the existing norms. For instance, Hippies in the 1960s and 1970s, together with street musicians in the late 1960s, fostered a joyful mood through their music, along with their rebellious manner that encouraged individuals to challenge oppressive values in pursuit of liberty. The transition from despair to optimism was precipitated by their determination to live without restrictions.

The second poem can be interpreted as an awakening, a commencement of consciousness facilitated by Prometheus's suffering. On the other hand, the third poem concludes with the vulture's awakening, which is a result of his strong feeling akin to that of an eagle. The initial cry of Prometheus is heard:

Shouted a world's end shout.
Then the swallow folded its barbs and fell,
The dove's bubble of fluorescence burst,

Nightingale and cuckoo
Plunged into padded forests where the woodpecker
Eyes bleached insane.⁶⁰

Scigaj asserts that the "world's end shout" of Prometheus is an abdication of responsibility to create reality for the self⁶¹. According to Smith, Prometheus is fragmented. He is the intersection of eternal light and bliss, as well as temporal doom, pain, change, and mortality. He is aware of eternity, yet he is compelled to exist within the realm of time. Additionally,

⁵⁹ A. Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982, p. 185.

⁶⁰ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 73.

⁶¹ L.M. Scigaj, *The Poetry of Ted Hughes: Form and Imagination*, Iowa City: U of Iowa, 1986, p. 270.

he is unable to resolve his predicament. He is suspended between the heaven and the earth, nearly wrenched apart, an immortal open wound⁶².

Prometheus's first shout, characterised by "intersecting self-consciousness, voice, and language" delineates "the Eden of 'holy, happy notions;' instead he develops a consciousness of the daily pain that attends existence - the vulture"⁶³. Although Prometheus briefly cries out for relief, his outcry not only increases the misery of all creation but also extinguishes his previous sacred, joyous ideals, intensifying the pain he feels due to the vulture's torment. Ultimately, the vulture rouses from sleep:

A world of holy, happy notions shattered
By the shout
That brought Prometheus peace
And woke the vulture.⁶⁴

As Xerr argues, "Prometheus senses that the grand notions he holds are forsaking him; he is about to die in a mysterious sort of way, but it is only thus that he will be resurrected as a god-like human being"⁶⁵. Therefore, the vulture will be crucial for his redemption. The vulture may symbolise evil in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. Similar to Prometheus, individuals during these periods transform their hardships into opportunities. Forster and Harper indicate that difficulties during hard times, including "food shortages, financial hardship and blatant inequalities for various sectors of society," together with a decline in living conditions, prompted a social revolution aimed at major changes in existing values⁶⁶. For instance, in the mid-1960s, women engaged in the workforce, offering an opportunity of liberation from the obligations imposed by traditional norms, including marriage and motherhood. Furthermore, to attain equality with men, women participated in other strikes, including one advocating for equal pay with male employees. Their strikes triggered a social revolution for women through the enactment of the Equal Pay Act in 1970.

In a similar vein, in the fifth poem, Hughes presents Prometheus's hope through his dream. Thus, Prometheus receives relief and hope from his dreams, which serve as a motivation for solution and release from suffering. Robinson observes that the rest of the Prometheus sequence addresses Prometheus's response to the vulture, encompassing "hope and

⁶² A.C.H. Smith, *Orghast at Persepolis; an International Experiment in Theatre Directed by Peter Brook and Written by Ted Hughes*, New York: Viking, 1972, p. 94.

⁶³ L.M. Scigaj, *Ted Hughes*, Boston: Twayne, 1991, p. 126.

⁶⁴ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 73.

⁶⁵ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes' Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 160.

⁶⁶ L. Forster, and S. Harper, *British Culture and Society in the 1970s: The Lost Decade*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010, p. 5.

hopelessness, calm and disturbance”⁶⁷. Accordingly, the fifth poem depicts Prometheus’s response to the vulture. Once the vulture departs, Prometheus passes on to sleep and experiences a dream:

Dreamed he had burst the sun’s mass
And emerged mortal. He raised his earth-soaked head
Like a new-born calf. A skirl of cold air
Joggled the flowers.⁶⁸

This poem clearly merges dream with illusion. Prometheus’s mere act of raising his head signifies his failure to release himself from his chains and escape the vulture’s torment:

He had resolved God
As a cow swallows its afterbirth.
But over the dark earth escaped
The infant’s bottomless cry, the mother’s lament,
The father’s curse.⁶⁹

Despite the aforementioned view on Prometheus, Prometheus’ gift of fire has not resolved humanity’s troubles as he is unable to ease their suffering through this gift⁷⁰. Despite the advancements in technology in the twentieth century, similar to the gift of Prometheus, they did not alleviate human suffering. Xerr further posits that “human life and the world are still characterized by confusion, fragmentation and hollow meanings”⁷¹. Despite Prometheus harboring a false dream in this poem, the dream nevertheless serves as a symbol of hope. The newborn in the poem can be interpreted as a symbol of Prometheus and humanity. Despite the challenges of the mid-1960s and early 1970s, individuals throughout these times continued to aspire to a better life, reflecting their hope for the future.

Similarly, in the sixth poem, Prometheus remains unable to fully grasp his current situation. Robinson claims that following the failure of his ideal solution, “his realization of the universe as an endless repetition of events all the same, all painful, all issueless, drives him mad and dumb”⁷². All his efforts to understand his state culminate in futility:

The thoughts that basted sweat downhill flushed features

⁶⁷ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p. 152.

