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D.D. ROȘCA AND THE CRITICISM OF THE “MYTH OF FULL RATIONALITY”

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Abstract: *The ideal of full knowledge implies hazardous assumptions in relation to rigorousness and testability, based on the belief that the universe is, in its intimate structure, rational and intelligible. It is postulated, therefore, that there is a fundamental/full agreement between the essence of outer reality and thinking. Through the myth/mythicization of full rationality, existence assigns a meaning, a finality, and, consequently, a sense to human life, from naïve-optimistic standpoints. It is believed, here, that everything - the world and humankind - has a clear-cut sense. By default, it is accepted that the cultural act is necessary, being perceived as a mere extension of biology, its enrichment and deepening; human relations with the world are unproblematic, implying a familiarity with the surroundings, which satisfies the human need for inner security and, implicitly, for the instinct of self-preservation. D.D. Roșca argues that likewise unfounded is the opposite postulate: the basic irrationality of the world, because it also assumes an - unachievable - all-encompassing experience. ..The tragic nature of human condition is deduced from the essential and irreversible constitution of reality as a whole, as given by experience: being rational and, at the same time, full of irrationality; in relation to human values/desires, the world is both reasonable and absurd, meaningful and meaningless, familiar and also indifferent or irresponsible. Between nature and culture there is always a tension, a break; spiritual values have a fragile status; they neither can have a biological justification, nor are they founded on the intimate structure of the world.*

Keywords: *rational, irrational, intelligible, reasonable sense, absurd, tragic existence, philosophy.*

“*L’Existence tragique*” is the original philosophical synthesis published by D.D. Roșca in 1934, at a Romanian publishing house, being edited, at Emile Bréhier’s proposal, to be published, in 1938, in French – which, because of international events, did not happen. Philosophy is understood as a way of life, the criticism of metaphysical tradition blending with the attempt to shed light on the irreducible/specific existential regime of the human being. “Philosophy is, in our opinion, an attempt to motivate - by arguments borrowed from knowledge - a moral and aesthetic attitude in the face of existence, as an entirety, an attitude whose secret springs, that is intimate, are of an affective essence.” Therefore,

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philosophy lays out an interpretation of Existence, of its nature, starting from certain privileged enunciations or principles based on elements of knowledge, “but the deep layer of consciousness in which metaphysics has the roots that nourish it is of an emotional, affective, ~lyrical~ essence”¹. Implicitly or explicitly, certain theses are privileged, enlightening the existential status proper to man/humankind. According to the traditional outlook, the ontology of humankind is just a particularization of the general ontology, hence an application and exemplification of the general philosophical theory of existence. Modern and contemporary perspectives bring about a significant shift toward “the regionalization of ontology”, so that the problematic of the irreducible structure of human condition is pivotal to any attempt to have an all-embracing explanation of existence itself. Therefore, the philosophical discourse always speaks about man, even when it refers to nature, things, and universe. Philosophy is concerned to substantiate global interpretations on the world and man starting from architectonically layered theses, whose contents merge together elements of knowledge and affective, attitudinal dominants and unavowed needs, which define a full human conscience.

“In trying to demonstrate what cannot be, to prove things that are heterogeneous to thought and to make the irreducible or the absurd worthwhile, philosophy satisfies its mediocre taste for the absolute”² – writes Emil Cioran, having in mind the tendency of systematic philosophies to fail into contemplative serenity, avoiding the real sufferings which they are willing/able neither to absorb, not to comfort. Exclusively focusing on their interest in knowledge, philosophies were prone to idealization, so as to meet the intellectual curiosity of the people who are content with unifying utopian models, inapt to strike roots into the soil of everyday tragicallness. “A philosophical theory of the world - points out Anatole France - resembles the world in the way a sphere on which one would only draw the degrees of longitude and latitude would resemble the earth. Metaphysics is remarkable in that it takes away from the world all that it has and gives it back what it did not have.”³ There is here the risk for any theoretical clarification which aims to open up for man enlightening cognitive horizons beyond the narrow frames of

¹ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, Traduit du roumain par l'auteur, The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1977, p. 19. “La philosophie est, selon notre avis, un essai de motivation - par des arguments empruntés à la connaissance - d'une attitude morale et esthétique en face de l'existence prise comme totalité, attitude dont les ressorts secrets, c'est-à-dire intimes, sont d'essence affective,” “mais la couche profonde de la conscience où la métaphysique a les racines qui la nourrissent est d'essence émotionnelle, affective, <lyrique>.”

² E.M. Cioran, *Le livre des leurres*, in *Œuvres*, Édition Gallimard, 1995, p. 231. “The pride of philosophers has long been to contemplate ideas, to stay outside them, to detach themselves from the ideal world which they nevertheless consider as the supreme value. Their existence has imitated the insipidity of ideas. The philosophers do not live in ideas but live on them.” (p.230).

³ Anatole France, *Le Jardin d'Épicure*, Édition revue et corrigée par l'auteur, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, éditeurs, 1923, p. 33. The author continues in a sufficiently ironic and relaxed tone: “a marvelous work no doubt, and a more exquisite, more illustrious game that cannot be compared to marbles and chess, but, on the whole, of the same nature. The thinking world is reduced to geometrical lines whose arrangement is an amusement. A system like that of Kant or Hegel does not differ essentially from these *successes* by which women deceive, with cards, the boredom of living.”

daily life. The escape is possible only by suspending the limits – decreed to be provisional – and by getting attached to any fatally idealizing paradigm. Philosophical knowledge entails a spiritual break from everything that girdles up attitudes, hampering them in their tendency to get radicalized. The detachment from the concrete has an enlightening stake. Latent or explicit utopias coming from philosophical constructs - unrealizable, of course, by structure - raise questions about human condition and the world in the absolute. The purpose is to substantiate or justify, in the most general terms, a theoretical opening as to what man is and especially what he should be. The ultimate goal is to propose a symbolic vault. Therefore, human ontology is inherent to any philosophical edifice: if not in a finalized manner or in the form of explanatory suggestions, certainly and always it works at least as a spiritual ferment.

Philosophical utterances do not and cannot have an axiological neutrality. They incorporate their psychosocial, historical, real and/or imaginary referentials in the form of affective and practical assumptions or in the form of value implications - attitudinal, value contents located in the very theoretical substance of philosophy. As a rule, these diffuse and confuse primary meanings are not made explicit by the philosopher. But remember that traditional systems encompassed, in addition to the general theory of existence (ontology), the theory of knowledge (epistemology), an ethics that aimed to speak about the human being, and ethics was regarded as relying on ontology; or ethics is, always, a value-normative explanation of what is already present and active in a philosophical conception. Extensively, philosophy entails a number of other value derived consequences, and in situations of creative intrepidity, axiological constructs as well. Therefore, the cognitive-spiritual content adequate to philosophy can be put in the terms of a value judgment: it does not come only from constative-explanatory skills and pretenses, but also from operations meant to give value to the world and humankind. In this way and for this reason, philosophy meets man's urgent need to elicit answers to questions that relate to his existential status, his role and, especially, the chances of fulfillment in relation to existence as a whole.

Using these distinctions from D. D. Roșca's work, we see that it is not by chance that the thematic nucleus from *Tragic Existence* is "the human condition", by which we must understand "not only the condition of an economic and political being who fights alongside his fellow human beings for their social and political freedom and for the defense of their dignity, but we mainly understand man's condition as a spiritual being, a creator of spiritual values and empowered to change with their help the reality around him, to humanize it by transfiguring it".⁴ Therefore, it is not by chance that this thinker explores and theoretically legitimizes, step by step, "the absolutely problematic character of spiritual life"⁵, the feeling that we have about the nature of "adventure" and "miracle" that civilization and its spiritual values reveal", "our sense of permanent

⁴ D.D. Roșca, *Oameni și climate (Men and Climates)*, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj, 1971, p.205.

⁵ This consideration is to be found only in the Romanian editions. Cf. D.D. Roșca, *Existența tragică, (The Tragic Existence)*, The Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1968, p.11.

and irremediable uncertainty about our destiny especially as creators of spiritual values”⁶

It foreshadows, therefore, the path followed by his entire philosophical synthesis. These premises and morally attitudinal solutions are based on the insights gained from a discourse on existence in its entirety. Discarding, in his philosophical project, any pressure from practical ideologies, D. D. Rosca aims only to outline a way of life: supporting the tragic conception of life on a global vision of the world that is receptive to the demands of the scientific spirit. More precisely, he deduces the tragic nature of human condition from the irretrievable and essential constitution of reality as a whole, as it is given by experience. The recourse to such instances of control also takes into account the lessons from Kantian criticism about the way to understand the process of knowledge and the distinction/difference between the real thing and the object of knowledge. The fact that what we know is not the thing itself, but the way it is presented to us - and it is effective - the reality-for-us legitimizes the interpretation of the value-anthropological dimension of knowledge, refusing, however, the consequences of pre-critical, pre-Kantian attitudes. Thus, in his doctoral thesis about Hegel's influence on Taine - held at the Sorbonne in 1928, under the guidance of Lévy-Bruhl and Émile Bréhier - he argues that the statement according to which our mind knows reality “in itself”, and therefore, “we are capable of absolute and limitless knowledge” is, certainly, the fundamental postulate of Hegel's philosophy, but it is also proper to Taine's philosophy, and it is also adequate to most metaphysical systems before Kant - to ancient metaphysics, as argues Hegel”⁷. The critical analysis of knowledge makes available the radiography of metaphysical projects, while the typology captured on the meta-theoretical level blends with the concern to outline an original reflexive synthesis. The methodological path is legitimate. To gain firmness and power of persuasion, our analysis should start, to our mind, from the criticism of the supreme goal pursued by the scientific knowledge of the world and the philosophy based on it. For, it is a fact known to critics steeped in the history of epistemology that the idea we have of the nature and the possibilities of knowledge determines *for us*, in ultimate analysis, what we believe to be the Essence of the object of knowledge. In our case, this object is existence viewed as a totality, on whose intimate structure largely depends the idea we have of nature and the value of human life, its *raison d'être* in general, the significance of human culture”⁸.

⁶ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, ed. cit., p. 11. “Le sentiment que nous avons du caractère d'«aventure» et de «miracle» que dévoilent la civilisation et ses valeurs spirituelles”, “notre sentiment de permanente et irrémédiable incertitude concernant notre destinée surtout en tant qu'êtres créateurs de valeurs spirituelles.”

⁷ D.D. Roșca, *L'influence de Hegel sur Taine théoricien de la connaissance et de l'art*, Paris, Librairie Universitaire J. Gamber, 1928, p.65. “Notre esprit connaît la réalité «en soi»”, and therefore, “nous sommes capables de connaissances absolues et sans limites” “est, certainement, le postulat fondamental de la philosophie de Hegel, comme elle est celui de la philosophie de Taine, mais elle est propre aussi à la majeure partie des systèmes métaphysique antérieurs à Kant – à l'ancienne métaphysique, comme dit Hegel.”

⁸ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, ed. cit., p.24. “Pour gagner en fermeté et en force de persuasion, nos analyses devront partir, croyons-nous, de la critique du but suprême vers lequel tendent la connaissance scientifique du monde et la philosophie

The ultimate goal of philosophy, of particular sciences implicitly, provided we accept the necessary accumulation in time, was, in most cases, if not always, the full knowledge of the Great Entirety of Existence. This can be found in endlessly repeated attempts, from various spiritual angles, to explain the kaleidoscopic totality and variety of the world starting from a single principle, i.e., to construct a coherent, unitary, homogeneous image by postulating a unique essence - as the only authentic, intelligible reality - from which all the concrete-individualized elements of Existence are deduced. This ideal, concludes D.D. Roșca, cannot be achieved for the simple reason that it runs ahead of any possible experience, exceeding and extrapolating, in a dogmatic and uncontrolled way, a certain type of cognitive experience: a factual reason, not a logical one, makes it impossible to fully deduce existence from a single law – namely, the temporal and spatial infinity (and the becoming which gets attached to it).

The way in which, by tradition, European thinking addressed knowledge earmarked the way in which the world/existence is interpreted as a whole; it is “the belief that we know things as they are in themselves, knowing the laws of thinking”; because “there is reason in the world,”⁹ the nous governs the world – as the Greeks used to say -, the logic and the logicity of the world/the real reside in “the necessary chain of ideas, concepts, and at the same time the necessary connection of things”; in Spinoza’s words: “Ordo et connexio idearum idem est ac ordo et connexio rerum”; from a certain perspective, underlines D.D. Roșca “there is therefore no essential difference between the nature of things as objects of knowledge and as objects in themselves”¹⁰; this postulate takes the shape of the myth of full rationality based on the belief that the determinants of thinking are also the fundamental determinants of things/reality.¹¹

If, in most cases, science moves forward more cautiously, philosophy, with its specific aspirations, rushes toward large-scale generalizations that go beyond the controllable sphere of human experience and strives, whatever the cost, toward global syntheses. Or, the ideal of full knowledge implies hazardous assumptions in terms of rigorousness and testability; more precisely, it is based on the belief that the universe is, in its intimate structure, rational and intelligible. It is postulated, in other words, a basic and total agreement between

fondée sur elle. Car c’est un fait connu par les critiques versés dans l’histoire de l’épistémologie que l’idée que nous nous faisons de la nature et des possibilités de la connaissance détermine *pour nous*, en dernière analyse, ce que nous croyons être l’essence même de l’objet de la connaissance. Dans notre cas, cet objet est l’existence considérée comme totalité. De la structure intime de celle-ci dépend ensuite en grande mesure l’idée que nous nous faisons de la nature et de la valeur de la vie humaine, de sa raison d’être en général, de la signification de la culture humaine.”

⁹ D.D. Roșca, *L’influence de Hegel sur Taine théoricien de la connaissance et de l’art*, cited works, p. 98, footnote note 1. about “la croyance selon laquelle nous connaissons les choses telles qu’elles sont en elles-mêmes, en connaissant les lois de la pensée”; because “il y a de la raison dans le monde.”

¹⁰ D.D. Roșca, *L’influence de Hegel sur Taine théoricien de la connaissance et de l’art*, cited works, p. 99; “enchaînement nécessaire des idées, des concepts, et en même temps liaison nécessaire des choses”, „il n’y a donc pas de différence essentielle entre nature des choses en tant qu’objets de connaissance et en tant qu’objets en soi”.

¹¹ For further details see - D.D. Roșca, *L’influence de Hegel sur Taine théoricien de la connaissance et de l’art*, cited works, p. 102 – 103.

the essence of outer reality and thinking. “When he tried to explain the outside world by postulating it as *entirely* rational in its essence and, to a greater extent, when he formulated the ideal of knowledge - openly or only somehow secretly – we have discussed it at length here, man has implicitly conferred on this external world the essential structure which is the prerogative of the intellectual world of logical ideas. He believes, lucidly or only instinctively, that reality is, in its essence and in this respect, similar to his own logical ideas, and holds the idea that it makes up a system. He imagines that the phenomena of the external world can be deduced from each other, as logical ideas are deduced one from another: he hopes to be able to establish deductive chains which he will be able to connect one day into a single deductive chain.”¹² Therefore, the world is conceived as having a perfect order which can be restored without insurmountable difficulties, on the logic level, since causal connections show a mutual involvement, the relations of coexistence and succession are outward signs of inner invariable links among phenomena; as they seem to behave like a logical necessity, they are decreed to be timeless, supra-temporal: temporality is eliminated, the content shifts being only apparent. So, the existential and cultural capitalization of a certain - uncritical - approach to understand the act of knowledge brought forth an ideal: “the establishment of a deductive chain with no discontinuity, providing the essential framework of empirical reality”, which means “an ultimate reduction of all facts and of all partial laws onto a single law, from which one can deduce, necessarily, all the forms of being, or, at least, the essential forms of being”,¹³ “and all the individual facts as well”¹⁴.

In their intimate structure, these postulates justify the practical and moral assumptions and express human desires, being, in fact, intellectual extensions of certain convictions and beliefs which satisfy the instinct of self-preservation, the basic needs of inner security/safety. The idea of the full rationality of existence lends meaning, purpose, and therefore a sense to human life, from naive-optimistic standpoints. It is believed here that everything - the world and humankind - has a clear-cut meaning. If the world is, in its intimate structure, rational, it is also intelligible, it does not “want” to baffle humankind, it “behaves”

¹² D.D. Roşca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, ed. cit., p.48. “Lorsqu’il a essayé d’expliquer le monde extérieur en le postulant comme *intégralement* rationnelle dans son essence et, en une plus grande mesure, lorsqu’il a formulé – ouvertement ou seulement en quelque sorte en secret - l’idéal de connaissance dont il fut si longuement question ici, l’homme a conféré implicitement à ce monde extérieur la structure essentielle qui est l’apanage du monde intellectuel des idées logiques. Il a cru, avec lucidité ou seulement instinctivement, que la réalité est, en son essence et sous ce rapport, pareille à ses propres idées logiques, il a cru qu’elle est système. Il s’est imaginé que les phénomènes du monde extérieur peuvent être déduites les uns des autres, comme on déduit les idées logiques les unes des autres: il a espéré pouvoir établir des chaînes déductives qu’il sera à même de relier un beau jour en une chaîne déductive unique. ”

¹³ D.D. Roşca, *L'influence de Hegel sur Taine théoricien de la connaissance et de l'art*, cited works, p.76; “... l’établissement d’une chaîne déductive sans discontinuité, constituant la trame essentielle de la réalité empirique”, which means “une réduction ultime de tous les faits et de toutes les lois partielles à une loi unique, d’où l’on puisse déduire, avec nécessité, toutes les formes de l’être, ou, tout ou moins, les formes essentielles de l’être”; see also p. 96.

¹⁴ D.D. Roşca, *L'influence de Hegel sur Taine théoricien de la connaissance et de l'art*, cited works, p.77; “...mais aussi tous les faits individuels.”

reasonably; hence, the urge to know the spiritual values, placed at the top of cultural hierarchy and justified in and by the very inexorable laws of nature. By default, it is accepted that the cultural act is needed, being perceived as a mere extension of biology, its enrichment and deepening; the human relations with the world are unproblematic, the human being feeling at home, familiar with the surroundings, which empower him and satisfy the need for inner security, bespeaking, in fact, of the instinct of self-preservation. Such statements, underlines ironically D.D. Roșca, voice an uncontrolled optimism and meet the need for psychological comfort.

In fact, this very projection of psychological contents carrying a vital function within cognitive images about the world accounts for the irreducible specificity of philosophical enunciations. “If it is true that to this day the spectacular knowledge in the absolute sense of the term has remained an ideal, and that the primary foundation of the most abstract vision on the world is also built up with more or less hidden finalist elements, knowledge (philosophy or positive science), to a close scrutiny, will reveal somewhat itself as an animist knowledge: the image of the world, presented as the creation of the absolutely “disinterested” intelligence, will prove to have been also constructed by the transposition into the outer world of our secret aspirations. It is because man hopes to also fulfill in this way his multi-millenary hopes. We do not seek to combat here this matter-of-fact situation, a situation which is, anyway, unescapable, to our mind. Nonetheless what we want is that, by knowing it, we further on try to keep constantly in our mind that the will to be wholly rational does not come from existence itself: it belongs to the thinker: man of science to philosopher.”¹⁵

Also unfounded is the opposite postulate: the fundamental irrationality of the world; and he includes - an unreachable! - totalization of experience, assumptions and critically uncontrolled affective implications. At stake, here as well, is an anthropomorphic predisposition of the human being. Usually, the turbulent epochs bring about states of acute uncertainty, inner loneliness, the feeling of uprootedness and the anguish of meaninglessness; in an opaque, obscure, hostile world, the consciousness despairs and loses control over the unity of life; anxiety is followed by the frenzy of passions; selfishness, ambition, instinct bring about either triumph or ruin; compensatorily, one can abdicate from personal independence (autonomy), ripe with insecurity, by accepting an authority, a sense-giving order; faith can be also a compensatory haven, a

¹⁵ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, ed. cit., p. 58. “S’il est vrai que jusqu’à ce jour la connaissance spectaculaire au sens absolu du terme est restée un idéal, et que le fondement premier de la plus abstraite vision du monde soit bâti aussi d’éléments finalistes plus ou moins cachés, toute connaissance (philosophie ou science positive), examinée de près, se révélera en quelque sorte comme une connaissance animiste: l’image du monde, présentée comme création de l’intelligence absolument «désintéressée», se montrera avoir été construite aussi par la transposition dans le monde extérieur de nos aspirations secrètes. C’est que l’homme espère obtenir aussi par une telle voie la réalisation de ses espoirs multimillénaires. Nous ne cherchons aucunement à combattre ici cette situation de fait, situation d’ailleurs inévitable, pensons-nous. Mais ce que nous voulons, c’est qu’en la connaissant, nous cherchions à garder constamment présent à l’esprit le fait que la volonté d’être intégralement rationnelle n’est pas celle de l’existence elle-même: elle appartient au penseur: homme de science au philosophe.”

technique for affective rejuvenation, or simply, an existential therapy. Such psychological effects boost the temptation to cancel the action of randomness on /in the world and one's own life by affective decree: purely and simply, there is no randomness, everything is subject to a rigor-bound determinism and to strict, necessary causal connections, so that random are those phenomena whose causes we do not know yet, therefore chance derives from our ignorance rather than from the actual movement of the world and life. As D.D. Roșca points out, hazard does not designate what is spontaneous, unpredictable or effectively/materially indeterminate in relation to a necessary causal linkage, but instead a temporary state of knowledge, the actual impossibility of a consistent explanation when it comes to an infinitely complex series of causes¹⁶; in Hegel's work, the question of chance/hazard is solved in other terms, namely the "powerlessness of nature" to fully realize the concept",¹⁷ as well as the arbitrary way in which moral/spiritual phenomena are produced/entwined, so that "we would not know how to dissolve reality as a whole into logical concepts"; hence, one cannot infer that the metaphysical background of the real might be the hazard, but that the accident has its legitimate place in the objective world, to the effect that, according to D.D. Roșca, it may seem that for Hegel, aside the panlogism, "the real contains both and always hazard and rationality"¹⁸, hence, it is neither pure contingency, nor absolute determinism.

Knowledge does not succeed to be a totally disinterested picture of existence. To live means to interpret from a human point of view, to bestow reality and life a sense in relation to ourselves and for ourselves. Therefore, any subject-object relation, including the cognitive one, involves the element of value. The ontological solutions criticized by D.D. Rosca, and also those we mentioned above, raise in subtext questions about the possibility, structure and efficiency of values- understood as "the expression of the possible satisfactory adaptation between things and conscience," "the ideal expression of an agreement between I and the world that always can be achieved"¹⁹. The two unilateral solutions mentioned above either sanction the need for values and culture to be included in the very rational structure of the world, the meaning of human life being already given, hence not introduced but built in by man, or locate these issues exclusively on the level of individual subjectivity, denying any consistency, the authentic meaning being impossible due to a lack of communication and a principled incongruence between man and the world, between the order of subjectivity/human desires and the order of objectivity/objectuality.