⁶⁸ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 75.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁷⁰ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 161.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁷² C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p.

And carved his body in a freezing ecstasy
Like a last supper, are dead as Harakhty.
Heaven funnels its punishment
Into a heart that beats ostrich
Into a brain horoscopes cretaceous.⁷³

Despite Prometheus seems depressed, there is some indication of his hope. The vulture's recurring appearances may be regarded as a metaphor of life and death. According to Taşkın, its tearing of Prometheus's liver signifies death, while the liver's regrowth represents life⁷⁴. Consequently, due to Prometheus's fate and punishment, he confronts death daily. Furthermore, "A last supper" in the poem alludes to "Christ's final meal before his death and resurrection, a prandial ceremony that was gradually transformed into an immortal ritual"⁷⁵. Following the First and Second World Wars, people in the twentieth century experienced psychological issues, and their negative impacts persisted into the late 1960s and early 1970s. Furthermore, they harbored a deep-seated fear that another conflict would erupt, resulting in their imminent demise, a fear they shared with their relatives who had perished in the previous wars. Xerr puts forward that "Hughes's ambition is to immortalize Prometheus's ceremony of suffering and encourage us to accept it as a necessary ritual whose ultimate reward is transmutation and rebirth"⁷⁶. Prometheus, thus, resembles a Christ figure who facilitates humanity's regeneration of life and restoration of hope. Similar to Prometheus, individuals in the mid-1960s and early 1970s must endure suffering to attain everlasting peace and freedom. Harakhty, a minor Egyptian deity, is also mentioned as a symbol of rebirth, which is a sign of life and liberation.

The seventh verse indicates that the signal for Prometheus's freedom has been provided. According to Scigaj, Prometheus's freedom is based upon "understanding the significance of what he has done and learning to mediate the opposites of aspiration and pain by developing his imaginative life"⁷⁷.

The images of chains, the sun,
flowers and freedom are given:
So the sun bloomed, as it drank him,
Earth purpled its crocus.

⁷³ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 76.

⁷⁴ S. Taşkın, "The Uses of the Promethean Myth in P.B. Shelley and Ted Hughes," Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, 1999, p. 53.

⁷⁵ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes' Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 161.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 161.

⁷⁷ L. M. Scigaj, *Ted Hughes*, Boston: Twayne, 1991, p. 125.

So he flowered
Flowers of a numb bliss, a forlorn freedom -
Groanings of the sun, sights of the earth -
Gathered by withering men.⁷⁸

Xerr states that Prometheus might be regarded as humanity's saviour and a symbol of humankind⁷⁹. Consequently, the pain resulting from his rebellious actions parallels the agony of humanity. Despite the apparent devastation of freedom, the imagery of flowers indicates that Prometheus will bring back his fragmented world and attain true liberty. Prometheus's relentless pursuit to comprehend his condition and the source of his suffering symbolises his resolve to regain freedom. Hughes suggests that the many strikes occurring virtually monthly during the mid-1960s and early 1970s illustrate people's determination in their quest for independence and enhanced living conditions. Prometheus's restoration of hope signifies that, ultimately, similar to Prometheus, the people of these decades would succeed in liberating themselves from their chains, which symbolise the limits they face.

In this regard, the eleventh poem, which presents a dream of Prometheus, is characterised by a sense of hope. Prometheus has been imagining in this poem and has successfully escaped reality through his dream:

And the hammer-splayed head of the spike through his chest
Was a swallowtail butterfly, just trembling,
And neither wrist nor ankle must move -
And he dared hardly look at butterfly,
Hardly dared breathe for the pain of joy⁸⁰

The butterfly, which holds significant significance here, may be interpreted as a symbol of hope and new life. However, the final lines confront Prometheus with the reality that nothing has altered:

But now he woke to a world where the sun was the sun,
Iron iron,
sea sea,
sky sky,
the vulture the vulture.⁸¹

⁷⁸ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 77.

⁷⁹ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes' Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 161.

⁸⁰ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 81.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 81.

According to Scigaj, Prometheus perceives “the fragmentary ordinary world”⁸². Upon awakening from his dream, Prometheus recognises that all aspects, including his suffering, the environment, and his current location, remain unchanged. Nonetheless, he may still harbour a dream of liberation from his chains and the restoration of his freedom. Similar to Prometheus, the British people in the mid-1960s and early 1970s desired freedom and harboured hopes for a better life, despite the absence of lively communities due to widespread corruption in every area. Only sociocultural changes and social reforms across all disciplines can restore their independence. According to Alt, the Labour Government from 1964 to 1970 implemented significant changes in various domains, excluding the economy. These changes included legislation on abortion, sexual offences, and divorce, as well as the 1965 Rent Act, the introduction of supplementary benefits in 1966, the Race Relations Act of 1968, and particularly the educational reforms initiated in 1965⁸³. These efforts for social advancements instilled hope in individuals.

Likewise, Prometheus’s endeavours to resolve his circumstances persist in the twelfth poem. This time, Prometheus attempts to evade reality by means of his song:

Prometheus On His Crag
Had begun to sing
A little before dawn
A song to his wounds.⁸⁴

As it is revealed in these lines, Prometheus symbolises humanity. Sagar asserts that “[t]he body of Prometheus is the body of humanity, his wounds its smouldering cities” and that “it is no incomprehensible external evil which has caused the ruins of cities”⁸⁵. The suffering endured by individuals during the world wars and the subsequent era is similar to the suffering inflicted upon Prometheus by the vulture. According to Taşkın, Prometheus “has yet to win understanding from his wounds, but at least his pure song brings to suffering mankind a blissful numbness”⁸⁶:

But he went on singing -
A pure
Unfaltering morphine

⁸² L.M. Scigaj, *Ted Hughes*, Boston: Twayne, 1991, p. 126.

⁸³ J.E. Alt, *The Politics of Economic Decline: Economic Management and Political Behaviour in Britain since 1964*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979, p. 23.

⁸⁴ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 82.

⁸⁵ K.M. Sagar, *The Art of Ted Hughes*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975, p. 156.

⁸⁶ S. Taşkın, “The Uses of the Promethean Myth in P. B. Shelley and Ted Hughes,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, 1999, p. 59.

Drugging the whole earth with bliss.⁸⁷

In this context, Prometheus persists in singing, indicating his ongoing hope to reclaim his freedom. Singing often signifies an image of happiness and serves as a means to evade harsh realities. His employment of song as a substitute for morphine signifies the general population's drug use during the mid-1960s and early 1970s, representative of their rebellion against conventional ideals. Similarly to Prometheus, who endures suffering for the sake of others, individuals died during the world wars for the benefit of others. The British people drew strength from their hardships and regained hope for the future.

The fifteenth poem similarly conveys Prometheus's hope through his dream. In this poem, Prometheus experiences a dream for the third time in the Prometheus cycle, and within this dream, "Between the aeons - dark nothing. But he could see / Himself wading escaping through dark nothing / From aeon to aeon, prophesying Freedom"⁸⁸. Through this dream, Prometheus transcends his terrible reality, experiencing a sense of liberation in "his soul's sleepwalking":

It was his soul's sleepwalking and he dreamed it.
Only waking when the vulture woke him
In a new aeon
to the old chains
and the old agony.⁸⁹

Xerr points out that "Prometheus comes to himself as the one who offers liberation to humanity, only to find himself confronted by the vulture which seems intent upon killing all hope"⁹⁰. The vulture symbolises authority, compelling Prometheus to abandon hope, while his chains depict the constraints imposed by that authority, limiting his freedom. Nevertheless, his circumstances and the vulture will require his freedom. The vulture may be regarded as a symbol of the constraints of established systems. These constraints evidently motivate individuals to react.

Similarly, in the sixteenth poem, the hopeful Prometheus recognises his situation and embraces his pain:

He yields his own entrails
A daily premium
To the winged Death in Life, to keep it from men.
He lays himself down in his chains

⁸⁷ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 82.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 85.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

⁹⁰ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes' Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 165.

On the Mountain,
under Heaven
as THE PAYMENT⁹¹

As Xerr cogently argues, “Prometheus saves humanity from ‘Death in Life’ and not from mortality, which together with suffering must be accepted as an intrinsic part of the wholeness of existence”⁹². In this context, Prometheus stands as a Christ-like saviour, enduring chains, torment, and suffering for the sake of humanity. Xerr further suggests that “Hughes conceives of Prometheus as being both the rock upon which the new Church is to be built and the new Church itself”⁹³. The new church signifies the right moment for action. Individuals in the mid-1960s and early 1970s should prioritise personal spirituality over loyalty to institutional regulations. The British people can only reclaim their independence by establishing new lifestyles through social revolution.

In the seventeenth poem, Prometheus hopes for the restoration of his freedom. This poem can be regarded as a metaphor for life:

No God - only wind on the flower.
No chains - only sinews, nerves, bones.
And no vulture - only a flame
[...]
The vital, immortal wound.⁹⁴

Robinson asserts that Prometheus’s chains signify “the burden of mortality” inherent “in our bodies,” but the vulture represents “the energy running through time and life”⁹⁵. “The essential, eternal wound” symbolises the vulture’s torment through its regular visits. As Taşkın propounds, the wound is “[v]ital because it is via, life itself, and it is necessary to Prometheus’s salvation, and immortal because the wound is everlasting, and it is the source of his redemption”⁹⁶. The vulture’s dual nature serves as both Prometheus’s tormentor and a symbol of hope for understanding his condition and reclaiming his freedom. Thus, Prometheus realises that he will attain freedom only through the vulture. Similar to Prometheus, individuals realised that liberation would be attained through various

⁹¹ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 86.

⁹² D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 166.

⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 166.

⁹⁴ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 87.

⁹⁵ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p. 163.

⁹⁶ S. Taşkın, “The Uses of the Promethean Myth in P. B. Shelley and Ted Hughes,” PhD. Dissertation, Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, 1999, p. 64.

adversities, including unemployment, poverty, and deplorable living conditions. This is due to their ability to overcome these challenges and restore their freedom.