N. Hartmann underlines that the question about the meaning of life and of the world is strongly connected to values; only the relation to values, their understanding and achievement can bestow meaning. In traditional metaphysics,

¹⁶ Cf. for further details - D.D. Roșca, *L'influence de Hegel sur Taine théoricien de la connaissance et de l'art*, cited works, p.79.

¹⁷ D.D. Roșca, *L'influence de Hegel sur Taine, théoricien de la connaissance et de l'art*, cited works, p.90: "d'une «impuissance de la nature» à réaliser complètement le concept"; p. 92: "nous ne saurons pas dissoudre le réel tout entier dans des concepts logiques".

¹⁸ D.D. Roșca, *L'influence de Hegel sur Taine, théoricien de la connaissance et de l'art*, ed. cit., p. 92, 93; "le réel comporte à la fois et toujours hasard et rationalité."

¹⁹ Tudor Vianu, *Opere, (Works)*, vol.8, Minerva Publishing House, 1979, p.134.

“the world is based on active teleological principles, and the world itself is understood by the analogy of man: as being driven by intelligence and consciousness working purposefully”.²⁰ Therefore, meaning is not a problem, since faith has already given it a solution; it is already present and active from its origins to its entirety (the world as a whole) and it is also applicable to its parts (humankind). Or, as Hartmann points out, “a meaningless world is the only meaningful world for a being like man; in a world full of meaning even without him, he, with his gifts of bestowing meaning, would be superfluous”.²¹ The world has not a predetermined sense, it is ready to beget a meaning; therefore, this very world missing an already given global meaning restores to man “the role of having within this sense-giving factor,”²² namely, the power of self-determination, decision, foresight, the initiation of goals and the consciousness (the feeling for) of values. The lack of sense means only indifference toward it; hence, Hartmann, and also D. D. Roșca, the question of meaning is placed only within the referential system of human condition; the determination of global existence also give rise to the structural aspects of meaning: i.e., axiological activism, fragility, temporal precariousness, cultural contextualization, the episodic character, the strained network of permanent relations with his own absence and his opposite etc. At Camus, for instance, although there is an obvious oscillation between the need to characterize the world as devoid of rationality and, on the other hand, to name it irrational - which is altogether something else, because it is not about the simple absence of the rational, but about the activism of its opposite - the theme of the absurd shows that the interpretive emphasis is placed on understanding the world as being refractory, hostile, structurally resistant to meaning.

D.D. Roșca, in his philosophical construction and reconstruction pages, avoids the extreme, uncontrolled and uncontrollable stands wherein he disentangles those attributes that the existence-as-totality has in relation to the existential and cultural-axiological status of humankind. In fact, the current experience is just the awareness that the world is, in relation to us, rational and irrational. “Through its meanings - argues Tudor Cățineanu - the poignant statement that “existence is rational and irrational” permeates and condenses all the synthetic planes and levels from *The Tragic Existence*. As a crystallized enunciation, it is, at the same time, pattern or a matrix, expression and meaning, which secures the directions, and also the limits within which *The Tragic Existence* could take shape from the stage of “project” to that of far-reaching synthesis”²³ The categories of “rational” and “irrational” have a semantic ambiguity the author develops systematically and fruitfully at the juncture, and sometimes, superposition of three planes: ontologic-anthropologic,

²⁰ Nicolai Hartmann, *Estetica, (Aesthetics)*, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1974, p.449.

²¹ Ibid., p.151.

²² Ibid., p.450.

²³ Tudor Cățineanu, “Semnificația determinațiilor rațional - irațional”, (The Significance of Rational - Irrational Determinants), in the volume *D.D. Roșca în filosofia românească, (D.D. Roșca in Romanian Philosophy)*, Foreword by Dumitru Ghișe, Coordinator Tudor Cățineanu, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1979, p.101.

epistemological and axiological. Their conjunction has, first and foremost, an ontologic relevance: it acknowledges the objectivity of universal becoming and, consequently, the structural-functional autonomy of existential manifestations in relation to the human desire to conceptualize and put into practice; the reason and the stupid happening, the necessary and the contingency coexist; on a universal scale, one cannot accept, logically, any implacable determinism or the fatality of chaos, but rather the unity of order and disorder, the creative becoming. In these very general themes, one can detect affective assumptions: “Metaphysical anxiety urges us to reject all internal and external limitations. It is encouraging us to postulate the eternal becoming as the only truly universal law of being. And, seen from another point of view, what is then the law of eternal becoming if not somehow the projection also on a cosmic background of the feeling of permanent inner insufficiency mentioned above.”²⁴ The thesis on “existence being both rational and irrational” also entails logical-epistemological meanings: the world submits to, but also opposes resistance to conceptualization; it is intelligible, logical and devoid of logic; “the intelligence, raised onto the steps of the new perspective, has discovered irrationals in areas previously considered as entirely rationalized and assimilated by it,”²⁵; therefore, the non-rationalized area is quantitatively wider than the one submitted to the rational, but there are not permanent formulas for the irrational; the intelligence „does not remain all the time *absolutely* identical with regard to its procedures and, maybe, with regard to certain pieces of its operational mechanisms”.²⁶ Nonetheless, due to the limitations of any process of conceptualization, “a single hypostasis of the irrational could be declared *a priori* as eternal. This very one, what is given (*le donné*, *das Gegebene*). That is, the irrational in its most general form of manifestation”²⁷. In fact – as D.D. Roșca points out –, “we cannot understand what is non-logical, illogical, irrational – words that are tantamount to «unintelligible»”²⁸.

The consequences about the ways of understanding human condition have as their nucleus some axiomatic derivates: in relation to human values and desires,

²⁴ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, ed. cit, p. 13. „L'inquiétude métaphysique nous pousse à rejeter toutes les limitations intérieures ainsi qu'extérieures. C'est elle qui nous encourage à postuler le devenir éternel comme unique lois vraiment universelle de l'être. Et, considérée d'un autre point de vue, qu'est-ce donc la loi de l'éternel devenir sinon aussi en quelque sorte la projection sur un fond cosmique du sentiment de permanente insuffisance intérieure ci-dessus mentionné?”

²⁵ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, ed. cit., p. 65; „...l'intelligence, haussée sur les marches de la nouvelle perspective, découvre des irrationnels dans des domaines qu'elle avait considérés auparavant comme entièrement rationalisés et assimilés par elle.”

²⁶ D.D. Roșca, *Studii și eseuri filosofice, (Philosophical Studies and Essays)*, The Scientific Publishing House, 1970, p.131.

²⁷ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, cited works, p. 66; “un seule hypostase de l'irrationnel pourrait être déclarée *a priori* comme éternelle. Celle-ci, c'est ce qui est donné (*le donné*, *das Gegebene*). Donc l'irrationnel dans sa forme la plus générale de manifestation.”

²⁸ D.D. Roșca, *Însemnări despre Hegel, (Notes on Hegel)*, The Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1967, p. 117.

the world is reasonable and absurd, meaningful and meaningless, familiar, and also indifferent or irresponsible. Therefore, at stake is a tension between nature and culture, between man and the outer existence. Spiritual values have a fragile status; they neither fit into a biological justification, nor are they founded on the necessary intimate structure of the world. They place and define humanity under the sign of superfluous...” Culture and civilization cannot be seen as the outcome of an existing predestined harmony between the profound tendencies of the real, material world and the essential aspirations of the mind. Here culture becomes a somewhat unsafe acquisition, the result of an ongoing struggle. As such, it is neither a natural extension of the material world, nor is it logically necessary. Thanks to the cooperation between certain fortunate circumstances and innumerable factors, it came into being at a certain moment of infinite time and in certain lots of infinite space, and in the same way it can also vanish into thin air.”²⁹

These conclusions require, as their next logical step, to clarify and build up a moral-aesthetic attitude toward life and the world. Not all human beings embrace a standard solution, since attitudes always involve a mental increment, interpreted through a subjective prism. The fact that existence is, in relation to us, both rational and irrational, reasonable and absurd, justifies neither the naive optimistic attitudes, showing an uncontrolled robustness, nor the pessimism, the anguished despair. They look more like psychological reactions than lucid standpoints facing reality. In the first case, the tragic human condition is canceled by decreeing a full rationality of the world - man being integrated into a universal necessity, drawn, in fact, by the secret need of an inner comfort and existential certainty - and, in the latter case, the tragic substance is diluted in/from/through emotional implications thwarted by salvatory value landmarks. At D. D. Rosca, the tragic feeling of existence and the metaphysical anguish imply the dignified assumption on the precariousness relative to our condition, inductive tensions which generate intellectual heroism, moral courage, nobility of mind and creative gestures. The heroic imperative is essentially moral: it overpasses indifference, rampant optimism and despair, not in order to incorporate them, but to boost that responsibility imbued with lyrical thrill. They protect man from delusions and/or spiritual comfort, urging him to build precarious meanings - gratuitous, useless in relation to the universal order - but which give life a purpose. The existential irreductibility of humankind is empowered with the value-creative initiative. Establishing the historical and cultural universe is indicative of the transcendence of nature and biology through humanization. The fragile and tragic/precarious universe of values is founded on the lucid exercise of an evidence: i.e. “*let us not totalize experience* in one sense or another. Let us accept existence as it is. Or, more precisely, as it is *for us*: let us accept it as equally real in its two aspects;

²⁹ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, cited ed., p. 138. „La culture et la civilisation ne peuvent pas être considérées comme le résultat d'une harmonie prédestinée existante entre les tendances profondes du monde matériel, réel et les aspirations essentielles de l'esprit. Ici la culture devient acquisition peu sûre, provenant d'une lutte qui dure encore. Comme telle, elle n'est pas un prolongement naturel du monde matériel, et elle n'est ni logiquement nécessaire. Grâce au concours de certaines circonstances heureuses et de facteurs innombrables, elle est née à un certain moment du temps infini et dans certaines portions de l'espace infini; et, de la même manière, elle peut aussi disparaître.”

let us not forget that it is intelligible, and also unintelligible; that it is reasonable, and also absurd; that it has a meaning, and also that it does not.”³⁰

In this context, we remind D.D. Roșca's option for the preeminence of spiritual values and the encouragement of uselessness as the main creative agent of genuine culture. The uselessness is the generating cause of usefulness: scientific knowledge triggers shifts in technology, and practice is powerless if it disregards its theoretical basis. Uselessness is specific to human species; man overruns the tyrannical pressure of biological needs through cultural creation and moral ideals, which are irreducible, biologically indefensible qualities. “The myth of usefulness” is an extension of the unmediated utility from the sphere of economic activity - where it plays its role of determined value - in other areas - cultural: scientific research, artistic and philosophical creation, the ideal of life - where - to the extent that it poses a criterion of axiological validation - requires reductions and attitudinal confusion. The sources of this value substitution are to be found in the utopias of modern technology and of *homo oeconomicus*. The material progress - turned from a means into an absolute purpose and a new religion of modern civilizations - tends to raise the material satisfaction up to the rank of the supreme standard of human fulfillment, worshiping usefulness as a prism to appreciate behavior and interpersonal relations. Thus, there is this illusion that the meaning of life is to be sought and found in the endless augmentation of physical comfort and the increasing multiplication of economic needs. The diffusion on a social scale of the instrumental behaviour weighs on the individual consciousness “discouraging and withering down any creative intentions in areas whose direct utility is not immediately perceived”.³¹ The pragmatic mentality tipped over a scale of spiritual, humanist values, turning the human being into a slave of subsistence means, unable to profoundly live his life.

For D.D. Rosca, the superfluous, the useless do not have an absolute meaning: they disclose the content and orientation which exceed petty, selfish, narrow usefulness; therefore, it is about a superfluity humankind cannot escape from. Usefulness is a value-means, a necessary condition for achieving higher values. As such, its contribution to building modern civilizations cannot be denied. Erroneous is only to consider it as a universal standard which should subordinate all values, the moral ones included.

We can say, by way of conclusion, that a philosophical system sets forth a model of the world. Interpreting the grounds of existence and universal order provides, at the same time, the theoretical openings to understand the specificity of the human order. In fact, knowing and explaining the world around him, man acquires his self-consciousness, he figures out human-scale projects, he discovers and assumes constitutive limits/limitations, he outlines the fragility and

³⁰ D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, cited ed., p. 162. “À savoir: ne totalisons pas l'expérience ni dans un sens, ni dans l'autre. Acceptons l'existence telle qu'elle est. Ou, plus précisément, telle qu'elle est *pour nous*: acceptons-la comme également réelle sous ses deux aspects; n'oublie pas du tout qu'elle est intelligible, mais aussi inintelligible; qu'elle est raisonnable, mais aussi absurde; qu'elle a un sens, mai aussi qu'elle n'en a pas.”

³¹ D.D. Roșca, *Mitul utilului, (The Myth of Usefulness)* in the volume *Puncte de sprijin, (Points of Support)*, “Țara” Publishing House, Sibiu. 1943, p. 12.

existential [re]sources of values. “Maybe an ephemeral passenger in a hostile chaos, man invented wisdom. And since then, carried away by serious dreams, he fights to bring, lastingly, the Reign of Heaven on the molehill where the son of God rises on the good and the wicked and where it rains on the righteous and the unjust.”³² By the pre-reflective, non-rational contents it incorporates, the philosophical discourse projects on the world desires, aspirations, the need for inner security and fulfillment; the restrictions on humankind become, thus, bearable, tamed, signified. Although rarely avowed, ontological models express not only the vain theoretical interest: if not hatred, at least fears and worries in the face of hazard, the fear of chaos. L. Blaga insightfully writes: man refuses to accept that his life is ignored by the rest of the universe. The spirit establishes a field of tensions between him and the existence as a whole, striving to clarify the lines of force along which the temptations of meaning should be launched - in their serious hypostasis, as a needed reason; in a formula of heartfelt intensity, in the form of happiness, or in contempt of precariousness, to the extent that this is possible; in partnership with his fellow beings for the confirmation of our own values (as a glory or a mere success). Although philosophical constructs do not admit it, the need for inner satisfaction (happiness) and the need for success and approval (success) are contingent (not secondary!) interrogations related to meaning, because it is in reality/world/authentic life that man finds his maximum intensity/increased value through which he acquires the reason of being what he is.

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³² D.D. Roșca, *L'Existence tragique. Essai de synthèse philosophique*, cited ed., p.190. “Peut-être passager éphémère dans un chaos hostile, l'homme a inventé la sagesse. Et depuis lors, emporté par des rêves graves, il lutte pour descendre d'une manière durable le Règne des Cieux sur la taupinière où le soleil de Dieu se lève sur les bons et sur les méchants, et où il pleut sur les justes et sur les injustes.”

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TYPE, SYMBOL, TOPOS IN UMBERTO ECO'S THEORY. AN APPLICATION ON BIBLICAL AND ROMANIAN FOLKLORE'S SYMBOLS

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Motto:

"...symbolism shows the human need to endlessly extent World's hierophany, to permanently find doubles, substitutes and shares of a given hierophany, and more than that, it shows the tendency to identify this hierophany with the entire Universe".

(Mircea Eliade)¹

Abstract: *This paper presents some semiotic and hermeneutic concepts belonging to renowned authors in the field of symbol studies; the goal is to emphasize the universal vocation of symbol as a main explanatory element both to Semiotics and Hermeneutics, in areas where the symbolic thinking replaces the rational thinking. In this respect, I try to highlight the parallelism between symbols in Romanian folklore and in Biblical mythology. The upper goal of this approach is to emphasize a way of understanding human creation and human condition by means of the explanatory potential of symbol, the most complex cultural phenomenon and the best instrument of mankind's cultural awareness.*

Keywords: *archetype, mythology, symbol, topos (topoi), type.*

1. Umberto Eco's concepts of "type", "symbol" and "topos"

Umberto Eco's book *Apocalyptic and Integrated People*² is as pertinent today as it has been when it was written, by the middle of the 20th century. The author himself has always been a relevant voice in the European and international cultural contexts, from universities to TV shows and holiday readings, from scholars and journalists to pupils. I will first focus on his descriptions of some useful semiotic concepts, helping me to then outline my parallelism of symbols between Romanian folkloric mythology and some *topoi* encountered in Biblical stories. These *topoi* may suggest the Christian origins of some significant symbols in our folklore, symbols which encapsulate important values and strategies of setting a worldview, a vision of man's life and of its

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¹ Mircea Eliade, *A Treaty of Religions' History (Tratat de istorie a religiilor)*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1992, p. 408.

² In Romanian translation, Umberto Eco, *Apocalyptic and Integrated People*, Iassy, Polirom, 2008.

meaning that has something to do with the sacred. Furthermore, this parallelism could emphasize a universal nature of symbol in terms of its sacred pattern. My assumption is that it is this very nature that confers the explanatory power of symbols, as compared to the narrower character of signs, in terms of interpreting mysterious, hidden, vague, imaginary or mystic cultural phenomena, in art, religion, psychoanalysis, history of ideas etc.

In my book, *Order and Disorder of Symbols*³, I pinpointed the difference between the explanatory potential of symbols as compared to that of signs for certain cultural phenomena. As such, I will not deal here with the main two theories of sign, the founding fathers of which are the American Charles Sanders Peirce, for the Anglo-Saxon culture, and the Swiss Ferdinand de Saussure, for the continental one.

The concept of “type” refers to an emblematic formula of a character or of a situation, in any literature; a formula which is more vivid than life itself to the readers, so this type is perceived as a credible character or situation, memorized as a significant or model experience for their future life. A character in a certain narration becoming a *type* is a character with complete intellectual, behavioral and moral traits, acting in such circumstances which the reader finds familiar or emblematic to his/her world and time.⁴

The meaning of “symbol” in Eco’s mentioned work is different from the meaning stated by Charles Sanders Peirce and quoted in Eco’s *Treaty of General Semiotics*, written in 1975. There, the symbol is viewed as nothing but a sign, arbitrarily correlated with its object.⁵ While here, “symbol” means:

*“a very peculiar sign which is not consumed by the act of indicating what it refers to, but which is perceived and appreciated together with its reference. (...) From a semantic point of view, the poetic symbol is reflective, as it is a part of its reference.”*⁶

Eco thus argues that the type can be always perceived and used as a symbol, but not every symbol can be perceived and used as a type. A symbol could preexist to a certain literary work, as it is an element of mythology, anthropology, heraldic, magic etc., but the type never preexists to a literary work, as it is created inside it.

A *topos* is therefore a literary symbol which has a conventional, traditional meaning, which the readers are well acquainted with, and its occurrences in literature are historical and typical. Some examples of such *topoi* are found in folklore, depicting characters: the brave prince, the good/bad young girl, the monster, the stepmother, the wizard, the fairy, the talking animal, the wise old man etc. Other examples of *topoi* illustrate situations: the initiation of a young person, the adventurous travel, the fight with supernatural evil forces, the reward

³ Corina Matei, (2008, 2014), *Order and Disorder of Symbols*, Bucharest, Tritonic Publishing House.

⁴ *Idem*, cited works, pp. 201-208.

⁵ Umberto Eco, *Treaty of General Semiotics (Tratat de semiotică generală)*, Bucharest.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 209.

of love, the perspective of Good eventually prevailing in the world, the Paradise and the Hell etc.

Eco mentions the case of such a *topos* as a very well-known symbol in universal culture, which is transformed into a new type, as it is given a new meaning, in a new cultural context.⁷ I could give the contemporary example of an animated movie's character, Shrek the ogre; initially, in the universal folklore, an ogre was always the symbol and the *topos* of an evil creature, a monster feeding with humans. But the new character named Shrek tells another story, transforming it into a type: the good old sentimental ogre, helping people, hating to be alone in the woods, and loving its family.

2. Symbols in Romanian folklore and in Biblical stories – a parallel

I will refer in this section to five symbols in Romanian folklore which seem to draw their inspiration from the biblical symbols, transformed in *topoi* of universal culture.

- The first one is embedded in the Romanian myth of Manole the artist, the myth of the creator's sacrifice that would make his creation unique and perennial. The symbol of this human sacrifice, following the artist's vows to a deity, could be found in the *Old Testament*, in the episode of the judge Iefta. He made such a vow that, if he returned victorious from a military battle, he would sacrifice the first person appearing in front of him, at the city's gate; the first person was his beloved daughter and he remained bounded to his vow;⁸

- The second symbol in many Romanian legends and stories is that of supernatural monsters forcing people –the inhabitants of a village, for example– to feed them with children, as a tribute paid for their peace. This situation became a *topos* first in the biblical narrations of the *Old Testament*, referring to some peoples' pagan habit of offering their children as human sacrifices to supernatural forces, in exchange for peace or prosperity;⁹

- The third symbol is that of the Meek (in Romanian, *Blajinii*), some legendary wise people, endowed with supernatural features, dwelling deep underground, in the territory of caves and underground waters; this territory is believed to be inhabited, judging by the second commandment, suggesting the existence of such a dwelling place deep underground:

*“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth...”*¹⁰

Another interesting connection to the biblical text is made in Tudor Pamfile's work, *Romanian Mythology*, where several folkloric “explanations” of

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 209-210.

⁸ *Holy Bible*, Bucharest, House of Bible, book of “Judges”, chapter 11, 2012, pp. 274-275.

⁹ *Idem*, book of “Leviticus”, chapter 20, p. 130, book of “2 Kings”, chapter 17, p. 409.

¹⁰ *Holy Bible*, King James translation online, book of “Exodus”, chapter 20, verse 4.

the Meek's existence are given, referring to the book of "Exodus", and of Jerusalem as well¹¹.

- The fourth symbol and *topos* is the phantom, the so-called living spirit of a dead person; although it is present in many cultures, it also has a biblical correspondent, due to a misleading popular interpretation of an episode in which king Saul wants to invoke the spirit of Samuel, a dead prophet; Saul asked the witch of Endor to invoke the spirit because God refused to answer him anymore;¹²
- The fifth symbol and *topos* is that of the dragon, a supernatural animal which flies and swims, throws fire and smoke over its nose and could be tamed by special people and heroes such as "solomonari" (wizards named by the name of Solomon/Salmon), according to the Romanian author Ivan Evseev¹³; the most interesting description of a dragon assimilated in Romanian folklore comes from the Biblical book of "Job", where it is named "leviathan", and God speaks of it like it was a powerful living creature on Earth, which probably lived before the Flood¹⁴.