In the eighteenth poem, the comforting words of the lizard inspire Prometheus with hope. Sagar asserts that the poem portrays the Prometheus narrative and its protagonists as an image filled with “permanent religious significance”⁹⁷. The poem begins with references to Io, Epimetheus, and Pandora, emphasising their absence within this context, thereby imparting a fresh perspective. Subsequently, Prometheus conveys the symbolic details by accepting the lizard’s sign:

The figure overlooked in this fable
Is the tiny trickle of lizard
Listening near the ear of Prometheus,
Whispering - at his each in-rip of breath,
Even as the vulture buried its head -
‘Lucky, you are so lucky to be human!’⁹⁸

This is a celebration of humanity. Xerr observes that “the lizard is a symbol of the earth, an earth lacking consciousness, imagination and understanding” and “[i]t has no hope of transcending its status and mode of being and this is why Prometheus remains adamant in his will to bear the pain”⁹⁹. Prometheus clearly perceives his suffering as a form of retribution; nonetheless, he remains in despair until he listens to the lizard’s words. Xerr claims that the lizard’s remarks “remind the hero that to be human is to possess consciousness and wisdom and thus to be responsible for the proper management of nature and its resources”¹⁰⁰. The lizard’s words inspire Prometheus to maintain hope. According to Robinson, the lizard “can hear the pain in his breathing,” hence it cannot confuse “Prometheus’s situation for bliss and freedom”¹⁰¹. Similar to Prometheus, humanity is fortunate to possess the awareness that the mid-1960s and early 1970s were characterised by uncertainty and lack of aesthetic appeal. Furthermore, he grows increasingly confident in breaking established rules to restore his hope.

The twentieth poem also expresses Prometheus’s hope to regain his liberty. In this poem, Prometheus becomes confused and enquires about the significance of the vulture. Prometheus poses multiple questions about the vulture in the poem, including whether it represents “his unborn half-self,”

⁹⁷ K.M. Sagar, *The Art of Ted Hughes*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975, p. 152.

⁹⁸ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 88.

⁹⁹ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 167.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 167.

¹⁰¹ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p.

“his prophetic familiar,” the “atomic law,” “the fire he had stolen,” “the earth’s enlightenment,” or “his anti-self”¹⁰². Robinson asserts that “Prometheus’s questions as a survey and summary of everything the vulture means”¹⁰³. In the beginning, Prometheus is unable to get answers to his questions; however, he ultimately reaches a conclusion to the Prometheus sequence through the final question, which fosters hope in him:

Or was it, after all, the Helper
Coming again to pick at the crucial knot
Of all his bonds...?
Image after image. Image after image. As the vulture
Circled
Circled.¹⁰⁴

Prometheus clearly sees the vulture as an essential supporter, as its torture is crucial for his personal growth. According to West, his revised perspective transformed “his rock and his dilemma into a vigorous telluric revival”¹⁰⁵. In the end, he will be released from his chains. Similar to the vulture, the hardships faced by individuals served as a means to solidify their authority one more time. Xerr asserts that for Prometheus, the vulture functions as “his liberator” and acts as “a sort of shamanic guiding spirit intent upon helping him communicate with the hidden other of his psyche and being that he can make possible his rebirth and transformation”¹⁰⁶. Prometheus significantly matures when he interprets the significance of the vulture. Likewise, individuals in the second half of the twentieth century sought to comprehend the meaning of their difficulties and tried to avoid their consequences.

According to Marwick’s 1969 survey regarding the question “Do you feel free?,” personal freedom is assessed across various domains. In relationships with parents, 85 percent of the participants feel free, while 10 percent do not. In leisure activities, 80 percent report feeling free, with 18 percent feeling constrained. In love relationships, 78 percent feel free, whereas 8 percent do not. Regarding purchases, 71 percent affirm their freedom, while 27 percent disagree. In job selection, 64 percent feel free, while 26 percent do not. In the context of exercising one’s occupation, educational, or professional pursuits, 62 percent feel free, with 26 percent feeling restricted. In politics, 58 percent affirm their sense of freedom, while

¹⁰² T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, pp. 90-1.

¹⁰³ C. Robinson, *Ted Hughes as Shepherd of Being*, New York: St. Martin’s, 1989, p. 166.

¹⁰⁴ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 91.

¹⁰⁵ T. West, *Ted Hughes*, London: Methuen, 1985, p. 97.

¹⁰⁶ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 170.

23 percent do not¹⁰⁷. Despite the encouraging percentages, it is evident that the British people in the mid-1960s and early 1970s are unable to achieve complete freedom, much like Prometheus, who has not yet been emancipated.

The twenty-first poem, the last poem in the Prometheus sequence, establishes a connection between people's hopes and those of Prometheus. This poem conveys the attainment of freedom. Prometheus resolves the problem by comprehending his situation and transforming his suffering into a means of regaining his liberty:

The mountain is flowering
A gleaming man.
And the cloudy bird
Tearing the shell
Midwives the unfailing crib of flames.
And Prometheus eases free.
He sways to his stature.
And balances. And treads
On the dusty peacock film where the world floats.¹⁰⁸

Prometheus “achieves freedom through his rebirth” and accepts “his dual state of being,” valuing it “as an optimal condition for existence, this being due to the fact that it denotes unity and harmony through the tension between opposite forces”¹⁰⁹. The last line of the poem references the peacock, seen as the “symbol of integrated wholeness,” due to its feathers covering all colours¹¹⁰. Xerr posits that “[t]he peacock’s tail is also a symbol of cyclicity since every year its colours fade and re-splendour” so it “symbolises immortality, longevity and love, as well as apotheosis”¹¹¹. The re-emergence of the colours in his tail symbolises the rebirth of Prometheus. Xerr states Jung’s opinion that “[t]he peacock is an early Christian symbol of the redeemer” and “is second cousin to the phoenix, a Christ symbol”¹¹². Accordingly, Prometheus successfully regained his freedom through the redeemer. Moreover, Sagar asserts that “Prometheus’s mother is the mountain, the whole earth, the fruit of the earth. The earth itself, the chestnut, the fig, all are covered with a shell or skin within which is the

¹⁰⁷ A. Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998, p. 762.