3. The parallelism's explanation

Searching a theoretical explanation of such a parallelism between Romanian folklore's symbols and the ones encountered in Biblical stories, I appreciate that Mircea Eliade's philosophical concept of Hermeneutics could be quite illuminating. It comprises not only religious symbols and phenomena, but the entire realm of significant spiritual, artistic, literary phenomena, either religious or profane. The Romanian scholar Adrian Marino treated his concept of "total Hermeneutics" in an exegetical book dedicated to Mircea Eliade¹⁵. I will try to summarize the main traits of the symbol as a hermeneutic instrument in Eliade's view, referring also to Marino's reflections on this topic¹⁶. So the symbol, in Eliade's view:

- represents the center and the origin of each hermeneutic approach of understanding spiritual life;
- its original status is the religious one, from which the other kinds of symbol, including the linguistic one were derived;
- it is characterized by unity and universality;
- it is spontaneous, it can preexist to cultural works, and sometimes it has the structure of an *archetype* – in Carl Gustav Jung's vision, which Eliade shares; it's like an ancient frame of a character or situation that belongs to a crucial and universal experience of mankind; an archaic memory of such an

¹¹ Tudor Pamfile, *Romanian Mythology (Mitologie românească)*, Bucharest, All, 1997, pp. 467-472.

¹² *Idem*, book of "1 Samuel", chapter 28, pp. 321-322.

¹³ Ivan Evseev, *Dictionary of Symbols and Cultural Archetypes (Dicționar de simboluri și arhetipuri culturale)*, Timișoara, Amarcord Publishing House, 2001.

¹⁴ *Holy Bible, cited ed.*, Romanian translation, book of "Job", chapter 41, pp. 552-553.

¹⁵ Adrian Marino, *Mircea Eliade's Hermeneutics (Hermeneutica lui Mircea Eliade)*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Publishing House, 1980, pp. 31, 32.

¹⁶ I extensively approached the topic in my cited book (see footnote 3), pp. 96-103.

experience concentrated in an image, a sound, a representation, philogenetically embedded in the collective unconsciousness of every human psychic;

- it allows an illiterate community to have a “universal” communication among its members, using a symbolic language instead of the literate conceptual language.¹⁷

Eliade also highlights the conditions in which the symbol has these attributes:

*“only when it participates to a culture’s life, when it represents a current language among people, when it is accessible and vivid to anyone and it is generated by the fantastical, mythical life of the entire society”.*¹⁸

The Romanian scholar Sergiu Al-George highlighted in one of his works the importance of symbols in the attempt of understanding the relationship between archaic and universal in our culture. He also mentioned Eliade’s approach of valuing our folkloric culture by using a symbolic key, a relation between its symbolic and mythical aspects.¹⁹

In his book *Archaic Ontologies in Present Times*, the Romanian philosopher V. Tonoiu states that the myth introduces us to a world which could not be “described” but only “told”, as it comprises encrypted transcendent elements, as well as natural elements;²⁰ and the comprehensive significations of myths are due to the existence of symbols in their structure.²¹

As a conclusion of these correlated views, I would say that Romanian folkloric mythology has prominent universal traits, being comparable to any other mythology belonging to the treasury of universal culture. As such, its parallelism with the Biblical mythology is not singular, but it has a universal vocation, due to the universal explanatory vocation of symbol as *topos* of any culture, having its origins in the sacred.

To be more specific, I believe that symbol is still a precarious instrument of interpretation, sometimes vague, other times too complex, due to its long-lasting history, or to an expanded cultural territory, similar to a semantic palimpsest or a semantic map. But it still remains the only instrument at hand for the interpreter, as long as the concept or the sign are totally irrelevant for certain areas which I mentioned before. There are the areas of the symbolic thinking, not the conceptual one.

In this context, concerning the possible limits of interpretation, I would say that a postmodern interpretive approach of symbol could not be relevant; this is because it cannot give the interpreter an unlimited liberty. I would say that, in this theoretical context, interpretation would seem more like a translation; the

¹⁷ Cf. A. Marino, *cited works*, pp. 181-201.

¹⁸ Mircea Eliade, *Fragmentarium*, Deva, Destin Publishing House, 1990, p. 79.

¹⁹ Sergiu Al-George, *Archaic and Universal. India in Romanian Cultural Awareness (Arhaic și universal. India în conștiința culturală românească)*, Bucharest, Universal Dalsi Publishing House, 2000, p. 18.

²⁰ Vasile Tonoiu, *Archaic Ontologies in Present Times (Ontologii arhaice în actualitate)*, Bucharest, The Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1989, p. 226.

²¹ *Idem*, *cited works*, pp. 223-224.

postmodern interpretation seems more like a creation. Turning to Umberto Eco's views, we may compare it with a "free reading", followed by an "unlimited semiosis"²². This would lead to the particularization of any interpretation, and to the specific, even unique explanatory specificity of symbol. This situation would give a fragmentary nature to any culture, and the parallelisms or cross-cultural correspondences would be impossible. And thus, the understanding of the human nature would be the ultimate impossibility.

This kind of interpretation is rejected by the renowned Italian scholar and I undertake his view. He says that "in fact, symbols are developing over time, but they never remain hollow"²³, that we are threatened by the phenomenon of alienation because our language talked too much till today²⁴.

So the playfield of semiosis is never a *tabula rasa* on which an interpreter is free to create, just like a painter or a composer; he's more like a translator or even a teller – he's telling what he cannot explain, analyze, or describe. Sometimes, he replaces his hermeneutic or semiotic approaches with an activity of storytelling. And sometimes, the story is like a reminder of origins. This is the spirit of Romanian Scholar Stella Petecel's assertions about the sacred languages: "Languages which were initially spoken by gods and heroes (themselves being supernatural beings, interpreters of gods' will and word) were sacred languages. If man have had access to direct communication with them in those primary times (...) this was possible due to the fact that their language was the same: the mythical symbol, the language «open and encrypted in the same time» (...) of a mute image."²⁵

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²² Umberto Eco, *Limits of Interpretation (Limitele interpretării)*, Constanța, Pontica Publishing House, 1996, p. 386.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ Umberto Eco, *The Open Work (Opera deschisă)*, Pitești, Paralela 45 Publishing House, 2002, p. 272-273.

²⁵ Stella Petecel, *Agonistic in Ancient City's Spiritual Life (Agonistica în viața spirituală a cetății antice)*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 2002, p. 25.

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MIRCEA ELIADE'S *PORTUGAL JOURNAL*: DOCUMENTARY AND LITERATURE VALUE

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Abstract: *The Portugal Journal is one of the less known and the most controversial books of Mircea Eliade. The article gives a brief survey of it. The author demonstrates that Portugal Journal represents a precious document for the literary historian and critic. It is full and frank statement of his political and scientific view. But perhaps the greatest value of this book is what it shows us the personality of its author. The Portugal Journal reveals more about the man Eliade than any other volume that has been published. Eliade's grief over the loss of his beloved wife defines a special character of Journal chronology. The relationship between real facts and their interpretation may be considered as one of the sources of his scientific theories (myth of eternal return in particular).*

Keywords: *Mircea Eliade, memoirs, Portugal Journal, documentary, chronology, myth of eternal return.*

Nowadays, world-known Romanian theorist of religion and fiction writer Mircea Eliade (1907-86) is more studied than ever. This is evidenced by the high number of volumes on Eliade's life and work, which are being published all over the world. Whether one refer to his correspondence, his literary or scientific works, Mircea Eliade is still taken up by critics and the public.

Our research deals with one of the less studied aspects of Mircea Eliade's heritage - his memoirs. This article is devoted to *Portugal Journal* in particular, one of the less known and the most controversial books of Mircea Eliade.

Mircea Eliade served as a diplomat in Portugal during the years 1941-45. As Press Secretary, Eliade had to sign all kinds of articles and reports for the home office about political activities and tension in Portugal, to write about Romanian culture in Portuguese journals, and to participate to dinners and public ceremonies.

As usual throughout his life, Eliade kept in Portugal a detailed journal. The value of this text cannot be overstated. The biographer will find it the most reliable source of facts for these years of Eliade's life. The literary historian will prize it for the information it provides on the background of the books Eliade published during the war. For historians of religions, most precious is what this journal reveals about the inception of his two major works in the field, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* and *Cosmos and History*, and the importance he assigned to them. But for anyone who wants to gain insight into the enigmatic

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and multifaceted personality of Mircea Eliade, this *Portugal Journal* will be a treasure.

The *Portugal Journal* is written, like all of Eliade's journalistic, autobiographical and fictional works, in his native Romanian language.

It should be pointed out that this portion of the *Journal*, unlike previously published volumes, is not a matter of selections made by the author. The American researcher of Eliade, professor Mac Ricketts describes this journal as neatly written manuscris.¹ He suggests that it was transcribed, at least partially, and in fact Eliade states in one place that he was writing on loose sheets and copying them later into the notebooks, while several times he mentions transcribing or elaborating from travel notebooks. Some portions of the journal appear *not* to have been copied² The pages are numbered consecutively. The author did not write the journal for publication, and he did not imagine at the time that he would ever publish anything from it but selections – and those only after he had reached the age of sixty. Why he did not do so, he never said³. The fact that this volume is unabridged and that it was not edited for publication cannot be over-emphasized, since Eliade cannot be suspected of deliberately withholding something from the public, as could be the case in his other published journals and autobiographical volumes.

Due to different reasons, which we are not going to focus on now, the *Portugal Journal* was published firstly in Spanish, and only later in English and Romanian.

As the *Portugal Journal* is the only one of Eliade's journals to be published in its entirety, unedited by its author, in it Eliade writes frankly about things that he could never bring himself to make public, including his relationship with the Iron Guard, his problems with hypersexuality, and his religious. This journal is fascinating to read because Eliade invites the reader into the interior of his troubled mind. The journal is replete with existential pathos, anxiety, loss, fear, danger, suffering, sorrow, and happy moments.

But the main topic of the *Portugal Journal* is the Second World War.

Although Eliade wrote in several places in the *Portugal Journal*⁴ that he was deliberately avoiding mention of the war, it was, of course, impossible for him to do. Entries of this sort are relatively few for 1941 and 1942. As the war continued, he became increasingly pessimistic about its outcome and aftermath. He confirms, that not his personal case concerns him. What makes him tremble, is the nothingness he sees ahead of him.

Eliade, as we see, was subject to moods of deep despair. The war was the principal impetus for these moods. Late in 1942 he writes that the only one thing

¹ Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Former friends and forgotten facts*, Chicago, Criterion Publishing, 2003, p.57.

² Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinele românești ale lui Mircea Eliade [Mircea Eliade: The Romanian roots]*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2005, p. 350.

³ Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Former friends and forgotten facts*, Chicago, Criterion Publishing, 2003, p.87.

⁴ Mircea Eliade, *The Portugal Journal*, preface and translation by Mac Linscott Ricketts, Albany, N.Y., SUNY Press, 2010, p.127, 145, 254.

he cannot accept, cannot assimilate, is the tragedy of his nation. His despair finds its source mainly in this Romanian destiny⁵

Throughout 1943 the *Journal* abounds in references to the war. In one of his longest and most bitter commentaries on the war, dated 7 June 1943, he says that in the apocalyptic struggle, his country has very little chance of surviving. In his opinion, that time Romania and even the Romanian people were passing through the greatest crisis in their existence⁶.

Eliade's journal for 1944 contains only a few entries concerning the war; he insistently tries to avoid mentioning any military event. In January he wrote: "*My disgust for history has grown so much that almost nothing happening in the world today interests me any longer. Since the first of January I haven't touched a newspaper, haven't read single communiqués from the war*"⁷.

One last entry from 1944 pertaining to the war deserves to be noted: "*Looking out my window, observing the beauty of the night - I was suddenly reconciled to the war, to the catastrophe, to the end of the Europe I have known and loved. The destructions of war have a meaning; they fulfill a role in the universal equilibrium. War - like death in the individual case - corresponds to the other cosmic act<...>: regression into the primordial amorphous state, where everything is lost in everything else, merging into unity...*"⁸.

Thus, Eliade finds a "cosmic meaning" in the otherwise meaningless historical events of the past five years.

Another sad event happened during Eliade's stay in Portugal – his wife got ill and finally died. Nina's illness (uterine cancer, although Eliade didn't know it), preoccupied him for several years, until her death on 20 November 1944⁹ – and then his grief overshadowed everything else for several months.

"*I'm thinking of writing a life of the Mother of the Lord - vœux for the healing of Nina*"¹⁰, "*<...>Hard night with Nina. The important thing is that I stay calm and optimistic. When I feel attacks of nerves coming on, or a darkening of my mind, I say to myself <...>'The Mother of the Lord'*"¹¹.

Forty days after her death, Eliade arranged for a requiem at the church across the street from their apartment, which was dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. "*Both of us*", he writes, "*had boundless faith in the Lord's Mother of Fatima. In the eight months of her illness, whenever there was a service at Fatima, I told Nina to pray - and she did. On 13 October, when the ceremony with the candles began, Nina watched from her bed and we both prayed*"¹².

⁵ Ibidem, p.53

⁶ Ibidem, p.85.

⁷ Ibidem, p.102.

⁸ Ibidem, p.113.

⁹ Sorin Alexandrescu, *Dinspre Portugalia [From Portugal]*, București, Humanitas, 2006. 198, Eugen Simion, *M. Eliade. Nodurile și semnele prozei [M. Eliade. Nods and signs of his prose]*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2005, p.73.

¹⁰ Mircea Eliade, *The Portugal Journal*, preface and translation by Mac Linscott Ricketts, Albany, N.Y., SUNY Press, 2010, p. 138.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 139.

¹² Ibidem, p. 143.

Soon after her death, Eliade recorded that he couldn't read anything but the Bible. The intensive Bible reading continued until as late as 11 April 1945. On 6 January he noted: "As often as I can, I pray. And I believe"¹³.

The most remarkable religious activity undertaken by Eliade was a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, some ninety miles north of Lisbon, in March¹⁴ – for the repose of Nina's soul, and on his own behalf. But the pilgrimage seems to have done little to banish Eliade's melancholy¹⁵.

Nina's death on 20 November 1944 brought the *reality* of death to him as nothing else had. On 23 December he expressed himself on the subject in more personal and dramatic terms: "For several years my hope and my despair have had their sources in the reality of the spirit and in life after death. The awful nihilism that sometimes comes over me is unleashed in the moment when I doubt there is anything beyond< ...>I must believe that we both will rise, in our bodies. Only in this way can Nina's sufferings possibly be redeemed: physically, so we may experience the joys we might have had and didn't have"¹⁶.

The keyword that defines Eliade's feelings is *despair*: "I'm in despair whenever I see ahead of me no alternative: more precisely, when I feel that whatever I do, the result will be despair. I can endure more easily the past, despite all its horrors. When Nina's departure overwhelms me, I still see a way out of the suffering: my own death and our meeting again"¹⁷.

Eliade feels guilty for being egocentric – as he called himself for keeping thinking about Nina all the time, for neglecting the world catastrophe in which tens of thousands of persons are losing their lives daily, when cities are being annihilated and nations devastated. He realizes his duty – the duty of writer and of scientist: "Melancholy or despair, torpor or temptation, whatever may be—my duty is to work, to write the several books I've begun or planned"¹⁸.

Eliade reads his wife's death as an act of God "to make me think in a creative way, that is, to facilitate my salvation". The only sense that Eliade sees in Nina's death is *initiatic*: her sufferings should show him the direction to move towards. This idea he expresses quite emotionally: "Nina was taken for my sins and for her salvation. God willed to take her, in order to cast me into a new life - of which, now, I still know nothing"¹⁹.

Really, after her death Eliade decides to immigrate to France. The stay in this country will make him world known scientist. Without Portuguese period this dramatic transformation could be hardly possible.

But the significance of the book lies not only in the many facts and much information useful for understanding the author that will be found there, but also

¹³ Ibidem, p. 138.

¹⁴ Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile românești ale lui Mircea Eliade [Mircea Eliade: The Romanian roots]*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2005, p. 367.

¹⁵ Sorin Alexandrescu, *Dinspre Portugalia [From Portugal]*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2006, p. 198.

¹⁶ Mircea Eliade, *The Portugal Journal*, preface and translation by Mac Linscott Ricketts, Albany, N.Y., SUNY Press, 2010, p. 142.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p.173

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 175

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 179

in its literature value. In *Portugal Journal* Eliade makes a creative experiment in diary genre.

A well-written private diary (or *intimate journal*) was one of Mircea Eliade's favorite forms of literature. In his own journals he often mentions reading such a book for pleasure. There is no doubt that he assigned an important place to journal writing within his numerous and varied activities as an author. Throughout his life, with the exception of only a few years, he faithfully recorded his activities and thoughts in notebooks.

So, journal form as his preferred genre became an area of his literature experiment. Traditionally, every journal entry contains an indication of time when it was written. Eliade's Portugal Journal has more sophisticated temporal structure. His grief over the loss of his beloved wife defines a special character of chronology. After Nina's death practically every comment will be marked by indication of period of time passed after this tragic end. So we can observe a system of double chronology.

29 December: *Forty days since Nina's passing.*

20 January: *Two months since Nina's passing. In the past several days, a terrible sadness. Nothing to be done.*

20 February: *Three months.*

20 April: *Five months since Nina's departure. Hard morning.*

20 August, nearing the end of his Portuguese sojourn: *"Nine months since Nina's departure. One of the saddest days I've had since then"*

So, we can observe the system of parallel calendars, general and personal one.

Remarkable is the fact that sometimes general calendar is replaced by personal. In these cases entries have no indications of date (only typographical sign *). Date indication is replaced by indication the time passed after Nina's death. So, an entry from April: *"Five months. At night, sitting on the terrace, I think again about Nina. I'm sure that my neurasthenia is due, in large part, to her sufferings"*. Or an entry from May: *"Six months since Nina's departure"*. This entry continues by remembering the party some years ago when Nina felt well, describing details of the party ...

Some entries with indication of the time passed after Nina's death contains Eliade's dreams and memories that only increase their untemporality: So, Eliade writes that he can't remember anything from his dream of last night except Nina's words: *"I am your bride and you are my dearly beloved bridegroom. The world tries to separate us, but even oblivion binds us"*²⁰. Or he is remembering *"all the phases of Nina's illness struggling harder and harder with melancholy"*²¹.

These and other examples allow us to speak of *dominating* nature of personal chronology.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 211

²¹ Ibidem, p. 213

Eliade sometimes chooses another starting point for his personally chronology. It can be:

The date when Nina become ill: “*It is one year today since Nina became ill ...I remember the date so precisely because we had been to Estoril to celebrate Brutus’s birthday. It was the last social event in which Nina took part in good health. Until July we went to several diplomatic dinners and dined with friends, and we were obliged to give a few luncheons—but Nina was sick*”²².

The date when they left Oxford: “*On this day four years ago, we had finished our preparations for leaving England. I remember now, hour by hour, those last days in England*”²³,

The date of starting their romance: “*Twelve years ago, on 25 December 1932, my friendship with Nina, which had lasted for several months, was transformed suddenly into love*”²⁴,

The date of their engagement: “*Eleven years and eleven months (lacking five days) since our engagement*”²⁵.

So, temporal structure of the *Portugal Journal* is a cyclic one. In this complicated chronology we would see the artistic realisation of *mythe de l'éternel retour*, the key scientific concept developed by Eliade.

This observation seems to us a crucial one. The theory of literature tends to consider memoirs as a documentary description of facts in the past. But *Portugal Journal* (as it was shown) represents not only documentary writing, but mainly fiction with some specific characteristics. The relationship between real facts and their interpretation are very subjective. *Portugal Journal* displays a tendency to turn Eliade’s life into the stuff of myth. It may be assumed that Eliade has created his own universe according to his scientific theories (myth of eternal return in particular).

In general, it can prove sophisticated and multilateral structure of Eliade’s memoirs.

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²² Ibidem, p. 187.

²³ Ibidem, p. 178.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 143.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 158.

ON THE POSIBILITIES OF KNOWING THE FIRST PRINCIPLE IN PLOTINUS

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Abstract: *This text aims to show the ways in which the Neo-Platonist philosopher believes that the first principle – that which is the first cause of all things or their generator – can be described. Although the Greek philosopher asserts that the first principle (named by him as the One, the Good or the First) is not fully knowable rationally, but only through a mystical contemplation or by direct union/ identification with him, Plotinus says that man is forced to approximate him rationally too, despite the fact that the Good is something ineffable itself. The rational ways of approximating the One that can be found in the Plotinian texts are those specific to metaphysics and theology: the cataphatic way, the apophatic way and the way of surpassing preeminence. The present text shows that all these three ways are present in the metaphysical thinking of Plotinus, even though he does not refer expressly to them.*

Keywords: *Plotinus, knowledge, metaphysics, ontology, first principle.*

1. The era in which Plotinus lives and creates is one of a strong decline in terms of philosophical creativity. The schools of Plato and Aristotle – the most important ones in the ancient Greek philosophical directions – are now manifesting only in an epigonic form, or as more or less inspired exegesis. Stoicism and Epicureanism – the Hellenistic competitors of the first two schools – are now manifesting less in a theoretical form that had defined them from the beginning, contenting with a simple implementation of the theory undertaken from the old teachers of these schools as a simple moral conduct.¹ As rightly said Léon Robin,² generally, the philosophies of the Roman imperial age did no more than to “rejuvenate” the old themes of Greek philosophy, travesty and mixing them. Greek philosophy had entered now in a clear and irremediable decline.

However, with the advent of Plotinus, something new begins to happen. He is one of the few philosophers who thought in an original way “in an era of intellectual fatigue”.³ Although a Neo-Platonist, he is not content to perpetuate *tale quale* the Platonism, he is not content to repeat mimetically his Master’s doctrine. On the contrary, he brings developments to this doctrine, nuances it and proposes personal solutions for the problems to which perhaps Plato did not see fit to provide an answer. We could even say that – because of the “archaeological” spirit that he was impregnated during his stay in Alexandria – Plotinus represents

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¹ Emile Bréhier, *La philosophie de Plotin*, Paris, Boivin et C^{ie}, 1922, p. 1 sq.

² Léon Robin, *La morale antique*, Paris, Alcan, 1938, p. 138.

³ Edouard Krakowski, *L'esthétique de Plotin*, Paris, Editions de Boccard, 1929, p. 66.

the fourth greatest moment of synthesis of Greek philosophy. If Plato had built his doctrine starting from a deep and applied knowledge of Socratism, Eleaticism, Heracliteanism and Orpho-Pythagoreanism; if Aristotle, then, when he put into question a philosophical *topos*, did not formulate his opinion on it before reviewing all the resolutions made by his predecessors *pre-* or *post-*Socratic; if, finally, Stoicism was composed of a mixture of the old thinking and the innovations brought by itself – Plotinus comes as a fourth moment of synthesis of all these schools of thought before him.

At a fairly brief on *Enneads*, we can see that, in connection with any matter investigated, Plotinus starts with the solutions already made by his predecessors, he thoroughly discuss them, and only then proposes his own solution. Generally, he first establishes the clear terms of the debated issue, and then passes through a critical filter all previous opinions, and only then he exposes his own views. Of course, this is not a *modus operandi* used absolutely every time, because he exerts critically only than when he actually has something to say. Because there is a risk that these statements seem too strong to the extent that they are coming from someone lacking the necessary authority, I could invoke on their support the opinions of many consecrated commentators Plotinus. They agree both on the assertion that Plotinus has made an obvious development of Platonism, and in terms of considering it as a moment of great synthesis of Greek philosophy. Thus, Ed. Krakowski,⁴ Gh. Vlăduțescu,⁵ Gr. Tăușan⁶ or I. Banu,⁷ have pointed firmly the overcoming of Platonism by Plotinus. It may be mentioned here that this thing has been observed since ancient times, with his characteristic sharpness, by St. Augustine, for example.⁸ In the other respect, C. Noica,⁹ G.W. Fr. Hegel,¹⁰ H. Bergson,¹¹ Ed. Krakowski¹² and Gh. Vlăduțescu¹³ firmly state the synthetic character of Plotinian philosophy.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 45, the author states that Plotinus is more than just a Platonic, being, properly speaking, a true innovator of Platonic doctrine.

⁵ Gh. Vlăduțescu, *The philosophy in Ancient Greece [Filosofia în Grecia veche]*, Bucharest, Albatros Publishing House, 1984, p. 474, says that the philosophy of Plotinus has an “distinctive personality”, and he is not a simple “glossist of Plato”.

⁶ Grigore Tăușan, *Beyond Ordinary [Dincolo de cotidian]*, Bucharest, Cugetarea Publishing House, f. a., p. 78, emphasizes that Plotinus brings an obvious increase in the philosophical movement of his time, “developing the ideas of Plato and creating Neo-Platonism.”

⁷ Ion Banu, *The history of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy [Istoria filosofiei antice și medievale]*, Bucharest University Publishing House, stresses that, taking the teachings of Plato, Plotinus configures them into a conception of its own, different from the Platonic one.

⁸ St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, X, 3, and *Contra academicos*, III, 41, defines Plotinus as a “Great Platonic”, and even “another Plato.”

⁹ Constantin Noica, *Sketch for the History of 'How something new is possible' [Schiță pentru istoria lui Cum e cu puțință ceva nou]*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1995, p. 142: “the Platonism of Plotinus is only partial. [...] Platonic as material of thought, but rather Aristotelian in spirit, Plotinus brings more than his sources, nevertheless starting steadfastly from them.”

¹⁰ G.W. Fr. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy [Prelegeri de istoria filosofiei]*, translated by D.D. Roșca, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1964, vol. II, p. 166, says that Plotinus is a Neo-Platonic and a Neo-Aristotelian which has a good command of the philosophy of the Stoics.

¹¹ *Apud* Joseph Moreau, *Plotinou la gloire de la philosophie antique*, Paris, Vrin, 1970, p. 13, who says that, according to Bergson, Plotinus is one of the remarkable heights of ancient Greek speculation.

It is therefore clear that a philosopher who is able to synthesize in his thinking everything valuable that was created, an author who mastered so well the ideas of those before him – both in an overview, and in each detail – can only be a complex thinker, difficult to understand and especially difficult to analyze. In these circumstances, it is no wonder that the reading of *Enneads* led many commentators to ascribe to Plotinus the epithet *unintelligible*.¹⁴ Even a far-reaching philosophical spirit as Hegel does not hesitate to declare that this is challenging to cross the Plotinian text and that “making a presentation of the philosophy of Plotinus is a very difficult thing.”¹⁵

Indeed, what makes it difficult to understand the philosophy of this thinker is just his style of exposure, style that somewhat reminds of Plato's dialogues. This type of exposure could be called “inner dialogue”, because, while he builds the answer to the question he studies, Plotinus examines objections that could come not only from his strong opponents (the Stoics, Gnostics, Peripatetics), but even the objections that could come from the perspective of his doctrine, to combat them then with a great deal of arguments. Only at the end he exposes his own solution to the matter. An extra element of difficulty in understanding the Plotinian philosophy is the fact that Plotinus often repeats an idea in different forms and contexts, in moments of its creation widely spaced in time. Finally, he does not exhibit his conception in the systematic Aristotelian manner that is so familiar for us today; he does not raise a system based on general principles, but he researches some “open concepts” launched by his predecessors, trying to bring to them a personal solution. He acts like that, for example, regarding problems such as: act and potency, form and quality, total mixture of essences, categories and genres, the substance, the soul, the first principle etc.

2. Of these, the problem that we have chose to analyse in this text is the possibility of knowledge of the first principle, or, in the Plotinian terminology, the Good, the One, the First, or what is commonly called as *the first hypostasis*. Since Plotinus treats this issue nowhere in itself, but only in relation to other issues that interested him, the task here is to identify passages in which Plotinus addresses the issue of first hypostasis detecting the aspects related to the problem stated in the title.

One thing that should be emphasized from the very beginning: the issue in question here a metaphysical one. Namely, it is about that which is commonly believed to be said about the thing which gave rise to the material world in which

¹² Ed. Krakowski, *op. cit.*, 43 sq., states that Plotinus knew Eastern philosophy too, whereas he treats in *Enneads* both specific Greek philosophical themes (the problem of Being, of act and potency, Pythagorean numbers, Stoics *sympatheia universalis* etc.), and specific topics of Oriental philosophy (the ineffable and rationally unknowable One, the ecstasy, the magico-theurgical practices etc.). In support of this assertion, he also cites F. Ravaisson, for which Plotinus was “the confluence of all the great Greek philosophies” (*Ibidem*, p. 56) and Fr. Picavet, which defines the Greek philosopher discussed here as a “moment of synthesis” (*Ibidem*, p. 59).

¹³ Gh. Vlăduțescu, *cited works*, p. 474, says that Plotinus is a “great admirer of Plato, but has a full knowledge of Aristotelianism and Stoicism too.”

¹⁴ Cf. René Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin*, Paris, Alcan, p. 1.

¹⁵ G.W. Fr. Hegel, *cited works*, p. 166.

we find ourselves. Of course, on the present existence of the universe there are two possible major positions: either to say that he is eternal, that is unborn and undying as such; or to state that, not being eternal, it was born at a time and, consequently, will disintegrate in the end. In each of these cases we have to do with a postulate that involves certain specific consequences. For example, if we choose to postulate that the universe was born, we must admit that it was born from something else pre-existing or from nothing. Because the last assertion is considered to be unacceptable after a rigorous rational analysis, usually in the history of philosophy it has been most often avoided, the philosophers considering that the material world is perishable and that it was born from something what precedes, a *first principle* or a *first cause*. This last option is the one that professes and Plotinus.

Regarding the possible discourse about the first principle of all things, in the history of philosophy it can be observed that to him it is inherent a certain “logic”. Naturally, it is not about *logic* in the current meaning of the term. It is not about logic that respect the boundaries imposed by the principles of “classical” logic; by the principle of non-contradiction, for example. On the contrary, is about a logic admitting, at least under certain conditions, the contradiction. That does not mean that we have to do with a discourse totally devoided of rational stringency and consistency. Essentially, the “logic” inherent to the metaphysical discourse consists in identifying the attributes which incumbent necessarily to the first cause of all things, and the attributes which as well necessarily it may not have. Moreover, some of these attributes can be, *mutatis mutandis*, both affirmed and denied. Why it would be such a thing permissible? Because the reality which is the subject of metaphysical discourse is one of a totally different nature than the things it has made possible. It is that *das ganz Andere* which transcends them in all possible ways.

According to Aram Frenkian¹⁶ in the attempt to rationally know and describe the first generating factor, there are three possible ways: an affirmative way (*via affirmationis*), a negative one (*via negationis*) and the one postulating the incomparable superiority of the principle in relation to its effects (*via eminentiae*). If by the first way it can be said about him all kinds of positive attributes that match also to some inferior beings, through the second, they can be denied equally; and this is possible precisely because there is the third way, showing that the first metaphysical factor is *above* all other beings and their attributes. So does, for example, Pseudo-Dionysius in his discourses about the *divine names* and alike, with some nuances, and Plotinus when he talks about the first hypostasis, about the first principle.

That this is so it can be seen first from the confrontation with those Plotinus’s commentators who discuss this problem, and then from the confrontation with Plotinus himself. Thereby, A. Fouillée¹⁷ shows that Plotinus distinguishes, following Plato, between an *affirmative* theology (which says about the First everything that is positive in his effects: happiness, justice, etc.) and a

¹⁶ A. Frenkian, *Les origines de la théologie négative de Parménide à Plotin*, Bucharest, National Printing House, 1943, p. 12.

¹⁷ Alfred Fouillée, *Histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, Librairie Delagrave, p. 160.

negative theology (which denies about the first principle all that is said about all other beings). A similar idea – maybe taken from Fouillée, given the almost identical terms – is sustained also by Ed. Krakowski,¹⁸ who adds that Plotinus considers the negative way as being the superior one because it marks better the difference between the One and his effects. In their completion comes Maurice de Corte, which also distinguishes in Plotinus's speech about the Good also two ways: *via negativa*, which starts from the sensible world, and, this time, *via eminentiae*. According M. de Corte, the negative way is in Plotinus's vision a propaedeutic to the second, which he calls "the perfect dialectic".¹⁹ Other authors, such as G.W. Fr. Hegel,²⁰ R. Arnou,²¹ N. Baladi²² and J. Moreau²³ speak only about one of these ways by which it is possible a discourse on the One, the Good or the First. One can easily see, therefore, that these commentators distinguish in the speech of Plotinus either only one or two of the ways by which generally one can talk about the first principle, but all, taken together, mention all three identified by Aram Frenkian as possible in general. The confronting with the texts where Plotinus himself talks about the attributes of the One will show that, indeed, he resorts to all these three discursive methods of describing that essence which is in itself ineffable, the first hypostasis. Let's follow them in turn.

Via affirmationis. As I said before, in the view of Plotinus, the material world in which we are is not eternal, but it has arisen due to the existence of something that precedes it absolutely and made it possible. He called this something as the *One* (τὸ ἓν), the *Good* (τὸ ἀγαθόν) or the *First* (τὸ πρῶτον). Although he believes that the true knowledge of the Good is possible only through a mystical way – as a knowledge-union or knowledge-contact – Plotinus says that we can have about he a (quasi)rational knowledge too, a discursive one, which proceeds by analogies and negations, and which, to be achieved, starts from the inferior things, from the effects of the One, and follows their ascendant gradation.²⁴ In order to speak about it and to represent it somehow to us, we have to ascribe to him qualities belonging to things which are inferior to him. Although ineffable in itself, we have to designate him in a way to be able to talk about him, to be able to conceive him; Plotinus is saying about him that, within certain limitations, he can be thought.²⁵

Thereby, concerning the One both in itself and in relation to its products, we can positively say about him a lot of attributes that cannot be missing. As a result, the first attributes that should be presented with the necessity of him would be exactly those which identify him in relation with the things that he generated.

¹⁸ Ed. Krakowski, cited works, p. 105.

¹⁹ Maurice de Corte, *Aristote et Plotin*, Paris, Brouwer et Cie, 1935, p. 248.

²⁰ G.W. Fr. Hegel, *cited works*, p. 173, says that the One can be known on the negative way "analysing all predicates."

²¹ René Arnou, *cited works*, p. 105, distinguishes *via eminentiae*, remarking the abundance of superlatives which Plotinus uses when he speaks about the first hypostasis and which are specific to this way.

²² Naguib Baladi, *La pensée de Plotin*, Paris, Alcan, 1970, p. 28, says that Plotinus used *via negativa* on the footsteps of Plato's *Parmenides*, 137 c - 142 a.

²³ Joseph Moreau, *cited works*, p. 76, sees only *via negativa*.

²⁴ Plotin, *Ennéades*, texte établi et traduit par Emile Bréhier, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1924-1938, *Enn.* VI, 7, 36 and *Enn.* V, 3, 14.

²⁵ *Enn.* V, 3, 13-14; cf. *Enn.* VI, 7, 40; *Enn.* VI, 8, 8.

Namely, in the first place, he can be called as being the *primary cause*, the *first principle* or *universal generator*, because everything that exists, it exists only dependent on.²⁶ Afterwards, because he is the first principle, he cannot be something composed, because everything that is composed is born from preceding parts and perishes by disarticulation of those components. So, if we say that there is a first principle, he shall be simple par excellence. He also must always be *identical with himself* also, because everything that is subject to change is born and perishes.²⁷ Or, this is contrary to the idea of the principle, which must be unborn and undying.

Then, being he altogether simple and always identical to himself, we can say about him that is *different from all the other things* and is *anterior to them*.²⁸ Accepting the attribute of absolute simplicity, it is necessary to use about him also attributes such as *one*, *unity* and even the *One* or the *Absolute Unity*, these attributes being the expression of the idea of absolute simplicity.²⁹ But, on the other hand, we must accept that from a particular point of view it is also *multiple*, to the extent that he is present in all things. Sure, the One is not multiple in himself, but only to the extent that he contains himself and *contains all things*. As a consequence, we can say about him so that he is the *all*, because there is nothing outside him.³⁰ Being present in all things, as a condition of possibility of their being, we can say about him that he is *immanent* too. But, equally, we can also say that is *transcendent*, because he is not present as such in any of these things. Being as such, the principle is something that *exists in itself and by itself* and not *in* or *by* something else. He is therefore *free*, being the *Absolute* itself (*Enn.* VI, 8, 7-8), the thing that is not dependent on anything, that does not need anything else for being.³¹

Another attribute that can be reminded in the same context it would be the *infinity* of One, an attribute that is related to his quality of being a limitless *potentiality* of the whole, of being “the productive power” of all things.³² Indeed, if we admit that the thing that generates all things is something finite, then we should also admit that he would deplete at some time and also that, consequently, the chain of engendering would conclude it in the end. Or, at the limit, this would be to admit that the world would end in nothingness, which is as rationally unacceptable as it is unacceptable its birth from nothing.

To conclude here this list (not necessarily complete) of the main affirmative attributes, one can say that Plotinus defines one as *life*, and also as a *final cause* or a *universal purpose*, being the thing that puts everything in motion while remaining himself motionless, like a target that all beings tend to touch.³³ Being

²⁶ *Enn.* II, 9, 1; *Enn.* V, 3, 17; *Enn.* VI, 9, 3; *Enn.* VI, 8, 8.

²⁷ *Enn.* I, 6, 7; *Enn.* II, 9, 1; *Enn.* III, 8, 9; *Enn.* V, 5, 5.

²⁸ *Enn.* III, 8, 9; *Enn.* III, 8, 10; *Enn.* V, 3, 11; *Enn.* V, 3, 12; *Enn.* V, 4, 1.

²⁹ *Enn.* V, 3, 15; *Enn.* V, 5, 4.

³⁰ *Enn.* III, 9, 4; *Enn.* V, 5, 9; *Enn.* VI, 8, 16.

³¹ *Enn.* I, 6, 7-9; *Enn.* III, 7, 2; *Enn.* V, 5, 9; *Enn.* VI, 8, 7-8; *Enn.* VI, 9, 7.

³² *Enn.* III, 8, 10; *Enn.* III, 9, 7; *Enn.* V, 4, 2; *Enn.* V, 5, 10; *Enn.* VI, 9, 6.

³³ *Enn.* V, 4, 2; *Enn.* V, 3, 15; *Enn.* VI, 7, 40.

therefore a *desirable* – even the ultimate desirable – it is natural to say about him also that he is the *Good* himself, that thing whose possession any being wants.³⁴

So we see that, according Plotinian thinking, it is possible an affirmative discourse on the first hypostasis, we see that we can say about it *what* it is and *how* it is. But the affirmation of all these attributes should be taken *cum grano salis*, because at the same time – but in different relations – they can be denied too. And Plotinus even does so. These affirmations and negations – contradictory only in form – are true together, given the special nature of the first principle, which is to be different to and beyond from all things.

Via negationis. We saw above that one of the commentators³⁵ said that in respect to the metaphysical first factor is more appropriate the negative way, because through it the difference between the First and its effects it is better marked. Thus, we can say that the first principle is *one*, but not as if we assign a predicate to a subject, other than itself, but only as a way of designating himself, because he *is not one*; in any case, he is not one by participating to the idea of unity. He is the One in a first and absolute sense.³⁶ Moreover, you cannot say about him in proper terms nor even that *he is*, because he does not need to be. We can say that the *One is*, but not in the same way that we do it about other things, because, in fact, he *is not* like them, being *beyond being*.³⁷ This statement itself, shows Plotinus, is just formally a statement, because in its background it says just that the Good is not a determined being. To say that the One *is* or *is not* is just a necessity of the discourse.³⁸ Not being able to say he *is*, you cannot say neither that *is good*, precisely because he is not a determined being, which has the attribute of goodness. The very fact that we call him the *Good* does not mean that we literally ascribe an attribute to him, but it is just a way of designating.³⁹

The allegations that the One *is all the things*, that he is *free* and *infinite* are also counterbalanced by negations that contradict them. Thus, says Plotinus, we can say that the One *is not all the things*; *it is not multiplicity*, because he does not need these things and because he is sufficient to himself.⁴⁰ Also, he *is nowhere* as such, precisely because he is everywhere. For the same reason, it is not attributable to him neither *infinity* nor *finiteness*, because, being all, there would be nothing to limit it, as there would be neither a place for him to expand.⁴¹ To say that he is *free* would mean, again, to assign him a quality that is related to the inferior things, the relative things, which depend on something else to exist, while he is the Absolute, and therefore he is not in relation to anything on which he would depend, or against which to be free. Affirming his freedom occurs only by analogy: we know that he is a “superpower”, beyond which there is no other and then we say he is as if he were free, because he has nothing to depend on.⁴²

³⁴ *Enn.* I, 8, 3; *Enn.* V, 5, 9-10; *Enn.* VI, 8, 7.

³⁵ Ed. Krakowski, cited works, p. 105.

³⁶ *Enn.* II, 9, 1; *Enn.* V, 4, 1; *Enn.* V, 5, 4; *Enn.* VI, 9, 5.

³⁷ *Enn.* V, 5, 6. The expression used by Plotinus is ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, expression identical to the one used by Plato in the *Republic*, 509 b to describe the mode of being of the Good as the first principle.

³⁸ *Enn.* VI, 7, 38; *Enn.* VI, 8, 8; *Enn.* VI, 8, 11.

³⁹ *Enn.* II, 9, 1; *Enn.* V, 5, 13; *Enn.* VI, 7, 38.

⁴⁰ *Enn.* III, 8, 9; *Enn.* V, 5, 6; *Enn.* V, 5, 12.

⁴¹ *Enn.* V, 5, 9-10; *Enn.* VI, 8, 16.

⁴² *Enn.* VI, 8, 8-9.

If in affirmative way, he said that the One contains all the things and contain him himself, Plotinus now shows that, in a proper sense, it *does not contain even himself*, because he did not even participate at himself.⁴³ Another element in the negative description of the One consists in showing that he is *formless* and *without essence* because the essence is *something specific* (τι), or a determined being (τόδε). Indeed, being the cause of the essence, he cannot be essence, as long as any cause is different from its effect.⁴⁴ Moreover, he *is neither cause*. If we call him *cause*, it is only in relation to the beings he has created; as such, he is not cause, as there is no quantity, quality, intellect or soul. He is not movement or rest, neither space nor time, says Plotinus after Plato.⁴⁵

Perhaps the most shocking statement made by Plotinus in the context of the negative way of defining the prime hypostasis is that it is not even the principle of all things. It is true that he immediately adds, weakening the bewildering hardness of his assertion, that only “in a sense” the Good is not the principle of all things, but without specifying his thought.⁴⁶ He probably was thinking that the One is directly principle just for the second hypostasis (Νοῦς), while all the other things he generates through the Νοῦς, and, then, by the Universal Soul. Or maybe he thinks that the One does not produce even the Νοῦς by action or movement.

Returning to the examples about the definition of the first principle by negations, we can say that Plotinus reaches a climax of the negative way when he declares that the First has no determination or quality: „*Sa qualité c'est d'ailleurs de n'en pas avoir; qui n'a pas de quiddité, n'a pas non plus de qualité.*” In the same place he shows by an example that the very name “the One” has only the purpose to denying about the First his multiplicity. He evokes here the Pythagoreans, who, he said, because of this called him *Apollon*, just to deny his plurality (<α privative + πολὺς = numerous, plural, multiple). If it would take the name of the *One* positively, it would attract upon him a greater obscurity for us. “*On emploie sans doute le mot un pour commencer la recherche par le mot qui désigne le maximum de simplicité; mais finalement il faut en nier même cet attribut, qui ne mérite pas plus que les autres de designer une nature qui ne peut être saisie par l'ouïe, ni comprise par celui qui l'entend nommer, mais seulement par celui qui la voit.*”⁴⁷

The One cannot have qualities and cannot have determinations because he is anterior to everything that can be called *something*. Because of that, not being *something specific*, he is ineffable, cannot be expressed in a proper sense, cannot have a name, and we cannot say about him anything as about a subject in general, and our words do not express him himself.⁴⁸ Naming him *being*, *life* or *substance*, we commit an error so long as any assigning downs him from his rank of first principle, to which his first condition is his absolute simplicity. Or, the

⁴³ *Enn.* VI, 8, 21.

⁴⁴ *Enn.* V, 5, 6; cf. *Enn.* V, 3, 17; *Enn.* V, 7, 17 and *Enn.* VI, 9, 3: „*la nature de l'Un est génératrice de tout et n'est rien de ce qu'elle engendre*”.

⁴⁵ *Enn.* VI, 9, 3; *Enn.* VI, 8, 11. Cf. Plato, *Parmenides*, 138 b, 139 b and 141 d.

⁴⁶ *Enn.* VI, 8, 8.

⁴⁷ *Enn.* V, 5, 6.