¹⁰⁸ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 92.

¹⁰⁹ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 173.

¹¹⁰ V.W. Odajnyk, *Gathering the Light: A Jungian View of Meditation*, United States of America: Fisher King, 2011, p. 183.

¹¹¹ D. Xerr, *Ted Hughes’ Art of Healing*, Bethesda: Academica, 2010, p. 174.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p. 174.

magma. [...] This ‘slow mire’ of unrealized life at the same time imprisons and cradles, entombs that which is always waiting to be born”¹¹³.

Prometheus finally attains his freedom. As Sagar posits, “Prometheus ‘balances’ the gift and the cost, humanity and godhead, heaven and earth”¹¹⁴. Therefore, Campbell defines Prometheus’s spiritual journey as follows:

fundamentally it [the journey] is inward—into depths where obscure resistances are overcome, and long lost, forgotten powers revived, to be made available for the transfiguration of the world. This deed accomplished, life no longer suffers hopelessly under the terrible mutilations of ubiquitous disaster, battered by time, hideous throughout space; but with its horror visible still, its cries of anguish still tumultuous, it becomes penetrated by an all-suffusing, all-sustaining love, and a knowledge of its own unconquered power.¹¹⁵

Clearly, Campbell’s characterisation aligns with the evolution of Prometheus as a mythical hero. Taşkın asserts that “[t]he mountain, once a prison, is now a mother in the act of delivery”¹¹⁶ and it “splits its sweetness,”¹¹⁷ while “[t]he vulture, once an enemy, is now midwife”¹¹⁸. In a similar vein, Marwick claims that “[d]ecline, disillusionment, unrestrained excess: that is not the central story” since the story “is of the freedoms won, the movements, the innovations, and the ideas of the sixties continuing through the 1970s”¹¹⁹. The 1960s, which started with misery, restriction, and uncertainty, concluded with a rebirth of hope for the future that characterised the 1970s.

Conclusion

Hughes, in his work *Prometheus on His Crag*, reinterprets the Prometheus myth to illustrate the condition of individuals in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. The central character of *Prometheus on His Crag* is Prometheus, a rebel who faces the results of his revolt. Thus, his account of resistance and retribution exemplifies life during these periods. In each

¹¹³ K. M. Sagar, *The Art of Ted Hughes*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975, p. 152.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 156.

¹¹⁵ J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1949, p. 29.

¹¹⁶ S. Taşkın, “The Uses of the Promethean Myth in P. B. Shelley and Ted Hughes,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, 1999, p. 72.

¹¹⁷ T. Hughes, *Moortown*, London: Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 92.

¹¹⁸ S. Taşkın, “The Uses of the Promethean Myth in P.B. Shelley and Ted Hughes,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, 1999, p. 72.

¹¹⁹ A. Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998, p. 742.

poem in the Prometheus sequence, Hughes depicts human despair and the subsequent recovery of hope and emancipation through his Prometheus myth. Eight poems of *Prometheus on His Crag* relate to hopelessness, whereas thirteen poems focus on hope. Prometheus seeks to reclaim his liberty, paralleling British society in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, which converts its hopelessness into hope by fighting against existing systems and values, using hardships such as economic downturn, unemployment, and poverty to its benefit.

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THE CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CULTURES BEYOND THE READABLE TEXT

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Abstract: *This paper investigates new strategies of cultural interpretation of literary texts in order to probe depths of meaning with which the blank spaces can be filled in. Either a semiotic or a semantic approach can reveal various facets of a cultural product. The text refers to something, to a reality that is recreated, and projected into a fictional reality. The narrative acts as an attempt to shape a world after the resemblance of the real one. The temporal background of human experience always offers an intrigue for the complex interplay between the indirect reference to the past and the shaping reference to fiction. The essential step in the exploration of textual semantics can be achieved through multiple readings. The concept of how the reader understands the texts of artistic literature is a synthesis of learning theories in psychology and text theories in semiotics, pragmatics, and linguistics of the twenty first century and subsumes the stated intention to study interpretation as a complex process. The issue of the subjective dimension of understanding was addressed in the sequence devoted to reading literary texts justified by the different profile of readers specified in different cognitive structures, affective structures, and reading intentions. The personal character of reception is highlighted in the case of comprehension and interpretation of literary texts, whose structure creates spaces, manifestation of subjectivity, and type of text that places readers with different profiles. Outlined from the perspective of these demands, the literature lecture should be a space for initiation in reading and culture, and a space for intellectual debates and critical thinking.*

Keywords: *hermeneutics, interpretation, fiction, meaning, textual semantics*

Introduction

The conditions for understanding cultural dynamics, not only the literary one, are prerequisites of any hermeneutical act that catalyse around

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a metatext, including a series of criticisms or debates. Therefore, this makes the individual value of a work become collective and determines other reading experiences, plural directions of interpretation of works in relation to others, and thus inducing a complex knowledge of literature. Critics and literary historians who leaned on the same text produced a variety of interpretations as they focused on specific aspects revealed through different theories and approaches.