⁴⁸ *Enn.* V, 3, 13-14.

assignment, the predicating of any determinations or qualities presupposes the multiple: a subject to which add some accidents.⁴⁹

In these circumstances, what can we do? The answer we shall find from Plotinus himself, and this is very clear: to the One we have nothing to assign because he is superior to any attributes and they could do nothing but to diminish it, to descend him from his spiritual status. „*Ne lui attribuons rien d'inférieur et de plus bas que lui; il est supérieur a tous ces attributs, puisqu'il en est l'auteur et ne les est pas lui même.*”⁵⁰ Adding to him any attribute, would mean to make him a multiple, or at least a duality, that would be obviously posterior to true One. Conceiving him or talking about One, you must make abstraction of all, do not add him anything. Most appropriate is to call him just so: *He*. Anything else you could not think nor say, in the most proper way about such an entity.⁵¹

Rather than saying *what the One is*, we can say *what he is not*, because „*tout ce qui est dit de lui n'est que négation*”.⁵² About him cannot be said that “is so” or “is not so”, because he is not one of the things about which you can make such statements. „*Ayant contemple son indétermination, l'on peut énumérer tous les êtres qui sont après lui, et dire qu'il n'est pas un seul de ces êtres.*”⁵³ The One is not conceivable as being something determined, a being, because then he would be no principle, but something determined. Not being any of the things, you cannot say about him than he is *beyond* (ἐπέκεινα) them. Moreover, even asserting about him that he is beyond being, essence, things, etc., we do not say anything about him in a proper way, we “do not say his name” – because no name matches him – but we only say that he is “neither this nor that.”⁵⁴ Plotinus says that it would be even a “madness” to try to “encircle” in a name “a boundlessness as his.” It would mean “to get away from the narrow way that leads to him”, committing thus a true “sacrilege”.⁵⁵

This whole uncertainty in which we find ourselves when we try to articulate a discourse on the first hypostasis is produced only by the fact that language is powerless before her, unable to express herself. Being beyond being, the One is also beyond thought and beyond its expression through language. Or, thinking in this way, Plotinus shows us that he has mastered the perennial ontological lesson of Eleatic Parmenides: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ εἶναι. Indeed, is the same thing *to be thought* and *being*. Only what it is can be thought. That which exceeds being exceeds thinking too and can only be approximated by thinking, not really known. This is why Plotinus tells us that we have to talk about the first hypostasis

⁴⁹ *Enn.* III, 8, 10-11.

⁵⁰ *Enn.* V, 5, 13.

⁵¹ *Enn.* V, 5, 4; *Enn.* VI, 8, 21; cf. *Enn.* VI, 8, 8.

⁵² *Enn.* VI, 8, 11; cf. *Enn.* V, 3, 14.

⁵³ *Enn.* VI, 8, 9.

⁵⁴ It must be mentioned in this context the troubling similarity between these statements of Plotinus and the apophysis present in the *Upanishads*, which, by the famous *neti, neti*, declares the absolute non-determination of the principle. We can remember, also, the way in which Lao Zi speaks to us about Dao, about which, although “Nameless”, we can say that it is “the source of Heaven and Earth”, but also that “looked, is not seen [...] listened, is not heard [...] touched, is not reached”, just because he is the “unseen”, the “unheard” and the “non-sensitive”.

⁵⁵ *Enn.* V, 5, 6; cf. *Enn.* VI, 8, 11 and *Enn.* VI, 9, 5.

only into *as such*. He complains of this uncertainty: „*Vous nous voyez peiner dans l'incertitude de ce qu'il faut dire: c'est que nous parlons d'une chose ineffable, et nous lui donnons des noms pour la designer a nous-mêmes comme nous pouvons.*”⁵⁶ And even apologizes: „*Il faut nous pardonner si, en parlant de lui, nous sommes forcés, pour indiquer notre pensée, d'employer des mots que nous ne voulons employer en toute rigueur. Il faut toujours les entendre avec un comme si.*”⁵⁷

To emphasize once again the ineffable character of the first hypostasis – and to finish this excursus about *via negativa* in Plotinus – one can show that, speaking about the One and about his way of “being” and “acting” the Greek philosopher does not hesitate to resort to flagrantly contradictory expressions, justifying them therewith, by showing that everything is linked to such nature is something extra-ordinary (θαῦμα). Thereby, he says that the One “comes not coming” (ἤλθεν ὅθεν οὐκ ἐλθὼν), “not coming, is here” (οὐκ ἐλθὼν πάρεστι), “not being anywhere, there is no place to not be” (οὐκ ὧν οὐδαμοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπου μὴ ἔστιν). This is really surprising, says Plotinus, but much more surprising it would be, to someone who “saw” the One, not to speak like this about him.⁵⁸

Via eminentiae. How is it possible that both assertions and negations regarding one and same thing to be both true and not false? What exactly makes possible all those contradictory constructions that I have listed a little earlier? From the Plotinian texts is generated the idea that this possibility is given and justified by the use of the third way, *the way of eminence*. The first two ways complement each other, while the third comes to confirm them, to found them, to show why you can simultaneously affirm and deny the same attributes about a same thing. You can say about the One that he *is* and *is not*, that *is beautiful, good and eternal*, and, at the same time, that he does not have these qualities precisely because he is “superior” to these attributes, is “above” and “beyond” them. Or, these are precisely a few of the meanings of the prefix ὑπέρ and preposition ἐπέκεινα, which Plotinus often uses in passages that deal with the possibility of first hypostasis description. Here are a few examples to clarify us on this.

Plotinus says that we can say about the first hypostasis that she is identical to the good or beautiful, as we can deny too these qualities, precisely because she is above goodness (ὑπεραγαθός) is above beauty (ὑπερκαλός) is above all the things that are excellent in maximum extent (ἐπέκεινα τῶν ἀρίστων).⁵⁹ She is a superpower that produces all things by an overabundance of him, without making any effort and without depending on anything. He is a perfect power.⁶⁰ Although we talk about he such as he would be, he *is not*, as all things *are*, precisely because he is *above* any being or essence, being their cause.⁶¹ The First is formless because he is *above every form*.⁶² How could it be affirmed about him

⁵⁶ *Enn.* V, 5, 6.

⁵⁷ *Enn.* VI, 8, 13; cf. *Enn.* VI, 8, 18.

⁵⁸ *Enn.* V, 5, 8.

⁵⁹ *Enn.* I, 8, 2; *Enn.* VI, 7, 17; *Enn.* VI, 9, 6.

⁶⁰ *Enn.* VI, 9, 6; *Enn.* VI, 8, 9; *Enn.* VI, 8, 21.

⁶¹ *Enn.* V, 3, 14-17; *Enn.* VI, 7, 16.

⁶² *Enn.* VI, 7, 16; *Enn.* VI, 7, 32.

the self-knowledge, when he is superior to any kind of knowledge?⁶³ How could we say about him that he is *will*, when it is above any kind of will?⁶⁴ Nor boundaries can he have, because he transcends every boundary, a term completely alien to his nature.⁶⁵ Strange to say, but neither the attribute of eternity does not fit to One, because he is what he is “before any eternity”.⁶⁶ You cannot assign to him movement and repose as long as he is beyond them.⁶⁷ In the final analysis, you cannot assign any determination, because he is *beyond* all things that can receive determinations, transcending them absolutely.⁶⁸ Good is “supreme reality” to which everything is subjected and is the cause in the most eminent sense, i.e. in the sense that he is the “Father of the cause”, as Plato would say, who inspires Plotinus in the passages involved here: „*Il est cause de la cause. Il est donc cause en un sens éminent et plus véritable.*”⁶⁹ That which best defines him is his absolute perfection, a perfection to which everything is imperfect and inferior, a perfection which consists in a full self-sufficiency, in a complete independence, in that he is “not looking for anything, he wants nothing and possesses nothing,” precisely because he does not need anything.⁷⁰

Another clue showing that Plotinus uses *via eminentiae* in his discourse about the first hypostasis is the presence in several places in *Enneads* of that type of argumentation which is called *a fortiori*. As we know, this manner of reasoning is to expand a statement from one case already proved or self-evident to another for which there are stronger reasons for this statement to be true. The examples are lacking neither this time. As a general form, these arguments of Plotinus show that, if we may affirm certain properties about the things inferior to Good, properties owed precisely to him, the more we will be able to say these properties about the Good itself, which is conceived as perfect and as not missing anything.

For example, to assert the full simplicity of the One, Plotinus shows that, if always the being that generates is always simpler than the generated being, then, all the more so the One will be simple, simpler than Noûς, which comes immediately after him. Or else, as any fulfilled being should produce something from itself, and the Good being perfection in its supreme form, the potency which gives to all beings the possibility of generating, how it would not produce something just him from himself? On the contrary, he gives birth even to an eternal being, the most fulfilling of all those who come after him in ontological order, namely the Noûς.⁷¹ Also, if the nature of Good is to be the desirable itself, which does not want anything (namely, is not dependent on anything), and all things have their freedom from him, the more will be affirmed about him the

⁶³ *Enn.* V, 3, 12; *Enn.* VI, 9, 10.

⁶⁴ *Enn.* VI, 8, 9.

⁶⁵ *Enn.* VI, 7, 17.

⁶⁶ *Enn.* VI, 8, 20.

⁶⁷ *Enn.* III, 9, 7.

⁶⁸ *Enn.* VI, 7, 12; *Enn.* II, 9, 1; *Enn.* V, 9, 6.

⁶⁹ *Enn.* VI, 8, 18; cf. *Enn.* VI, 8, 16.

⁷⁰ *Enn.* VI, 9, 6; *Enn.* V, 3, 15; *Enn.* V, 2, 1; *Enn.* VI, 7, 23. Cf. R. Arnou, *cited works*, p. 105, which lists a number of superlatives used by Plotinus on the First: αἰτώτατον, τελειότατον, δυνατώτατον, ἀπλούστατον, αὐταρκέστατον, ὑπέρτατον, ἀκροτατον.

⁷¹ *Enn.* III, 8, 9; *Enn.* V, 1, 6-7; *Enn.* V, 4, 1; *Enn.* IV, 8, 6.

full freedom.⁷² Then, if nor being or Noûs does not have occurred by accident, much less could say something like that about him. Finally, as long as we talk about Noûs using the attributes of unity or rationality, the more they have to be affirmed about the One, who made Noûs to exist and to have these attributes.⁷³ The examples of this kind could continue, but those of the above are more than sufficient to illustrate how Plotinus uses the method *a fortiori* to highlight the character eminent of the Prime, which, precisely because of this character, is *the first*, the one before whom nothing else can stand.

3. What I have sketched thus far in this present text is the knowledge of the discursive type of the One. But this is not the true knowledge of the One in the vision of Plotinus, as long as he is unknowable in the current meaning of the word and, as we have seen, it is ineffable itself. The real knowledge of this ineffable nature is one of a mystic type, according Plotinus. The language, the discourse about the One, says Plotinus, is only an earlier stage to his direct contemplation, which is his only true knowledge. „*Dès qu'on s'élance vers lui, on ne peut dire ou il est; il apparaît partout devant les yeux de notre âme*”, he could be “seen” but not with “mortal eyes”.⁷⁴

This problem of the Plotinian mysticism is one of the most delicate, the most serious and complicated of the many issues discussed by him in *Enneads*. It cannot be shipped superficially. But here, as a conclusion, it will be designed under only in his general frame shape. We say, thereby, that, after Plotinus, the mystical knowledge of the One, his “vision” or contemplation, is possible for every being, because the Good or the One is everywhere for who has the power to contemplate him. The human soul has this ability in the fullest extent, because he is of the same nature, is from the “same family” (ὁμογένει) with the One that lies within us.⁷⁵ This similarity, however, is only a potential one, because Plotinus says that to become truly similar to the Good, man must purify him by practicing the superior virtues. By purifying, the soul must isolate itself from all that it is outside; from the sensitive bodies and even from the comprehensible ones. He must give up everything, even himself, to let place in himself only for the Good, “the greatest object of our knowledge”.⁷⁶ In short, to know the Good, you must *ignore everything*. This is exactly the advice of Plotinus: Ἄφελε πάντα!⁷⁷

What is this mystical knowledge that you get after “you have removed everything”? Plotinus defines it by using words such as *vision, union, contact, contemplation, intuition* of an “ineffable light”.⁷⁸ What can one say more? Also Plotinus answers: “only one who saw can tell”.⁷⁹ Or cannot nor he?

⁷² *Enn.* VI, 8, 7; *Enn.* VI, 8, 14.

⁷³ *Enn.* VI, 8, 9; *Enn.* VI, 8, 17.

⁷⁴ *Enn.* VI, 8, 19; cf. *Enn.* V, 5, 11.

⁷⁵ *Enn.* VI, 9, 4; *Enn.* VI, 9, 7; *Enn.* V, 1, 10; *Enn.* V, 5, 12; *Enn.* III, 8, 9; *Enn.* I, 6, 6.

⁷⁶ *Enn.* I, 2, 1; *Enn.* I, 6, 6-7; *Enn.* III, 6, 5; *Enn.* V, 5, 6; *Enn.* VI, 9, 3; *Enn.* VI, 9, 7; *Enn.* VI, 7, 36.

⁷⁷ *Enn.* V, 3, 17.

⁷⁸ *Enn.* V, 3, 17; *Enn.* V, 5, 10-11; *Enn.* VI, 9, 4; *Enn.* VI, 9, 10; *Enn.* VI, 8, 19; *Enn.* VI, 7, 36; *Enn.* VI, 7, 40.

⁷⁹ *Enn.* VI, 9, 6.

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ISLAM AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY OF ANTHROPOLOGY – INCONGRUENCIES AND DIFFICULTIES

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Abstract: *This article provides a selective overview of the most important studies on the anthropology of Islam published to date. From my point of view, the anthropology of Islam should be thoughtfully constructed at the juncture of social-cultural anthropology (I also include here the economic anthropology) and the anthropology of religion, by making use of pluritopical hermeneutics and the intercultural discourse and by establishing a balance between how the Muslims' many-sided and heterogeneous ways to live and give meaning to their lives are outlined and the emphasis on the similarities and common contexts the different „Islamic worlds” share together. I believe this is the only solution to the difficult task to locate the social structures and norms that concur to the construction of the generic Muslim identity, without sacrificing the individuality and the actions of the real human being who is assuming an Islamic background.*

Keywords: *anthropology of Islam, Islamic anthropology, Islamic studies, Islamic tradition, Islamic identity, world anthropologies.*

Although in recent decades, substantial studies have been published on Islamic beliefs, practices and institutions, the anthropology of Islam is still a disputed, at times even a contested, task. The plausibility of the idea that Islam may constitute, *per se*, a category of the comparative anthropological research is still a matter of concern. Given the heterogeneity of competing and often contradictory discourses about what might be called *the anthropology of Islam*, as well as the multitude of practices and beliefs seen to be - more or less rightfully – as pure “Islam”, Abdul Hamid el-Zein argued, four decades ago, that any attempt to define in a restrictive or isolated way a so complex set of phenomena could be absolutely questionable¹.

Lately, Gabriele Marranci has tried to outline the domain of Islamic anthropology through a series of basic interrogations: “*The Anthropology of Islam* is a title that raises questions and certainly expectations. What is the anthropology of Islam? Why anthropology instead of theology or history? Why use the term Islam instead of Islams or Islam(s)? Why focus on Islam instead of Muslims? Is there only *one* anthropology of Islam or can we speak of anthropologies of Islam, or even anthropologies of Islams? How does the

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¹ A.H. el-Zein, “Beyond Ideology and Theology: the Search for the Anthropology of Islam”, in: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, no. 6, 1977, pp. 227–254.

anthropology of Islam differ from, say, any other anthropology of religion? How does the anthropology of Islam differ from the sociology of Islam, or Islamic studies, or Islamic anthropology?”². The author lays the blame on the lack of an all-comprising and well-articulated epistemological analysis on what should be the *anthropology of Islam*, despite several attempts made to ponder over the concise specialized literature which belonged to Abdul Hamid el-Zein (1977)³ and Talal Asad (1986)⁴.

John R. Bowen, for instance, underlines the need to establish a new anthropology of Islam which should transcend the shallow characterization of Islamic societies by means of the categorical culture-religion binomial, a method which effectively dominated the academic and non-academic discourse in North America and Europe: “However opposed these two perspectives might seem – one that assumes that Islam has its own, rather backward culture, another that claims it to be independent of (and superior to) any particular culture – they share one feature: both perspectives assume a *single object called “Islam.”* They often assume that we can find that object directly in scripture. Those urging a positive view of Islam quote verses of the Qur’an about the respect due to mothers, or a verse about “no compulsion in religion”; those seeking to condemn it quote verses about killing one’s enemies. In both cases, scholars, religious leaders, and radio commentators move directly from a particular text to statements about Islam in general”⁵. Since new reasons have been at stake for the investigation of Islam, mainly after September 11, 2001 events, Bowen argues that the recent studies on anthropology must be directed toward the reception of Islam as a *set of interpretative resources and practices*. Only by analyzing *Islamic sources* – texts, ideas, methods, – can we understand the way in which the idea crystallized of all Muslims taking part, in the long run, in the tradition of the entire world. On the other hand, we would not be able to identify the Muslims’ reasons to get adapted, transformed and diversified, without understanding the practices of Islam on *submission, rationality or jihad*. In this sense, “the new anthropology of Islam” should focus on the efforts made by the individual Muslim to relate to Islamic sources and to adopt the above-mentioned religious practices. This kind of approach to Islam, starting from the effort to know and interpret the tradition of the sacred texts in order to model up social practices, generate two complementary analytical strategies: 1) the first based on empathy: being in “the interiority” of Islam would allow the higher knowledge of intentions, reasons and emotions related to certain Islamic practices, through individual and historical testimonies (for instance, what does for a Muslim mean to follow the commandment to obey to Allah in everyday life?); 2) the second which follows “the outer dimension”, the opening toward the social significance

² G. Marranci, *The Anthropology of Islam*, Oxford, Oxford International Publishers Ltd., 2008, p. 3.

³ A.H. el-Zein, *cited works*, pp. 227–254.

⁴ T. Asad, “The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology”, in: J. Clifford and G. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: the Poetic and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986, pp. 141–164.

⁵ J.R. Bowen, *A New Anthropology of Islam*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 2.

and the conditions necessary for the manifestation of Islamic religious practices in keeping with the various contexts in which they crop up. Assessing the recent anthropological studies, Bowen appreciates the demarche aimed to put into brackets the certitudes related to what we usually call “Islamic world”. Only the practices and assertions of individual Muslims about their own „world” can explain how social, religious, educational or political institutions are established, based on an extremely contextualized analysis. Nonetheless, the need to investigate the Muslim’s conception about the world implies that the anthropology of Islam must also incorporate *the practices or significances of a global Islamic tradition*. Really complicated is this two-fold relation; this analysis of particular Muslim practices is pointless without the investigation of global Islamic traditions. Understanding the stringent need to shed light on the complexity of these relations has engendered major shifts within the social anthropological discourse, while the Islamic studies have focused, in recent years, to a greater extent on the problematic of scientific and religious knowledge, on the law or on women’s status in Islam.

Since the early ’70 onwards, several specialists have published critical reviews on the anthropology of Islam, which are, nonetheless, biased because they draw on studies preponderantly conducted in certain geographical areas: Middle East and Northern Africa⁶. It may be that no other field of anthropology – with the exception of this sub-domain dedicated to the study of Islam – would admit such a deficit of articles, introductory, synthetic handbooks or books, absolutely necessary to make the reader familiar with the basic themes. The few exceptions (B. Morris⁷ and Clifford Geertz⁸) succeeded only to point out again the likely explanations for these bibliographical deficiencies: a) the incapacity of the anthropologists of Islam to transgress the borders of their own sub-domain and to make known their contributions to the anthropologists from other branches, and b) the confusion about the object of research and the basic themes of the anthropology of Islam.

Between 1960 and 1980, however, a few important contributions were made to the study of the anthropology of Islam. In 1968, Clifford Geertz published the work *Islam Observed. Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*; still, the first authoritative attempt to investigate the specific problematic of Islamic anthropology can be identified in Abdul El-Zein’s article, published in 1977, which launched the debate about the so-called “academic diatribe” on the

⁶ R. Fernea and J.M. Malarkey, “Anthropology of the Middle East and Northern Africa: A Critical Assessment”, in: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, no. 4, 1975, pp. 183–206; D.F. Eickelman, “A Search for the Anthropology of Islam: Abdul Hamid El-Zein”, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, no. 13, 1981, pp. 361–365; L. Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986; M. Gilson, “Very Like a Camel: The Appearance of an Anthropologist’s Middle East”, in: R. Fardon (ed.), *Localizing Strategies: Regional Traditions of Ethnographic Writing*, Edinburgh and Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990, pp. 222–239.

⁷ B. Morris, *Religion and Anthropology: A Critical Introduction*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁸ Cl. Geertz, *Islam Observed. Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1971.

existence of a *singular* or a *plural Islam*. Disputing the tendency shown by the Western intellectual history to see in Islam a unitary religious tradition, a non-variable universal form of human existence, el-Zein was interested in the interaction between the theoretical conceptions on Islam and its ethnographic descriptions, starting from the apparent opposition between the anthropologic and theological perspectives. He deplors the essentialist approach embraced by the so-called “real Islam”, sharply contradicted by the diversity of the religious experience and the significances of Islamic tradition: “It then becomes possible to ask if a single true Islam exists at all”⁹. The issue of the singularity or plurality of Islam was also reviewed by Talal Asad¹⁰, but, as in the case of Abdul Hamid el-Zein’s article, his contribution to the development of Islamic anthropology has caught the attention of the Western critics only in recent years¹¹.

Thus, after twenty years, el-Zein’s project to identify a definition of the anthropology of Islam was still not completed, fulfilling Talal Asad’s prophecy: “no coherent anthropology of Islam can be founded on the notion of a determinate social blueprint or on the idea of an integrated social totality in which social structure and religious ideology interact”¹². In the first place, Asad has the impression that the entire literature dedicated to the anthropology of Islam is a grandiose, politically orchestrated industry, which gravitates around three major assumptions: 1) basically, there is not such a theoretical object called Islam, 2) Islam is a label used by anthropologists to name a heterogeneous collection of the issues known under the name of “Islamic” and 3) Islam is a distinct historical totality which organize the various aspects of the Muslims’ social life. For Talal Asad, none of these approaches seem to be acceptable. To el-Zein, he reproaches that he implemented the idea that there would be several Islams, which makes likely for these variants of Islam to be founded on an unconscious logic (if not a contradiction in terms). Hence, to assert that there is not a singular theoretical object called “Islam” invariably leads to the dissolution of this analytical category and, implicitly, of the anthropology of Islam. The partisans of the type 2) assumptions, for instance Michael Gilsenan¹³, are inevitably prone to reach a paradoxical situation: on one hand, they identify Islam with what the Muslims say they would represent, but, on the other, they acknowledge that they would always be Muslims who would deem that the divergent assertions from other co-religionaries do not represent “the true Islam”. Finally, in order to criticize the type 3) assumptions, endorsed by Clifford Geertz and Ernest Gellner¹⁴, who try to highlight the diversity of Islamic religious beliefs and practices by means of uninspired dichotomies (orthodox Islam/unorthodox Islam, major Islamic tradition/minor Islamic tradition, the Islam of nomadic tribes/urban Islam, “revolutionary” Islam/„normal” Islam, modernist Islam/fundamentalist Islam etc.), Talal Asad argues that “Islam is neither a distinctive

⁹ A. H. el-Zein, *cited works*, pp. 227.

¹⁰ T. Asad, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam”, in: *Qui Parle*, 17(2), 2009, pp. 1-30.

¹¹ R.A. Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

¹² T. Asad, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam”, in: *Qui Parle*, 17(2), 2009, pp. 19-20.

¹³ Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam*, London, Croom Helm, 1982.

¹⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

social structure nor a heterogeneous collection of beliefs, artifacts, customs, and morals. *It is a tradition (...)* A tradition consists essentially of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history (...) *An Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present*¹⁵.

A few years later, another article – signed by Richard Tapper¹⁶ – would resume the discussion on the relations of the so-called „Islamic anthropology” with various “anthropologies of Islam”. Exploring the cultural and social phenomena on the basis of values, principles and methodologies derived from Islamic texts and traditions, the author points out that the academic status of Islamic anthropology was disputed and minimized because of the emphasis put on values to the detriment of empirical data. This is the reason why Tapper endeavors to unravel how *Islamic anthropology* (on Muslims or other societies/cultures) differs from other *anthropologies of Islam* (the study of Islamic society and culture, more precisely, of Islamic traditions, beliefs and practices). The *anthropology of Islam* would represent a sub-domain of the anthropology of religion and may be understood to be the result of applying the methods of cultural and social anthropology to the study of Islam seen as a “religion of the world” associated with certain social institutions. However, as we can neither speak about a single *anthropology of Islam*, nor can we support the idea of a singular *Islamic anthropology*. Although Tapper identifies several projects to build up an Islamic anthropology since 1980 onwards, projects which share this option to carry out any research on “Islamic” texts and methods, he notices that they differ with regard to the finality of their demarche. Should Islamic anthropologies be limited to the study of Islamic societies or should they be applicable universally? The works on Islamic anthropology authored by Muslims have been, on one hand, criticized from within and, on the other, ignored by non-Muslim anthropologists, because of their non-academic character. Tapper believes, however, that it is important for Western anthropologists to attentively examine the project of Islamic anthropology before concluding that it cannot be of help to the development of anthropology in general. It is necessary, however, that Islamic anthropologists themselves share the conviction that their project is methodologically valid in order to be exported to Western academic world. Or, the Muslim anthropologist Akbar Ahmed admits that: “the Muslim intellectual confronting the world today is sometimes moved to despair. He is ill-equipped to face it. His vulnerability diminishes him in his own eyes. He wanders between two worlds, one dead, and the other powerless to be born. His wounds are largely self-inflicted. At the root of his intellectual malaise lies his incapacity to come to terms with Islam in the twentieth century”¹⁷. The message incorporated in similar Islamic works focuses on the need to deny the

¹⁵ T. Asad, *cited works*, p. 20.

¹⁶ R. Tapper, “Islamic Anthropology” and the “Anthropology of Islam”, in: *Anthropological Quarterly*, 68(3), Anthropological Analysis and Islamic Texts, 1995, pp. 185-193.

¹⁷ A. S. Ahmed, *Toward Islamic Anthropology: Definition, Dogma and Directions*, Ann Arbor, New Era, 1986, p. 61.

cultural, political and economic domination of the West, by rejecting the stereotypes circulated by Orientalism regarding the Islamic world, and also by reexamining how knowledge is managed in general. A main objective of these works on Islamic anthropology is to restore Islam and the Muslim's identity in the wake of the usurpations caused by the preeminently "materialistic" values from Western anthropologists. Following Ahmed's suggestion, Tapper launches a necessary interrogation: "(...) can Islam (and the culture and society of Muslims) be studied and understood by non-Muslims? In other words, *what is the nature and possibility of anthropology of Islam?*"¹⁸. It is not an easy answer, the more so as recent works are keen to articulate a virulent criticism of the socio-cultural theories and values promoted by Western specialists rather than to develop a coherent project for building up the Islamic anthropology they proclaim. The accusations made by Muslim thinkers against the biases of the Western discourse in relation to Islam are well-known. Almost there is not an Islamic study on Western culture not to criticize its ethno-centrist, imperialist and colonialist dimension. The most serious flaw of Western approaches, the anthropological ones included, would be the conscious embracing of hypotheses, investigation lines and methods dictated by „imperialist" interests, whose purpose is consolidate the idea that the world of Islam is characterized by a cultural retard and underdevelopment. Muslim anthropologists cannot understand in any other way the preference shown by Western anthropologists of Islam for themes associated with the stagnant, primitive, incompatible with modernity Muslim, or for topics centered on the crisis, decline or cultural backwardness of Islamic societies.

These days, following the terrorist actions associated with radical Islam which shattered Europe and Northern America, the anthropologists' interest in the Islamic cultural space has increased exponentially. A significant segment of Western specialists has become aware of the seriousness of this issue and its potentially practical consequences. In 2005, Daniel Martin Varisco published a provocative work, *Islam Obscured: the Rhetoric of Anthropological Representation*¹⁹, which opens up with the following words: "I have no interest in telling you what Islam is, what it really *must be*, or even what it *should be*. In what follows I am more attuned to what Islam hopefully is not, at least not for someone who approaches it seriously as an anthropologist and historian. (...) By avoiding judgment on the sacred truth of this vibrant faith, I shift intention toward an I-view that takes no summary representation *of Islam as sacred*"²⁰. Following el-Zein's suggestion, Varisco argues that the verification of the sacred truths of Muslim religion should be left in the hands of the theologians of Islam, while the anthropologists should deal with exterior elements, articulating their discourse through "the lens of anthropological or sociological narratives"²¹. He notices that in the year 2005, no updated critical assessment was made of the way

¹⁸ R. Tapper, "Islamic Anthropology" and the "Anthropology of Islam", in: *Anthropological Quarterly*, 68(3), Anthropological Analysis and Islamic Texts, 1995, p. 186.

¹⁹ Daniel Martin Varisco, *Islam Obscured: The Rhetoric of Anthropological Representation*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

²⁰ Daniel Martin Varisco, *cited works*, p. 1.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

in which anthropologists illustrated the religion of Islam, although there was a corpus well-equipped with ethnographic data and analyses, mainly owing to the contributions made by Clifford Geertz, Ernest Gellner, Fatima Mernissi (the first sociological analysis of the role of genres in Islam) or Akbar S. Ahmed (the project of an “Islamic anthropology”).

The same year, Brian Morris published, however, the work *Religion and Anthropology: A Critical Introduction*²², in which anthropology is critically approached, from the multitude of theoretical perspectives on religion, focusing on Islam as a regional, geographic and social phenomenon. His major criticism aims at the status of the anthropology of religion as such. Anthropology, as a comparative social science, should be an interface between natural and humanistic sciences, a quality which is about to be obliterated either because postmodern anthropologists repudiate empirical sciences altogether, or because positivistic anthropologists, high-handedly and absurdly, ruled out hermeneutics. Or, for Morris, the history of anthropology was always placed somewhere in-between naturalism and hermeneutics, and it was not, as Shweder argued, purely and simply “a Romantic rebellion against Enlightenment”. The chapter on *Islam and Popular Religion*²³ carries out, in the segment on social anthropology of religion, an ethnographic analysis combining the interpretation of religious beliefs and practices of Islam (seen as a “religion of revelation”²⁴) in determined regional social and historical contexts (Somalia, Sudan), with elements of political sociology on reformist movements (the existing relation between Islam and politics in Morocco). Morris agrees with Dale Eickelman²⁵ that studying Islam means to describe and examine the ways in which its universal principles were shaped up in various historical and social contexts, but he also tries not to overlook the suggestions made by Muslim specialists on this subject. Morris notices that the Western specialists’ outlook on the absence of a unitary “essence” of Islam is counterpoised by the Muslims’ almost unanimous conception on the existence of a single “religious tradition”. For Seyyid Hossein Nasr, Islam, although a religion, equally represents a civilization and a social order based on its revealed principles, namely “an archetypal reality which eternally subsists in the Divine Intellect”²⁶. For Talal Asad, as we have seen above, Islam is not a distinct social structure or a heterogeneous collection of beliefs, artifacts, habits and morals, but, instead, it is, primarily, *a singular tradition*. Morris also stands apart from the erroneous identification of Islamic culture, in its entirety, with Islamic religion. To the general tendency of the anthropologists of Islam to consider that all Islamic activities or cultural practices are fundamentally religious, Morris counterpoises an approach whose aim is to analyze those “beliefs, concepts, motivations and activities” placed beyond the purely religious

²² Brian Morris, *Religion and Anthropology. A Critical Introduction*, London, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 77-111.

²⁴ *Idem*, p. 78.

²⁵ Dale F. Eickelman, “The Study of Islam in Local Contexts”, in: *Contributions to Asian Studies*, 17, 1982, pp. 1-16.

²⁶ Seyyid Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 1981, pp. 1-2.

ones and which indisputably shape up the social life of the individuals with a “Muslim” background²⁷. Together with Mary Douglas, who studied the laicized Basseri nomads from Persia who continue to give themselves a Muslim identity, Morris pleads for renouncing at the Islamic „myth of the primitive pious man”, which effectively intoxicates the specialized anthropologic literature²⁸.

In 2007, other important anthropologic works on Islam were published. I shall mention, for now, *Journey into Islam: the Crisis of Globalization*²⁹ written by the Muslim thinker Akbar S. Ahmed. He argues that Islam – a major traditional civilization facing the issues of globalization (the latest form of Western imperialism) – should be explained within the broader framework of theology, sociology and international businesses. What concerns Ahmed is to identify and define the typically Muslim *psyche*³⁰, the Muslim’s relation with Islam, and also to understand how the readings, the Internet and international media shaped up its values and lifestyle. Taking over an idea from Malinowski, Ahmed gives anthropology the privileged status of scientifically based science whose object is crucial to the world of today: “how can peoples of different appearances, mutually unintelligible languages, and dissimilar ways of life get along peaceably together?”³¹. Conducting a large-scale field research in varied geographical areas – the Arab world, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Malaysia and Indonesia – Ahmed identifies and analyzes, in essence, three expressions or three models through which the Islamic world responds to the crisis generated by the phenomenon of globalization: *acceptance*, *preservation* and *synthetization*. He identifies these different Islamic approaches to globalization, metaphorically called Ajmer, Deoband, Aligarh, after the appellation of Indian towns known for their spiritual life. In this sense, the typical approach of Ajmer town is Sufi, inner, mystical. That one specific to Deoband town is conservative, traditionally rigid, while that of Aligarh town is liberally laic. To understand the Islamic reaction to globalization we should take into account the tribal structures of the three categories of Muslim communities, and also the fact that the lack of genuine Muslim leaders deepens the crisis and the gap between Western modern values and Islamic values.

Gabriele Marranci, in 2008³², after the social and political events which marked the beginning of the new millennium, and also the increased tension between the stereotype representations of Islam and the likewise stereotyped Western civilization, pleads for a reconsideration of how Islam should be approached from an anthropological perspective. The anthropologists preferred to direct their attention toward the Muslim as if it was an *alter* placed in an exotic

²⁷ Brian Morris, *Religion and Anthropology. A Critical Introduction*, London, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 78.

²⁸ Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology*, London, Taylor & Francis Routledge, 1999.

²⁹ Akbar S. Ahmed, *Journey into Islam: the Crisis of Globalization*, Washington, D.C., Brookling Institution Press, 2007.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

³¹ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, New York, Dutton, 1961, p. 20.

³² Gabriele Marranci, *The Anthropology of Islam*, Oxford, Oxford International Publishers Ltd., 2008.

context. They who studied Muslim societies had as their favorite target the Sufis and the Bedouins, whereas Western Islam, mainly seen as a monolithic cultural and social expression, was the object of study for sociologists. The new inflow of migration from Muslim countries brushed away the lack of interest, blurring the frontiers between sociology and anthropology, mainly in the case of Europe. Marranci considers also that we should pay attention to the methodology used from the very beginning in academic classifications. In fact, a growing number of contemporary sociologists make use of field and observatory scientific research as an indispensable part of their studies. Therefore, their contributions would fit into the social and anthropologic approach to Islam. Despite all this, even in recent publications, the anthropology of Islam is still stuck into a nostalgic exoticism when it should be, de facto, a *global anthropology*, as Daniel Martin Varisco also claimed. We cannot study the Muslims from Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria, Morocco or Libya without taking into consideration the transnational and global relations they are part of. Likewise, we cannot study the current Muslim communities in the West without paying attention to their ties with the Muslims from other Islamic countries and with other Muslim or non-Muslim communities³³. However, essentialism affects both the academic and the popular discourse about the Muslims. Marranci calls this type of essentialism an “error of the Islamic theory of the mind” he surprisingly finds in many sociological and anthropologic discourses³⁴. According to this erroneous stand, Islamic religion works in a strictly determinist way, automatically forcing the Muslims to believe, to act, to think, to justify and develop their identity of being *Muslims* despite their own different legacies, ethnicities, nationalities, experiences, genres, sexual orientations or ways of thinking. In brief, the belief in Islam would turn them into a kind of clones: “different styles, different colors, and the same process”. Sometimes, this error is the outcome of a hard to avoid generalization; at other times, it is more ideological and the product of a radical cultural position. Whatever the case, the root of essentialism is the tacit non-recognition of the fact that the Muslim is, first and foremost, a human being as everybody else. For this very reason Marranci argues, in *The Anthropology of Islam*, that emotions and feelings may be the core of anthropologic studies on Islam. It implies to *reconsider the relation between nature and culture*. It is necessary to examine the interpretations of Islam as part of a network of shared significances: to investigate concepts such as jihad, *jahillyya* or *tawhid* as a result

³³ S. Yaqoob, “Global and Local Echoes of the Anti-War Movement: A British Muslim Perspective”, in: *International Socialism* 100 Autumn, 2003. (<http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj100/yaqoob.htm>).

³⁴ T. Modood, “Anti-Essentialism, Multiculturalism and the ‘Recognition’ of Religious Groups”, in: *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 6, 1998, pp. 378–399; H. Donnan, *Interpreting Islam*, London, Sage, 2002; R.D. Grillo, B. Riccio and R. Salih, „Cultural essentialism and cultural anxiety”, in: *Anthropological Theory*, 3(2), 2003, pp. 157–173; A. Matin-Asgari, “Islamic Studies and the Spirit of Max Weber: A Critique of Cultural Essentialism”, in: *Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 13(3), 2004, pp. 293–312.; R. Geaves, “The Dangers of Essentialism: South Asian Communities in Britain and the ‘World Religions’ Approach to the Study of Religions”, in: *Contemporary South Asia*, 14(1), 2005, pp. 75–90.

of interpretations influenced by personal identity, emotions, feelings and the environment, instead of being the products of a common textual determinism.

A year after the publication of Marranci's book, Christopher Houston wrote *The Islam of Anthropology*³⁵, a provocative article inspired by Fenella Cannell's study which investigated that uncomfortable gap between Christians' explanations of their own religion and the anthropologic assumptions about Christianity³⁶. Houston resumed Cannell's interrogations and aimed to find out whether or not there was an "Islam of anthropologists" which did not match at all the Muslim accounts about their own religious beliefs and practices and which would favor a certain theoretical model to the detriment of a more adequate one. Surprisingly, the anthropologist from New-Zealand argues that in the case of Islam the things are completely reverse: one can see a curious "fusion of horizons" between the accounts made by Muslim faithful and the model of Islam constructed by the interlocutors with whom the anthropologists spoke during their field research. How can one explain this similitude between the accounts of radical Muslims and the classical anthropologic writings on Islam? They incessantly underline the existence of an overwhelming difference between the Muslim society and the other social formations, within a history stretching from Ibn Khaldun, through Gellner and Zubaida³⁷, up to Varisco³⁸. All of them show Muslim society to be perfectly opposable to the Western one. How come that the anthropologists, usually extremely wary of any information given by the participants in these studies, are so "open" and non-critical when it comes to asserting the radical distinction between these two civilizations? Can we identify a given trend which is preferentially embraced in the current anthropologic study of Islam? Houston investigates the model proposed by authors like D.M. Varisco, G. Makris³⁹ and Jenny White⁴⁰. Against the background of legislative measures taken by Western governments regarding the surveillance of Muslims and the recruitment of anthropologists within the *Human Terrain* project carried by the United States of America Army, Houston tries to present the discourse on Islam in the current Australian political climate, by examining the right-wing perspective taken by the media as compared to the left-wing perspective and the feminist movement approach. Houston's first remark is that there is, in all the three works mentioned above, a central topic of reflection: the debate around the singularity or plurality of Islamic society or Islam. In fact, this problematic means to clarify the answer to other few essential questions: whether or not there is a

³⁵ Christopher Houston, "The Islam of Anthropology", in: *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 20, 2009, pp. 198-212.

³⁶ Fenella Cannell, "The Christianity of Anthropology", in: *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 11, 2005, pp. 335-356.

³⁷ S. Zubaida, "Is there a Muslim society? Ernest Gellner's Sociology of Islam", in: *Economy and Society*, 24, 1995, pp. 151-188.

³⁸ Daniel Martin Varisco, *Islam Obscured: The Rhetoric of Anthropological Representation*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

³⁹ G. Makris, *Islam in the Middle East: A Living Tradition*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

⁴⁰ J. White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2002.

“similarity” of the core of Islamic practices and beliefs in different social contexts, whether or not there is a “non-controversial” theological discourse for all Muslim faithful and whether or not Islamic sacred texts are “disputed” inside the Muslim world⁴¹. Secondly, Huston considers that the above-mentioned authors write their books under the intellectual pressure of the paradigm imposed by Edward Said, according to whom, the study of Islamic world should leave aside the “style of thought made upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between ‘the Orient’ and ... ‘the Occident’”⁴². Despite Varisco’s pretense to direct the study of Islam toward the analysis of the way in which Muslims believe and act in a given social context, in an attempt to free Islam from the idealization and essentialization which, so far, has characterized it, Houston believes that his project failed. Since it represented neither the ethnographic analysis of a particular historical moment or of a certain community, nor the adequate description of Islam in a recognizable region, Varisco’s *Islam Obscured* cannot overshadow the value of Makris’s work on Middle East, in which we find an approach based on the investigation of the way in which the doctrines and practices of Islam acquire their locally recognized canonical status⁴³. Instead of trying to picture Islam as a dynamic and unified tradition which shows a global vision transcending cultural specificities, being shaped locally and reinterpreted permanently in keeping with idioms deeply rooted in history, Makris is also appreciated by Houston for the emphasis on “the political economy of meaning in Islam”⁴⁴, the only one which can help understand the material conditions for the continuously changing Islamic tradition, once the dominant versions of Islam gained ground.

In 2013, the collective volume edited by Magnus Mersden and Konstantinos Retsikas, *Articulating Islam: Anthropological Approaches to Muslims Worlds* aimed just to „de-exceptionalize” the study of Islam, through a series of studies which explore the ways in which the religion of Islam was produced, reproduced and shaped by particular historical and social contexts⁴⁵. The authors’ perspective challenges the idea that Islam and the fact-to-be-a-Muslim are essential and unchanging dimensions of the world belonging to them who are of a *Muslim background*. In other words, under consideration are a series of stereotypes abounding in the present-day Western specialized literature⁴⁶, and it questions not only the role played by Islam in particular geographical areas, but also the importance to explore often fluid and abscond contexts, which determine the

⁴¹ Christopher Houston, *cited works*, p. 200.

⁴² Edward S. Said, *L'Orientalisme. L'Orient créé par l'Occident*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2005, p. 15.

⁴³ G. Makris, *cited works*, p. 2.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁴⁵ Magnus Mersden and Konstantinos Retsikas, *Articulating Islam: Anthropological Approaches to Muslims Worlds*, London, Springer, 2013, p. 1.

⁴⁶ For further information on the nature of stereotypes regarding the Muslims: Andrew Shrycook, *Islamophobic/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2007; Matti Bunzl, *Anti-semitism and Islamophobia: Hatred Old and New in Europe*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2007; Oskar Verkaaik, “The Cachet Dilemma: Ritual and Agency in New Dutch Nationalism”, in: *American Ethnologist*, 37(1), 2010, pp. 69-82.

profound or superficial incorporation of Muslim religion in the centre or at the periphery of the everyday life of the individual who claims to have such a background. This approach sheds light on the need to cautiously use syntagms like “Muslim identity”, “to be a Muslim” and even the words “Muslim” or “Islam”.

Pierre Bourdieu and Marshal Sahlins⁴⁷, together with other specialists in anthropology or in related disciplines, underlined the complexity of the „worlds” created and inhabited by people, function of how they were succeeding to internalize and reflect *practically* the cultural, religious and historical paradigms facing them in everyday life, in various spatial and temporal contexts. Bourdieu warned that “When one discovers the theoretical error that consists in presenting the theoretical view of practice as the practical relation to practice, and more precisely in setting up the model that has to be constructed to give an account of practice as the principle of practice, then simultaneously one sees that at the root of this error is the antinomy between the time of science and time of action, which tends to destroy practice by imposing on it the intemporal time of science. The shift from the practical scheme to the theoretical schema, constructed after the event, from practical sense to the theoretical model, which can be read either as a project, plan or method, or as a mechanical programme, a mysterious ordering mysteriously reconstructed by the analyst, lets slip everything that makes the temporal reality of practice in process (...) Science has a time which is not that of practice”⁴⁸. Likewise, in this field, of the anthropology of Islam, one should not avoid the fact that it is fragmentary, if not pointless, to spotlight the abstract, intellectual and symbolic beliefs of Islamic religion in a type of discourse, being oblivious of the concrete practices shared by the individuals who live in the real Muslim world or who declare their appartenance to an „imaginary” Muslim world. How does the contemporary individual strike a relation with the complex and multidimensional religious tradition? In other words, to what extent he who claims to belong to the religious tradition of Islam considers himself to be a “Muslim” and what does this tradition mean to him? Is the fact-to-be-a-Muslim a constant, an observable and quantifiable empirical feature of everyday life or is it *an experience/a state/a disposition of the mind* without clear-cut outlines, volatile, influenced and shaped by particular social and historical contexts? Some of these interrogations are also dealt with in the collection of studies edited by Marsden and Retsikas, written with the aim to “to capture some of the ways in which Islam is both evoked and diffused in the lives of the people with a Muslim background and show how these processes unfold in mutual interaction with particular social and historic contexts”⁴⁹. The two authors make use of notions of “systematicity” and “articulation” to bring to light the Muslims’ obvious or ambiguous tendency to call forth or hush away, to maximize or minimize the significances of their own religious traditions in concrete historical and social situations facing them at a given time. The need to lay the stress on contextualization circumvents once again the essentialized perspective which

⁴⁷ Marshal Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1976.