These strategies are meant to fill the potential dimensions (called blank or white spaces) that intertwine with those given in the fabric that the text represents, especially the fictional one, the one that wants to create pleasure. As far back as 1968 René Berger summarized in the following terms the way in which the 20-th century mind conceived art: “Already a work of art is no longer conceived as an image of reality, but merely as a reminiscence of it.”¹ In 1972, the same author was questioning “to what extent the technical conditions of the acquisition, transmission and reception of knowledge modify the knowledge itself. ... We are exiting the era in which there was a correspondence between words and things, in which the reproduction was an echo of the original.”²

The referential relation between the work of art/literary text and the external, extratextual world has been a complex one in the history of literary theory. From the *mimesis* of classical times, to the pragmatic, “teach and delight” approach to poetry of the Renaissance sir Philip Sydney³, or the Romantic, expressive theory of poetry as an overflow or manifestation of emotions⁴ to the various 19-th and 20-th century theories of production and reading of texts there is a continuous evolution and interrelation.

Wolfgang Iser’s phenomenology of reading offers us a hermeneutics the important relations are not between fictions and our worlds, but between the fictional narrative and the reader. Iser discusses the act of reading as a creative process which reveals to the reader something new about the world as well as a performative one that leads the reader to reflect on the outer as

¹ R. Berger, *The Discovery of Painting. The Art of Seeing*, vol. I, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1975, p. 39

² R. Berger, *The Mutation of Signs*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1978, p. 39, 50

³ M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and The Lamp: Romantic theory and Critical Tradition*, London: Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 15. The long tradition of pragmatic approaches to art in the West, from Horace to Dryden, explained so well by Abrams in his seminal work cited here, has a parallel in China, in the *Shih Ching*, or *The Book of Songs*, collecting verses from the 11-th to the 7-th century BC, which also teach morality as well as the way to delight (cf. I. Waniek, “Four Perspectives on Traditional Japanese Poetics”, *DCCU Annals, Linguistics, Literature and Teaching Methodology Series*, No. 1/2011 (69-82)

⁴ Abrams, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22. This expressive view of poetry also has a parallel in the Orient, in the Japanese poetics expressed in the Preface of the classic anthology of poetry *Kokinshu (Poems Old and New)*, ca. 905 AD.

well as inner world. This communication between reader and text is facilitated by what Iser calls the repertoire: “The conventions necessary for the establishment of a situation might more fittingly be called the *repertoire* of the text. ... [repertoire] may be in the form of references to earlier works, or to social and historical norms, or to the whole culture from which the text has emerged”⁵.

As no hermeneutics is possible by separating a text from its context. Narrative fiction represents preconceptions and authoritative structures of the dominant social system (norms, conventions, traditions) in certain ways. The fictional narrative represents these things in modified ways, making them themes for the reader’s reflection. The text implies the assumption of a competence established in the strategy to give life to the text:

“Meaning, then, is produced by varying degrees of differentiation brought about by the connections established among clauses, sequence of sentences, and their contextual location [...]. Thus liminality does not confine itself to marking off positions from one another but also blurs the salient features of syntactical and contextual determination, as these features continually shade into one another without losing their identity”.⁶

Similarly, but not identical with Wolfgang Iser’s *implied reader*, a distinction is also made between *the first-level model reader*, who wants to know how the story will end and the reader of the second level model of a reader who actually does the interpretation. The definition of this instance and its bivalence reveal their special potentialities when they are applied in observing the valences and modalities in which a reader of this type generically constitutes the meaning and significance of the literary

text, whether this happens in the presence of closed or open texts. A model reader updates the codes and sub-codes of the fictional text according to the typology of its generic involvement in the text. This idea allows finding a conceptual support validated by experience, such as that of inferences from intertextual scenarios, especially sequences of related events applied in the analysis of the epic genre in a particular approach.

Today’s readers

As one of the highest forms of human communication is reading, the information conveyed through books is sometimes expressed in words with hidden meanings. Literary masterpieces are in a dialogue and appeal to the

⁵ W. Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore&London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 69

⁶ W. Iser, *The Range of Interpretation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000, p. 49

intuitive ability of readers. Interpretation puts readers in a state of constant reshaping of ideas about meanings, because it is not known from the very beginning of analysis what is hidden behind the next page of a book. Due to the modern theories reading is regarded as being more than a simple scrolling through the pages of a book. It means reception and its effectiveness is accomplished through serious interpretive processes. The interpretation of literary texts is involved in the complex processes of human personality formation and development. It gives access to culture and is formative in nature. Through literature, readers apply their own methods to evaluate and comment validly the literary productions they are interested in. Interpretation unites or divides generations since each age has created a specific register of reception and interpretation through the constantly changing tastes, as the universe of natural and technological information around us expands at an increasing rate. The reader is affected by a number of objective and subjective factors that guide his interest in one book or another. The educational, moral, and cultural environment in which the adult reader was trained, the field in which he works and, last but not least, the entourage and friends to whom he attends help to establish the sphere of an individual's preferences for one literary masterpiece or another. The reader begins to appreciate a book when he expresses a desire to own it. He gives up for a moment his cultural prejudices and his subjective problems in order to experience as accurately as possible, the inner world of the writer or the one about whom it is written. When the reader comes to appreciate the author's creative effort, he gives in writing his ideas, feelings, and reactions to the surrounding reality and the world, and reading enters into the register of the act appropriation. Undoubtedly, the reader's self-denial is partial and

ephemeral. It is a necessary condition for the fulfilment of the reading process, it is a step imposed by the will to self-realization. Giving up almost total immersion in the act of reading is certainly not a free act because it determines the enrichment of the self with new knowledge, with an absolutely new way of receiving the inner and outer world.