⁴⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1992, p. 83.

⁴⁹ Magnus Mersden and Konstantinos Retsikas, *Articulating Islam: Anthropological Approaches to Muslims Worlds*, London, Springer, 2013, p. 2.

establishes that “the fact-to-be-a-Muslim” is “a permanent, essential, unchanging and uncontested premise of being”⁵⁰ belonging to the people having a Muslim *background*, and endorses the complementary analysis of other identity markers. Marsden and Restikas acknowledge these markers under the disguised form of certain sensibilities, aptitudes and dispositions which cannot be purely and simply derived from investigating the significances of religious traditions specific to Islamic texts or academic debates: “Such sensibilities and strands of life might have an Islamic or a Muslim dimension, yet might also draw on other concerns, ethical practices, moral values, or cultural influences (...)”⁵¹. The content of the collective volume authored by Marsden and Restikas proposes, therefore, an anthropological approach freed from the explicitly religious dimension, bringing to light those aspects of the Muslim’s life in which the centrality of Islam is much less present or stable than it has been thought until now. The discourse about the plurality of identities demonstrate the fact that one cannot identify something similar to a petrified, permanent and essential “Muslim identity”, but, rather, the existence of a new multiplicity of potential identifications adopted to fit into each and every context, manifested in all these situations and processes wherein individuals with a Muslim background call forth Islam or – on the contrary – they dissimulate or even hide it.

The problematic of Muslim identity is also analyzed by Aaron W. Hughes in his work *Muslim Identities. An Introduction to Islam*⁵². The book opens up with *Introduction. Religious Studies and the Academic Study of Islam*⁵³, in which the author critically explores the assumptions on Muslim identity circulated in theological introductions (explicitly favorable to Islam) and also in those having an obvious political message (of course, unfavorable to Islam). Keen to understand the Islamic religious practices and beliefs under their historical conditioning, Hughes embraces the middle way between the critical and apologetic approach, in an attempt to build up a consistent discourse from the historical, sociologic and literary viewpoint. Placing it, still, under the category of sub-disciplinary contributions to the study of religions, Hughes constructs his theoretical demarche by means of an inventory borrowed from related disciplines to anthropology (archaeology, the history of the Near East, philosophy, sociology), to demonstrate his extreme skepticism about the authenticity of most Islamic historical sources. In his outlook, the contents of Islamic religion are not detectable in a stable synchronicity (in a given time of history) or diachronically (throughout time). Since any historical record of Islam is problematic and since the religious beliefs and practices which followed the adoption of such „accounts” with the pretense of authenticity are so varied, Hughes considers that „(...) *there is no such thing as a monolithic Islam or a singular Muslim identity*. On the contrary, terms such as “real Islam” and “real Muslims” are highly charged and, as such, highly contested. Various actors and various groups have constantly been

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

⁵¹ *Idem*, p. 25.

⁵² Aaron W. Hughes, *Muslim Identities. An Introduction to Islam*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2013.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, pp. 1-12.

caught up in this struggle to establish their version of Islam as normative or authentic, and in this way, by extension, they define the Islams of their competitors as simple innovations, misinterpretations, or bastardizations”⁵⁴. His preference for the plurality of Islam is a natural consequence of the fact that essentialized “Islam”, Muslim and non-Muslim specialists talk about, is to a great extent a construct inherited and intensely crafted throughout time. His outlook stands also apart from the Islamologists who want to interpret or construct an Islam compatible with Western values (liberal, democratic etc.), as well as from they who pictured Islam according to certain political or ideological convictions, identifying it with terror and fundamentalism (jihadism, salafism etc.).

If Marsden and Retsikas talk about “systematicity” and „articulation”, Hughes resorts to the notions of “legacy” and “creation” to underline two key ways which give meaning to the Islamic social world: Muslim identity/identities constructed somewhere at the crossroads between the way in which the received religious legacy (ideas and practices which are not “given”, but instead thought about, adapted or disputed by each generation) are understood and interpreted and the type of action needed to shape up this legacy in keeping with their self-image and time requirements. Nonetheless, historical past, studied in a disinterested way, may not at all correspond to the past seen as a theological category; hence, the need for genuine historical accounts, the only ones able to shed light on the creative interactions between legacy and creation which gave rise to the multitude of Muslim identities and the plurality of Islams (Sunni, Shi’a, Sufi, Ismaili, Ahmadi etc.). In keeping with Jean-François Bayart’s ideas on the fluidity of identities engendered by political and cultural shifts⁵⁵, Hughes aims to deconstruct/denounce a certain type of culturalist ideology so abundant in religious studies on Islam. Bayart claims the fact that – as historical constructions – “cultural identity” or „political identity” are nothing else but illusions, (cultural, religious etc.), “tradition” - an invention of modernity, while culturalism – a hoax of the ideology of globalization. In this sense, there is no “primordial” or “essential” identity of the Muslim, but, instead, a multitude of “identity strategies”, which substantially modify the way in which we should understand the construction of identities and cultures. *The Islamic culture*, like the „French culture”, is not something “stable”, it is a product. It is not “closed”, but permanently constructed and re-constructed through borrowings and transfers of meaning, starting from an imaginary empowered by a so-called „political culture” (another indistinct and vague aggregate of multiple discursive genres). In conclusion, Hughes states that “Muslim identity” is not a gift received from the forerunners, passively adopted by the individuals and the groups of individuals with a Muslim background, but instead an answer to political, social and

⁵⁴ Aaron W. Hughes, *cited works*, p. 226.

⁵⁵ Jean-François Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2005; idem, *Les Études postcoloniales. Un carnaval académique*, Paris, Éditions Khartala, 2010; Assad Azzi, Xenia Chrysochoou, Bert Klandermans, and Bernd Simon (eds.), *Identity and Participation in Cultural Divers Societes: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011; Jeffrey Ayala Milligan, *Islamic Identity, Postcoloniality, and Educational Policy. Schooling and Ethno-Religious Conflict in the Southern Philippines*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

intellectual contexts facing them. Imagining and interpreting the memory of the history of Islam give rise to “various religious identities, which include a variety of political, social, gendered, economic, and intellectual forces. If we ignore these forces and simply assume that religious identity is strictly “religious” and inherited, we risk overlooking how and why such identities form”⁵⁶.

From my point of view, using the terminology sanctioned by Western culture, the anthropology of Islam must be built at the juncture of social and cultural anthropology (I include here also the economic anthropology) and the anthropology of religion, however having in mind a series of necessary precautions. I consider that the anthropology of Islam would benefit from *pluri-topical hermeneutics*⁵⁷ and that its goal should be to grasp, from an *intercultural perspective*, the development of social, cultural and historical processes of Islamic communities in their diversity. First and foremost, one should not ignore what the Muslims have to say about their own cultural and religious tradition. Secondly, one should avoid, as much as possible, the non-critical usual set of categorial oppositions excessively employed by Westerners and Muslims in their anthropological studies on Islam: modernity/tradition, rationality/ faith, East/ West, politics/ religion, autonomy/authority, Islam/Islamism, primitive/evolved, *homo islamicus/homo æconomicus* etc. Thirdly, one should make best use of recent theoretical contributions questioning or reconsidering the significance of concepts which made history in Western anthropologic and sociological research: *modernity, religion, culture, tradition, society, identity, relation, process* etc. Last but not least, one should reject the essentialist approach asserting the existence of an Islamic religion *sui generis* and embrace the perspective expressing the *everyday religiosity, the everyday Islam* of the Muslim, along the line ushered in by Samuli Schielcke, Liza Debevec, Filippo Osella, Benjamin Soares, Hayder Al-Mohammad, Daniela Peluso, Veena Das, Michel de Certeau, Ben Highmore, Michael Lempert or Magnus Marsden, to name just a few.

For instance, a recent project – on “the anthropologies of the world”⁵⁸ – supports the idea that anthropology, like other disciplines, must reanalyze its object, methods and finalities, whatever the cost or the scale of epistemological and institutional shifts likely to occur at the level of current practices. Masterminded by Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and Arturo Escobar, this project is meant to fill in the gaps caused by the effective ignorance of the scope, complexity and diversity of anthropologic research internationally, which generated the impossible confrontation of different, invisible and overlooked epistemologies, concepts and methods. This approach is *intercultural*, not multicultural. The multicultural conceptions, although acknowledging the diversity of cultures, preeminently spotlight the *differences* among them, enhancing segregation. On

⁵⁶ Aaron W. Hughes, *cited works*, p. 9-10.

⁵⁷ In early 1990, Raimundo Panikkar coined the syntagm *diatopic hermeneutics* by which he named that reflexive and speculative framework which makes it possible to transgress the distance between two or more cultures with blurred cultural and historical ties (*The Intrareligious Dialogue*, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1999, p. 27).

⁵⁸ Johannes Fabian, “World Anthropologies. Questions”, in: Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and Arturo Escobar (eds.), *World Anthropologies. Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power*, Oxford, New York, Berg, 2006, p. 282.

the contrary, *interculturality* refers to the clash/encounter among cultures and the contexts wherein the groups establish relations and exchanges. From this viewpoint, I deem that the anthropology proper to Islam implies to understand that they who are *different* from us, in this case the Muslims, *are what they are* in the broader context of the relations of negotiation, conflict and mutual borrowings⁵⁹. The homogenization or the enhancement of cultural disparities, as well as the understanding of cultural differences and inequalities only in terms of *inclusion* and *exclusion* should be avoided. It is necessary to establish a balance between the delimitation of the multiple and heterogeneous ways in which Muslims live and give meaning to their own lives and the emphasis on the similarities and *common* contexts of *different* „Islamic worlds”. I consider that this is the only way to find a solution to the difficult task of underlining the social norms and structures which concur to the construction of generic *Muslim identity*, without sacrificing the individuality and actions of the real human being who assumes for himself an Islamic *background*.

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⁵⁹ Néstor García Canclini, *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados: Mapas de la interculturalidad*, Barcelona, Gedisa, 2004, p. 15.

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TRENDS IN THE EVOLUTION OF TODAY'S WORLD. REFLECTIONS PROMPTED BY THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS (2016)

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Abstract: *The US presidential election results (2016) threw dust into the eyes of the intellectual superstructure of the political sphere (political analysts, specialized observatories). The most frequent questions were: "Who would have believed it?" and "How was this possible?" Those who could "believe" it were the open-minded thinkers, who evaded from the dominant ideological referential, imposed in the last decades, and who could foresee the evolution trends of the public consciousness in the US. As regards the second question, we shall try to provide an answer in two phases: 1) by analyzing the consequences of the end of the Cold War; 2) by assessing the actuality of the Enlightenment project of human emancipation. As such, we discover several causality links between Donald Trump's victory, Brexit and the ascension of the national parties in the West. These events have a common cause: the change of the social evolution mechanisms and of the legitimation ideologies.*

Keywords: *„end of history”, „dispute of humanisms”, prior ideology, ideological referential, cultural paradigm, Enlightenment, linear reasoning.*

1. The world after the Cold War

„We may have won the cold war, which is nice –it's more than nice, it's wonderful. But this means that now the enemy is us, not them”.

Irving Kristol

The collapse of the Communist ideology as dominant ideology in most part of the world¹ has been, on the one hand, the effect of the general disillusion regarding the societies of the “real socialism”; on the other hand, the recent rise of fundamentalism in the Christian, Hebrew and Muslim traditions proves a profound distrust toward the liberal consumption societies. It was Pope John Paul II who first drew our attention on this phenomenon, stating, at the beginning of the '90s that “It is good that we got rid of Communism, but this does

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¹ At the beginning of the 80's of the last century, the Socialist world system, which was also been referred to as the „Socialist camp” (I. V. Stalin) or „the empire of evil” (Roland Reagan) covered 26% of the world's population, 35% of the surface of the globe and 40% of the industrial production of material goods.

not mean that we have to embrace consumerism which is just as bad”². For him, the notion of “consumerism” was just one of the equivalents of “capitalism” in its contemporary version (often called “consumer society”). As such, according to philosopher Karol Wojtyła, the moral opposition of our epoch was not defined in the “Communism-Capitalism” terms, but rather in terms of *Humanism* and *Consumerism* antagonism.

After one year, in Encyclicals *Centesimus Annus*, during the *Rerum novarum* Hundredth Anniversary, Pope John Paul II invoked the principle of the powers’ complementarity, of the subsidiarity and solidarity in the economic growth, showing that economic liberalism is meaningful only if the ethics of solidarity is respected: “In 1989 it was not the savage Capitalism that won, but rather the Capitalism subordinated to the principle of integral human liberation”³.

When André Malraux foresaw a future “religious century”, there were few who believed that this prognosis had high odds, particularly if they understood the term *religious* in its strict sense; the European thinkers were aware that liberalism itself was a consequence of the weakness displayed by the religion-driven societies, incapable of producing the minimum conditions for peace and stability. The Neo-protestant churches and the quasi-religious sects were not a threat for the social societies in which they flourished, since they rather helped individuals adapt to the System (it becomes more bearable for individuals to the extent that they no longer expect spiritual satisfactions, discharging it from any such obligations). At that time, the single viable alternative for the replacement of the Universalist ideologies in the perspective of a possible “religious century” was Islamism which was meant to be a counter-proposal to Communism – Liberalism; but, at that time, its attractiveness for Muslims was weak and the advisors of the politicians gave it slim chances of universalization. At the beginning of the ‘90s, the Persian Gulf War postponed, for a while, the uprising of Islamism as universal ideology (this is a fact that we are aware of now, but in the last decade of the last century many reputable authors believed that this possibility had forever vanished).

Both for Communism and for liberalism, a permanent threat was always considered to be nationalism – either as a mere cultural nostalgia (the case of the Romanian peasants), or as a strongly articulated doctrine (the case of the nationalist parties in the West). Up until recently, the large majority of the nationalist movements did not have an affirmative political program – being focused, as a rule, on the “negative” doctrine of independence toward another people or a group of peoples. We shall further see that this does not render them less dangerous for the future of humankind. Following the extension of the European Union, the nationalist platforms became “positive”, setting well-

² The Easter message *Urbi et orbi* from April 15th 1990, delivered from the window of the “terza loggia” of the Apostolic Palace.

³ John Paul II-lea, *Centesimus Annus* Encyclical, addressed to the bishops, monks, believers of the Catholic Church and all people of good faith, during the *Rerum novarum* hundredth anniversary. Translation of the Roman-Catholic Archiepiscopate in Bucharest, edited by the „Kirche in Not” International Catholic Aid Organization, Niyegyhaza, 1991, pp. 85-86.

defined goals driven against the foreign workers. This process boosted after the wave of immigrants that assaulted the West in 2014-2015. Why should we disavow such evolutions? Do we disavow them because they are “obsolete” ideologies that pertain to the pre-globalization epoch, the so-called “epoch of the nations”? Or because the foreseeable effects would be more devastating than the unpleasant effects of globalization?

There are many specialists who argue that the explosion of the Nationalist spirits have the most terrible consequences: the large structures of global balance implode (the decaying political-military competences); the destructive forces are getting out of hand, with world-scale impact; the traditional economic structures, such as the financial-banking system dissipate, leading to a noisome isolationism and, as a consequence, the emergence of many “fascisms of helplessness”, triggering international conflicts and large-scale instability.

From an ideological standpoint, the symbolic arches erected by the bipolar system until present day would collapse: the “socialist global system”, as ideological referential of the Soviet imperialism, and the “Western civilization”, as referential of the North-Atlantic one; but these referentials, in their capacity of symbolic arches, made the conduct of collectivities, political elites and states coherent and universally significant. Along with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disappearance of the two referentials led to a “generalized feud” of options, a fracturing of the system of “symbolic interactions” (Habermas), a chronic incapacity of communication and of mutual comprehension between people and collectivities, between states and groups of states or between the bureaucracy in Brussels and the European citizens – which is likely to create a long-lasting blockage of any settlement of the current global issues and of those which will become global sooner or later.

In our vision, two alternatives are possible: 1) this re-falling from the “sky” of universality will become an *irreversible trend of human history*; 2) we are dealing with a return to the point in which the universalization of history has been confiscated by the great powers and distorted by means of the Imperialist strategies and shall remain just a *regression phase necessary within the more ample trend of universalization*, a step backwards before taking three steps forward. As regards the second alternative, we cannot know whether this phase will last just a few decades or as much as Malraux’s “religious century”. For the time being, we must focus on the likelihood that a possible *omnes contra omnis* war could degenerate into an Armageddon, into a final battle without losers or winners. However, this prospect will most certainly become a “philosophical fact”, an object of the nowadays’ philosophical reflection.

The undeniable merit of turning this prospect of history into a topic of meditation and of re-setting the bet between the rationalization of humanity and its re-falling into barbarism through the recovery of the irrational residues of human aspirations belongs to Francis Fukuyama, the author of the “The End of History?”, published in the American magazine *National Interest*⁴. The solution put forward by Fukuyama, who grasped the signs of the “universalization of

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, „La fin de l’histoire?”, in *Commentaire*, no. 47 / Autumn, 1989, pp. 457-469.

Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government”, was unilateral because a possible universalization of liberalism would not exclude the peril of nationalist conflicts. To Fukuyama’s thesis, according to which “this conflict does not arise from liberalism itself so much as from the fact that the liberalism in question is incomplete. Certainly a great deal of the world’s ethnic and nationalist tension can be explained in terms of peoples who are forced to live in unrepresentative political systems that they have not chosen” (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 466), we may reply as follows: “The ethnic and nationalist tensions in the Eastern Europe do not stem from Communism itself, but rather from the fact that this Communism has been incomplete; they account for the fact that the people living in this part of the world have been forced to live in unrepresentative political systems that they have not chosen”.

This reply must be studied not necessarily for its truthfulness, but rather in view of showing that at a strictly formal level, Fukuyama’s vision is linked to an obsolete paradigm that we have elsewhere called the “paradigm of confrontation”⁵. A unilateral absolutization (of liberalism) makes possible, accounts for and even legitimates – again, at a strictly formal level – another absolutization, no less unilateral (of Communism). The false solution foreseen by Fukuyama did nothing but make us return to the initial point: the alternative Communism or Liberalism, the blind opposition between two projects of humanization – ultimately, to the so-called “dispute of humanisms” (Roger Garaudy).

Fukuyama raised a truly significant issue for the theoretical discourse, related to the type of international relations that will mark Europe at end of the “ideological evolution of humankind”, i.e. the exit from the universal history’s scene of Marxism – Leninism as state ideology pretending to have an impact on real history. Unfortunately, he failed, again, to enlighten us as to the issue he himself raised, due to his theoretical obsession translated into the craze of the “end of history”, that seems to have fascinated the author so much that it guided his entire analytical approach, making him go against his own statements or circumvent irrefutable elements of real history⁶.

Criticizing the ones that foresee a return to the model of the relations between the great European powers from the 19th century (Russia, Great Britain and the German Empire), he accuses them that their image on the “dezideologized” contemporary world is based on the questionable assumption that ideology is a “superstructure imposed on a substratum of permanent great power interest”. For the way in which any state defines its national interest is not universal but rests on some kind of prior ideological basis, just as (...) the economic behavior is determined by a prior state of consciousness. In this

⁵ Dumitru Borțun, “From the paradigm of confrontation to the alliance of humanisms. An approach of the ideological conflict”, in *GeoPolitica, magazine of Political Gography, Geopolitics and Geostrategy*, no. 60 (2/2015), pp. 197-205.

⁶ We must admit that this phrase is very adequate for the title of a successful article at global scale. But it also has a theoretical meaning, since it invokes a Hegel’s conference in which he stated that with the Battle of Jena (1806), “history ends” due to the elimination of the distinction between masters and slaves, when both disappear and are replaced by the man proposed by the French Revolution, as a dialectical synthesis between master and slave. He, i.e. the bourgeois (!), shall be the integral man of the universal and homogenous state to be created by Napoleon Bonaparte.

century, states have adopted highly articulated doctrines with explicit foreign policy agendas legitimizing expansionism, like Marxism-Leninism or National Socialism”⁷. These doctrines, however, no longer have a real impact on international politics, according to Fukuyama, in the purest expression of the linear rationality; as a consequence, “international life for the part of the world that has reached the “end of history” is far more preoccupied with economics than with politics or strategy”⁸.

There are, nevertheless, many, including the author of the above-quoted excerpt, who believe that things are neither as simple, nor as complicated, that we are just witnessing a new crisis of human civilization. Nowadays, we know that the two global systems are *complementary*, as two sides of the same coin, and this coin was called “industrial civilization”. We have shown elsewhere⁹ that both Capitalism and Communism have been the necessary products of this civilization and that neither could have functioned without the other¹⁰.

The ultimate novelty brought about by this crisis is the *global nature* of its causes and effects and, as such, the fact that one of its consequences may be the *global and final* destruction of civilization. On the other side, the lack of novelty of the current crisis resides in the fact that it can be overcome by the wise (critical and selective) use of that huge “*think tank*” that is the culture of humankind.

Should we recourse to this think tank and know how to relate to human aspirations, we shall become our own allies; otherwise, we shall become our own enemies. In a short article entitled “From now on, the enemy is us”, the American Neo-conservative Irving Kristol went beyond the Hegel-like historical optimism, that he called the “Hegelian sensitivity and way of thinking”, and wrote: “Our American civilization does indeed seem to be ‘the wave of the future’ while the various forms of anti-liberalism and anti-capitalism (...) do indeed look passed. I agree that they are in fact passed. What I cannot believe is that we represent ‘the wave of the future’, as distinct from a temporary hegemony. (...). Our American democracy, though seemingly triumphant, is at risk, and it is at risk precisely because it is the kind of democracy it is, with all the problematics - as distinct from mere problems. Among such problematics are the longing for community, for spirituality, a growing distrust of technology, the confusion of liberty with license, and many others besides. We may have won the Cold War, which is nice - it's more than nice, it's wonderful. But this means that now the enemy is us, not them”¹¹.