“The concept of syncretism encourages us to investigate the extent to which the different elements are blended (as anyone who has used a kitchen blender knows, there are degrees of fusion). As for ‘hybridity’, it is a slippery, ambiguous term, at once literal and metaphorical, descriptive and explanatory”.⁷

A literary work is an object of the reading experience. The problems of optimizing it and of establishing the consensual rules of the objective

⁷ P. Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*. UK: Cambridge Polity Press, 2014, p. 54

foundation of interpretation are important. They are not only the prerogative of special disciplines, such as Hermeneutics, the Theory of Argumentation, Logic, and the Theory of Communication, but are objects of debate and controversy in any field in which the truth is sought. In opposition to the free use of a text, interpretation starts with reading par excellence, tending towards the maximum fidelity of the restitution of the meaning. The question is what determines the meaning of the work. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to this question. The meaning of a literary work would be equivalent to either the text or the context, either with the reader or with authorial intent. Each answer raises and generates numerous pros and cons, the problem remaining permanently open. Undoubtedly, the meaning of the work is not easy to determine but the most widely circulated argument is that the text would be the equivalent of the one who produced it, that is, of the author, and would be an achievement of his intention and cultural mentality. The author is the individual creator of literature, who produces a literary text. The literary work appears to us as an object of sui-generis knowledge, which has a special ontological status, and is the result of a totalizing experience. The act of reading, done by the reader, establishes a literary relationship with the text, which is only a way of interpreting and revealing its existence, which is, a system of norms.

Text theory

Books will not disappear by the unprecedented expansion of computers in our world, and of information circulating through computers and the Internet. A kind of awareness of cultural reflexes with the classic and the Searlean background of any reader's potential, predisposes readers to fine analytics and comparisons between what is already known and what is offered from the outside, to an epistemic and affective ruminating.

The problem of text theory was first put within the limits of exegesis, which, in its hermeneutical sense, is a discipline that aims to understand a text based on its intention and what the text actually means. Interpretation, therefore, poses a problem of reading effectively, in order to understand the intentionality of the work. Text analysis creates a distance between what it seeks to understand and what the text in question actually says. The problem with any theory of the text, however, is to overcome this hermeneutic distance. First of all, there is a temporal difference between the interpreter and the text, so that the present of the interpretation is not the present of the text. This is the case with the analysis mentioned above. The connection between interpretation, in the sense of textual exegesis, and comprehension, is the gist of understanding the signs that carry meanings according to traditional hermeneutics. In Aristotle, hermeneutics refers to any significant discourse. Even the significant discourse is hermeneutics,

the one that interprets reality, insofar as it says something about something. In this lies the whole problem of distance (and distancing) specific to textual exegesis.

The new status of interpretation

It is the ontological condition of man that is uttered through that surplus of meaning that is added to the literal historical event. Therefore, symbolism implies the opening of language to something else. Or this opening beyond language, but through language, is a saying, an utterance. "Symbolism reflects a cultural striving to unfold new vistas".⁸

Furthermore, the saying is a revelation, a power that reveals, that manifests, and brings to light a hidden place. Even if it is a saying, when the language says more than itself, when it shows more than it says, at the very moment of the appearance, the language is silent in front of what it says. Or this silence is the very expression of what is being said. Through the structure of the double meaning, symbolism reveals the equivocality of being: being is disclosed in different ways. The *raison d'être* of symbolism is therefore to open the multiplicity of meaning to the equivocality of being.

The new status of interpretation is an attitude towards literary works. Interpretation is thus the art of meeting the textual opening; to open a window. Reference may be made to an "open work" as Umberto Eco called it, through interpretive acts. Before Eco, Heidegger said that the work is an open space where everything is different than usual. Interpretation retains the character of closeness to the text. Neither immediate reflection nor logical explanation means anything if it is not mediated by the process of self-understanding.

The elaboration of framework concepts and tool concepts acquires its full meaning insofar as, coming from reading itself, it makes its results available to a research that uses them and tests them by going to meet the texts. Without these general concepts - the list of which includes the descriptive vocabulary of linguistics, grammar, old and modern rhetoric - interpretation would be unsupported and without the actual techniques of interpretation, these concepts would live only in a sterile and separate existence, in which nothing would distinguish the good approaches from the bad, as long as they remain unused.

Bridging Cultural Distance in Interpretation

Any interpretation tries to reduce the cultural distance, which is a temporal distance. The interpretation therefore seeks to cancel this distance, to bring the text, including its significant value, closer to the

⁸ U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Text*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 58.

current analysis. It thus transforms the text into a contemporary of ours, updating it, not betraying its own system of values, but re-signifying them in the order of the present. It is the very problem of the actuality of the work. Interpretation updates the semantic possibilities of the text. Two features result, on the one hand, in the victory over cultural distance, and, on the other hand, the fusion of text interpretation with self-interpretation. As a matter of fact the meaning of the text reveals the meaning of the interpreting self. It is therefore an active interpretation that completes the discourse of the text in a dimension similar to the dimension of speech.

“Perceptual experience appeared more and more like an artificially isolated segment of a relation to the ‘life-world’, itself directly endowed with historical and cultural features.”⁹

The Text as Event

The text appears to us as a significant cultural event that speaks to us and demands our speech (understanding and interpretation). The text updated by interpretation finds an audience, a circumstantial environment, that of multiple interpretations. Analysis, in turn, is a procedure that, beyond the given, straightforward communication, raises awareness of possible hidden meanings. These must be revealed and interpreted based on the evidence in the text and with integrated explanations. The first stage of analysis explains the text in its static structure (structural analysis is not concerned with the chronology of the text), and then it is interpreted according to what the text communicates. There is no longer a subjective interpretation as an act on the text, but an objective operation of interpretation, which

would be the very act of the text. It is another way of saying that the text is itself in the act of reading. The interpretation brings to light the deep semantics, being on a path indicated by the meaning itself as direction.

This is what Ricoeur calls objective or intra-textual interpretation, which is confused with the semantic dimension of speech: interpretation is a discourse that speaks of a meaning that signifies itself in the very act of interpretation. It is an interpretation through text (through language) and not over the text. As the theory of the text is in the plane of sign theory, the debate proposed by Ricoeur is for the time being limited to the semiotic plane.

“The kind of narrative analysis we are dealing with here is in fact situated entirely at the level of the signified. For it, narrative forms

⁹ P. Ricoeur, and J.B. Thompson, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences. Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 79.

are no more than particular organizations of the semiotic form of the content for which the theory of narration attempts to account.”¹⁰

A prose text is constructed on narrative codes and language, with a logical-grammatical code that guides the comprehension of sentences. The explanation is therefore required by the discourse itself and understanding is therefore mediated by relevance of idea by a logical line of thought. The road from explanation to comprehension is the road from virtual to actual, from system to event, and from language to speech.

Intuitive interpretation becomes reflexive through a mediation of possible explanations. Structural, explanatory analysis does not leave the immanence of the text, but this description of the code through which the narrator and the reader are signified through the text uses comprehension, which resumes the text from where the analysis leaves it. In other words, it inscribes it in a kind of transcendence of its own to the one who offers it and to the one who receives it (the author and the reader). Otherwise it could not be a cultural tradition; it is based precisely on the transmission of the work; or the work can only be transmitted if it is left open and reopened for reading. It is not a question of completely denying the subjective character of comprehension, as the explanation means, in fact personalizing understanding of the text since it is always addressed to the one who receives it and appropriates its meaning. Nonetheless, there is no radical and insurmountable rupture between the strictly objective analysis of textual structure and this acquisition of meaning by a subject. Between the two sides there is the world of the text, the meaning of the work; it means that it is open to understanding in a world of real action.

“Eco states that aesthetic texts change semantic systems and change the way in which culture sees the world, ... (which) indicates that they reflect our cultural encyclopedia”.¹¹

Hermeneutic theory

A first meaning of the hermeneutic theory of the text would therefore be the rules of interpretation of documents written in culture. Interpretation raises certain specific issues, taking into account the fact that it works with texts and not with spoken language. The hypothesis is as follows: the human sciences can be considered hermeneutic insofar as their object corresponds to the specific features of a text; and to the extent that their methodology corresponds to the interpretation of a text.

¹⁰ A.J. Greimas, *On Meaning. Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 114.

¹¹ B. Hoxha, *Umberto Eco's Semiotics - Theory, Methodology and Poetics*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, pp. 54-55.

Two problems may arise from this hypothesis: the extent to which the notion of a text is an appropriate paradigm for the object of human sciences and the limit to which the methodology of text interpretation provides a valid paradigm for interpretation in the humanities in general. The object of the text and the method by which it can be interpreted can be considered models. “Contemporary world is intrinsically dependent on a holistic approach, in spite of it being informed by tiny specializations and hyper-specialized professionals”¹²

Considered from these perspectives, the theory of literature becomes a discipline that frees itself from the apparent claim of autotelic being, resizing its research object and methods. It will seek to acquire more concreteness, to work not so much ascertaining, evaluating and categorical, but involving in cultural dialogue, issues, and dynamics of the humanities and beyond. It provides a meta-language to the sciences of communication, art and advertising, social sciences, and history of ideas, implementing even its fundamental practices, critical-ordering, and hermeneutic and creative operations. In the twentieth century, even writers will imprint this spirit of dialogue between literature, the arts, and theoretical speculation of the avant-garde, pedagogy of the reception and production of literary values.

Conclusions

Reading should be understood as a process that cannot be conditioned exclusively by textual norms, nor by metatextual and critical ones. However, this process has a degree of intrinsically defining subjectivity that cannot be circumvented. Iser considers that through imagination readers produce a picture of the imaginary object that is not given as such. The way in which the reading act is performed is a representation through imagination and not through perception being, obviously, the one that influenced the idea. Wolfgang Iser argued that the starting point for the constitution of a synthesis was through the relations between signs, which can be identified and their equivalence represented. For the reader, reading consists in imagining in the presence of the text, with effects realized by stimuli, whose meaning cannot be reconstituted by simple perception, thus making creativity necessary in the production of the meaning by constructing the image of the character. Consequently, an investigation is made of the psychological springs of the way in which the world of the text intersects with the psychic dimension of the reader and, more importantly, of the ways in which this fact occurs in relation to the literary world. Through these multiple coordinates, literature exceeds the formative value of all the other

¹² F.N. Nicolau, *Morpheus: from Text to Images. Intersemiotic Translation*, Bucharest, Tritonic Publishing House, 2016, p. 21.

types and texts and allows the formation of the new horizon of cultural identity.

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