⁷ Fukuyama, Francis, „La fin de l’histoire?”, in *Commentaire*, no. 47 / Autumn, 1989, p. 467.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Borțun, Dumitru, „The logic of the included third party and the social inclusion in the globalization era”, in Cristina Cîrțiță-Buzoianu, Elena Nechita (editors), *Social Inclusion in the Digital Era*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2016, pp. 9-20.

¹⁰ For instance, the idea of the “external enemy” delivered not only the pretext for the economic growth effort and for the escalation of the arms race, but it provided an internal homogeneity of the societies from the two camps, extinct nowadays and regretted by many. After 1989, the Washington administration felt the need to procure another external enemy – “the international terrorism”.

¹¹ Irving Kristol, „L’ennemi, désormais, c’est nous”, in *Commentaire*, no. 47 / Autumn, 1989, p. 681

The real issue that those who survived the Cold War have to face is the understanding of the “after” world and the avoidance of letting it slip into a new war, this time not between USA and the Soviet Union, not between “Capitalism” and “Socialism”, not between Liberalism and Communism, but *between US and OURSELVES*, i.e. between different ways of imagining cosmos, of perceiving history, of understanding man and human accomplishment – inherently, of conceiving the odds and the ways of the pursuit of happiness.

In fact, the issue is of seizing, in this chaos, the *cultural stake* of the generalized fight for a place in the Sun. Raising today the issue of cultural stake does not mean siding with the speculative idealism, but rather with the historical realism, because the “evaporation” of the *outside* enemy for the two large segments of the post-war world and for the people that lived and thought under the two symbolic arches of the two types of civilizations coincides with the disappearance of any solution *from the outside*; Leon Brunschvicg gave this warning, dating back from 1937: “...The only chance of salvation for people will be, most likely, the awareness of the fact that they cannot be saved from the outside”¹².

One of the philosophers who is aware of the new historical situation, deducing thereto the need and the emergency of the reconfiguration of the ideological landscape and, implicitly, the re-organization from the inside of the great universalist ideologies (in this case, of Liberalism) is Allan Bloom. He depicts the spiritual experience of the last years using terms similar to those of the Kantian awakening from the dogmatic sleep: “Fifty years of opposition to fascism and communism provided us with clear moral and political goals, but they were negative. We took our orientation from the evil we faced, and it brought out the best in us. The threat from outside disciplined us inside while protecting us from too much depressing reflection on ourselves. The global nature of conflicts we are engaged in imposed an unprecedented uniformity on the world. It has been liberalism – or else. The practical disaster of anti-liberal Right or Left has in general been taken to be a refutation of the theories which supported or justified them”¹³.

The dogmatism described by Bloom consists, therefore, in the non-critical reference of liberalism to its own victory on the field of the actual history, of the facts. Its essence resides in the confusion between *Sein* and *Sollen*, between the *de facto* defeat of theorist ideologies and the *de jure* defeat thereof, which is yet to occur. The totalitarian ideologies have not yet been defeated “at home”, i.e. where they were born and develop before they become state ideologies pretending to be Universalist: they have not been defeated *in the people’s minds*. But the annihilation at an empirical level of its main rivals gives liberalism the following alternative: either a positive reconstruction of the world or the filling of the void created by a postmodern irrational tumult: “Liberalism has won, but it may be decisively unsatisfactory. Communism was a mad extension of liberal rationalism, and everyone has seen that it neither works nor is desirable. And,

¹² Alexandru Boboc, *Contemporary Philosophy. Marxism and the Debates in Contemporary World*, Bucharest, The Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, 1982, pp. 281-282.

¹³ Allan Bloom, „Le moment de la philosophie”, in *Commentaire*, no. 47/Automne, 1989, p. 470.

although Fascism was defeated on the battlefield, its dark possibilities were not seen through the end. If an alternative is sought there is nowhere else to seek it. I would suggest that fascism has a future, if not the future. Much that Fukuyama says points in that direction. The facts do too. (...) However this may be, Fukuyama has introduced practical men to the necessity of philosophy, not that ideology is dead or dying, for those who want to interpret our very new situation”¹⁴.

Allan Bloom’s words save us from explaining why we see in the philosophical reflection an instrument enabling us to understand the present, if not to even intervene in it. The use of this instrument is all the more necessary as ideologies and their languages proved to be incapable of fostering a real dialogue. The “dialogue” between them, *ab ovo* a dialogue of the deaf, could not lead, over the years, but to the current ideological chaos in which ideologies speak and no one listens. The current crisis is deeply rooted in centuries of evolution of the European culture, particularly in the two centuries after the French Revolution. But it has been foreshown, for those who had the gift of eyes to see and ears to hear, by the congenital autism of the great ideologies of the 20th century; they represent, in our view, one of the causes of their empirical compromise.

The collapse of the nationalized Marxism, the misleading loneliness of liberalism as well as the never-ceasing crisis of values, which has been a hot topic for several decades, are nothing, in fact, but a bill that we, today, have to pay. When a system of thought (theory, perceptions etc.) is deaf and dumb in its relations with other systems of thought, it fatally becomes deaf and dumb in its relations with the current, live history. Faced with the reality that facts contradict it, the single reply that it will be capable of giving is one that it shall whisper to itself, seized by a paranoid megalomania: “So much the worse for the facts!”

2. The end of history, or the end of the illuminist project?

Saying that history does not bring again and again the “same meal” is false; it does it all the time and, more than that, its main specialty is rewarming or over-refrigeration”.

Jean Francois Revel

The quest of romantic philosophy, particularly the Hegelian and post-Hegelian one, has been a unified human society at planetary scale, following the completion of the linear and relentless process of universalization of history. Such a diagnosis was offered by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who saw in Communism the perfection of the universalization process; in their view, Communism shall mean the “empirical existence of men in their world-historical, instead of local, being”¹⁵, which is possible only based on the universal development of productive forces, another linear and relentless process, through

¹⁴ *Idem*, p. 472.

¹⁵ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *German Ideology*, State Publishing House for Political Literature, Bucharest, 1956, p. 35.

which the “universal intercourse between men is established”¹⁶. According to an important representative of Christianity, “Some fatal flaw always brings the selfish and cruel people to the top and it all slides back into misery and ruin. In fact, the machine conks. They are trying to run it on the wrong juice. (...) I believe that, if we look at the current situation of the world, it is clear that humankind made a huge mistake. And if we are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man”¹⁷.

We are wondering: are the events that we referred to in the introductory part, Brexit, Trump’s victory, the recharging of right-side nationalism, of autochthonism, of ethnocentrism and xenophobia linked to the “about-turn” preached by C.S. Lewis three decades ago? Should we reverse the logic in which we think history, contemporary history and our own history, i.e. biography?

The participants to the above-mentioned debate, organized in 1989-1990 by the prestigious magazine *Commentaire*, criticizing Fukuyama’s theory, attached, more or less explicitly, the main assumptions of the Enlightenment: 1) human nature is immutable, universal and homogenous (the same all over, according to the Newtonian model of space and time); 2) men are born equal, free, rational and good, but society corrupted them; 3) the human individual is perfectible, and men can be changed through education; 4) men’s change leads to the change of society; 5) the ideal society is the one that corresponds to human nature, in which men shall become equal, free, rational and good, as they were born; 6) social progress is a fatality and, as such, any new thing is better than the one it replaces; 7) historical evolution, understood in this way, is linear and univocal: it is created in only one direction – from the past toward the future; 8) social processes are irreversible¹⁸.

By drawing some excessively optimistic conclusions, Fukuyama shrank the fact – confirmed by history – that the “prior ideology” is not always that systematic and explicit ideology that the state displays in the international arena. He himself seems to realize this when he writes: “The expansionist and competitive behavior of nineteenth century Europeans states rested on no less ideal a basis; it just so happened that the ideology driving it was less explicit than the doctrines of the twentieth century”¹⁹. That “it just so happened that” is so much the less convincing as Fukuyama himself “happens” to recognize – rather vaguely, indeed – the existence of some ideological formations different from the official ideology of the respective states, formations that essentially went against the classical liberalism (which was not less explicit than the contemporary Neo-conservatism): “most 19th century “liberal” European societies were illiberal insofar as they believed in the legitimacy of imperialism (...).The justifications for imperialism varied from nation to nation, from a crude belief in the legitimacy of

¹⁶ *Ibidem*

¹⁷ C. S. Lewis, *Christianity reduced to essences*, Romanian Missionary Society, 1987, p. 37; 20

¹⁸ According to Karl Popper, the last three assumptions underlie a conceptions that he called “historicism” (Popper, 1993, pp. 210-216) and that he deems to be deeply dishonest, since it hides the real issues and emergencies under ideas such as “legality”, “historical trend”, “meaning of history”, ideas that discharge men from historical initiative and exonerates them from civic and political responsibility (Popper, 1993, pp. 283-304).

¹⁹ Francis Fukuyama, „La fin de l’histoire?“, in *Commentaire*, no. 47 / Autumn, 1989, p. 466

force (...) to the White Man's Burden and Europe's Christianizing mission, to the desire to give people of color access to the culture of Rabelais and Molière”²⁰.

Therefore, this is how, beneath the Universalist and official ideology of liberal states vibrated anterior and particular ideological layers in which pre-modern and non-officialized ideological formations subsisted: violence legitimated by itself, racism, eurocentrism, missionarism, messianism. It was not sooner than the 20th century, along with the German Fascism, that they will officially be included in the state politics. However, there is no inexpugnable argument that might exclude the doctrinarian re-definition and re-officialization of such ideological formations in an Europe cleansed of the bi-polarity triggered by the Second World War but still culturally non-unified under the symbolic arch of humanist values.

The “prior ideologies” truly determine the way in which each state defines its national interest and the objectives of its international policies. As a rule, they are “second-hand” (Jürgen Habermas), tacit and diffuse ideologies, entertaining ambiguous logical relations with the official ideologies (sometimes, even relations of contradiction— as, for instance, in the case of the *imperialist* “liberalism” invoked above, in case of the Romanian *nationalist* “Communism” of Ceaușescu or in case of many of the individuals who voted for Donald Trump against the establishment, i.e. the dominant ideology). Such a “prior ideology” may survive over time even in spite of the replacement of the official ideology with another one, which will *rationalize* (Max Weber) different ideological formations, more useful in the process of society’s adaptation to the rules of its times or more lucrative for the society’s elites.

Whenever the new official ideology falls into an authority crisis and there is no stand-by ideology replacing it, the former ideological formations are most likely to be reactivated, seeking a new doctrinarian definition and even its institutionalization as official ideology. The two purposes may be fulfilled jointly (the case of the German Nazism and of the Italian fascism, when the doctrinarian definition favored its officialization) or separately (the case of the Japanese fascism, when the officialization occurred without a doctrinarian establishment). The instrumentalization by the new elites of the former ideological formations that remained on the watch may occur in a *non-conflictual* manner (Germany and Italy), in a *conflictual* manner (post-Communist Yugoslavia) or in a *quasi-conflictual* manner (inter-war Romania, post-Communist Baltic States etc.).

The *pre-conceptual* “prior ideologies” are to be found at another level of the spiritual life than the *conceptual* “prior ideologies” and their analytical approach presupposes other instruments, different from the ones used for the analysis of the theoretically established ideologies (doctrines). The possibility of such analytical instruments generates, however, the need for a new theory of knowledge, which accounts for the fact that Donald Trump’s victory took analysts by surprise. It was not only the analysts that were taken by surprise, but even Trump himself, as the apostles of Brexit, led by David Cameron, needed several

²⁰ *Idem*, p. 467.

days to understand that they won the referendum from the “black Thursday” (June 23rd 2016).

Analysts and politicians that played with fire failed to understand a simple aspect, albeit not seen with the naked eye: the issue of the ideological unification of Europe – one of the crucial issue of our days – cannot be raised at the level of the official doctrines. At this level, things seem simple: complete victory of liberalism, in its utopic version – neo-conservatism, the definitive compromise of Marxism – Leninism; caducity of traditional religions and the insignificance of nationalisms; last, but not least, the competitive nature of the great ideologies, their congenital tension, the fatality of incommunicability. In conclusion, *an authentic communication between ideologies* is not possible, but it is not even desirable, since liberalism will offer, in its quality of unique universal ideology, the symbolic arch necessary for communication, peaceful cohabitation and stability.

But can we comfort ourselves with such a clear, reassuring, linear and calm simplicity? Even if we admit that there is the slimmest likelihood that the scheme proposed by Fukuyama is correct from the point of view of an observer placed at the “end of history”, in our capacity of co-participants to the historical process – and not of super-historical subjects – we could not afford to let ourselves tricked by this likelihood; on the contrary, our duty is to sanction the optimism emanating from Fukuyama’s scheme as an ill-founded one and – for this very reason – dangerous. The events that took place in 2016 confirm this assertion.

Referring to the regression of the Marxism–Leninism and of the nationalisms that Fukuyama foresaw, in an optimistic manner, Jean-Francois Revel lucidly observed: “Presenting these regressions as some causes lost beforehand is exact only judging by a pure logic. In actual life, a cause lost beforehand which in 1989 concerns approx. two billion people, that lasted 80 years and which, doubtlessly, shall last another several decades before its complete liquidation, is a cause that occupies more place in history than the cause won beforehand. (...) Unfortunately, nine tenth of what happens to us is the result of complete obsolete historical moments. (...) Saying that history does not bring again and again the “same meal” is false; it does it all the time and, more than that, its main specialty is rewarming or over-refrigeration”²¹.

Revel seems to be circumspect toward the rehabilitation of the Hegelian dialectics of history: “...I see no coincidence between the moments of consciousness and the moments of reality, between rational and real”; “Let’s imagine a quick tour of the world and we shall observe that, more often than not, the practical sense turned its back to pure reason”. He rather adheres to the historical realism: “History concerns particular individuals, not abstract processes. For these individuals, the triumph of the ‘Western liberal democracy as the ultimate stage in human government’ does not represent a crashing reality. “It is wrong to reply that someday it might be, because it will be for other men, and this is precisely the odious proof through the future which was used and is

²¹ Jean-François Revel, „A propos de la fin de l’histoire”, in *Commentaire*, no. 48 / Winter, 1990, p. 676.

still used to justify so many totalitarian atrocities. Let us not reproduce the Communist reasoning when we declare that they are obsolete”²².

It seems obvious that here Jean-Francois Revel looks at the “real, living individuals” (Marx) and to the history created by them, turning his back to the “accomplishment of the Idea” which had become the “objective laws of dialectics” – turned by Stalin into real “gods of history”, quoting an inspired phrase of Althusser. Speaking of the “Communist reasoning”, Eevel refers to the historical fatalism and passivity stemming from the Stalinist dogmatism (originating not from Marx, but rather from Hegel). As if trying to summarize Marx’s *Thesis* 1,3,5,9 or 11 on Feuerbach, Revel pleads for a *world politics of democracy*: “I do not believe in any automatism of democratic implantation, in any ‘dialectic process’ that does men’s work. Anything can be turned back. (...) We have to invent a world politics of democracy and namely a voluntarist politics”²³. In what way voluntarist? Let’s continue reading the text in order to discover the meaning that Ravel gives to this term: “In politics, as in sciences, letters and arts, it is man who does the work. History, provided that we do not fetishize it, is nothing but the list of these works, it is never the engine”²⁴.

An intuitive model of the amalgam of official ideology and prior ideologies that has set the American society into motion since the American Civil War, is provided by Claude Karnoouh in an interesting polemical text entitled “America...America...An answer to V. Tismăneanu”: „Realm of mass immigration, except for an Anglo-Saxon elite, at the origin of the upper leading classes whose members are carefully selected, the continent-country is a federation of states profoundly marked up until recently by a terrible civil war and by a very tardive emancipation of the Afro-Americans (the civil rights movement from the ‘60s). Conglomerate of most world’s peoples, the United States presented themselves as a place of an abundant life, the real myth of ,the New Frontier’ and of the ,American way of life’, the American dream as well as, from the end of the 80s, for many, as the place of a profound poverty, turning this continent-country ‘the richest of the third world’s countries’, as highlighted by the economist K. Galbraith. The USA are more than multiple, they are deeply contrasting, contradictory, paradoxical, even, on the underneath, the boiler in which a silent and permanent class fight is boiling, often mixed with a races fight, as proven by the riots from the black ghettos and as shown by the employees’ movements in Madison (capital city of Wisconsin). There are, as such, more United States of America within the Unites States of America, whose Union is maintained through violence, as seen during the terrible civil war – one of the first modern wars in which the terror inflicted upon the civil populations was part of the military tactics. More than that, the federal State maintains a ferocious order whenever a more serious riot is about to burst, be it the students’ riot against the Vietnam War or the riots from the Negro or Latino ghettos, a social-political violence

²² *Idem*, p. 672

²³ *Idem*, p. 673

²⁴ *Ibidem*

exercised upon the civil population, unknown in most of the European countries”²⁵.

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In this study, we aimed to argue that one of the “works” to which our generations are called to contribute is the *rethinking of history*, which entails, to the same extent, a *mental re-education* or, to use a barbarism, an *ideological resetting*. If the historical evolution had been as simple as that felt by the political imagination touched by a Neo-Hegelian fever and which up until recently set the pace in most inter- or super-governmental chancelleries, the project of an ideological unification of Europe would have been achieved; what would have been left to be done was the struggle of the Eastern Europe to catch up with the liberal democracy and, of course, to plant its roots as deeply as possible in it.

Such a mental re-education was proposed, 24 years ago, by the renowned British political analyst John Nicholas Gray who invoked the need for a “fresh thinking of the late modernity’s dilemmas”. It was not by chance that John Nicholas Gray is considered to be “One of the most nonconformist and controversial contemporary British authors”²⁶.

In his famous work *Post-liberalism. Studies in Political Thought* (1993, 1996), John Gray lucidly wondered: “the end of history or the end of liberalism?” This question took those who perceived him as an exponent of the classical liberalism by surprise. But the “fresh thinking” had led Gray *out of the box*, that is outside the symbolic arch of neoliberalism, making him understand the remarkable role of prior ideologies to the need for the dominant ideology to find a *modus vivendi* with them. Seeking to formulate a “successor theory of liberalism”, he reached a legitimization of the liberal practices not by virtue of an universal political morality (which would mean, as we already said, the Illuminist belief in an universal and homogenous human being), but rather as a “historical inheritance that meets the human needs in the context of modernity”²⁷.

In the light of the above, ca a lesson on the meaning, in the Anglo-Saxon space, of “open mind”, “critical thinking”, “creative thinking”, “intellectual honesty” and “ethics in research”, let us go through the conclusions drawn by John Gray. He considers that both the fall of Communism and the crisis of liberalism can be accounted for through the bankruptcy of the Enlightenment project that was an inspiration both from Marxism and for the ‘liberalism of all times’. This human emancipation project included the “dislocation of local, customary or traditional moralities and of all forms of transcendental belief through a critical or rational morality, designed based on a universal civilization”

²⁵ Claude Karnoouh, „America... America... An answer to V. Tismăneanu”, in *Critic Atac*, April 21st 2011 – <http://www.criticatac.ro/6474/america%E2%80%A6-america%E2%80%A6-un-raspuns-lui-v-tismaneanu/>, accessed on 07.12.2016, 11.00 p.m.

²⁶ Cristian-Ion Popa & Gabriela Tănăsescu (coord.), *Encyclopedia of fundamental works of political philosophy. Contemporaries: 1989-2000*, Bucharest, Publishing House of “Ion C. Brătianu” Institute of Political and International Relations, 2016, p. 457.

²⁷ John Gray, *Post-Liberalism. Studies in Political Thought*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 284, *apud* Cristian-Ion Popa & Gabriela Tănăsescu, *cited work*, p. 464.

and which “would be secular and humanist and would set universal standards for the evaluation of the human institutions”²⁸. Neoliberalism (Anglo-American political philosophy after 1970, imposed, after 1990, as a unique ideology in the European countries as well) seems, according to Gray, to be the most recent expression of the Enlightenment project in American context. Its anthropology is based on the premise that the traditional origins, the local identities and the cultural differences are not essential, as essential are in fact the universal traits of human nature and their integration in politics within the American nation would be a “form of atavism unfit for modernity”²⁹. How could the *Middle America* not vote against Clinton and for trump?

If human nature had been universal and homogenous, if globalization had been linear and univocal, and its confiscation by the transnational corporations had been irreversible, the US elections would have been won by Hillary Clinton, UK would have remained in the EU, Turkey would have continued to march *en fanfare* on the Westernization track, the Western states would be governed by more or less liberal parties. And we would have never heard of Marine Le Pen, Norbert Hofer, Viktor Orban, or Recco Tayyip Erdogan.

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²⁸ John Gray, *Enlightenment’s Wake Politics and Culture at the Class of Modern Age*, London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 185-186.

²⁹ *Idem*, p. 187.

Karnoouh, Claude, (2011), „America... America... An answer to V. Tismăneanu”, in *CriticAtac*, April 21st 2011 –

<http://www.criticatac.ro/6474/america%E2%80%A6-america%E2%80%A6-un-raspuns-lui-v-tismaneanu/>, accessed on 07.12.2016, 11.00 p.m.

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Marx, Karl, Friedrich Engels, (1956), *German Ideology*, Bucharest, State Publishing House for Political Literature.

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EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS IN SOME BALKAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract: *Many scientists assume that entrepreneurship plays an extremely significant role in economic development. In this frame, a part of literature has considered as crucial human behaviour and individual perceptions in explaining the intentions to start up new firms over time.*

These issues are of strategic importance also in Balkan countries where a large part of the industrial production has been strongly weakened and many industrial branches have almost disappeared. The current economic crisis contributed to exasperate the labour market conditions even more than in other European regions and caused increasing unemployment within traditional industries. These considerations reveal the importance of cognitive process because they represent one of the main premises of entrepreneurial activities and shapes individual entrepreneurial decisions.

In this paper, we focus on potential entrepreneurs, that is, individuals expecting to start a new business in the next three years, trying to understand if the intention to start up a new business is influenced by stylised variables. Our empirical analysis is based on data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) for the period 2007-2012 and we test our hypotheses using a pooled logistic regression focusing on some selected countries from the Balkans.

At the policy level some recommendations will be hypothesized in order to translate the analytical findings into diagnostics tools and assessment to foster entrepreneurship in the countries under observation¹.

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1. Introduction

Many scholars state that entrepreneurship plays an important role either under the production point of view or the social one^{2,3,4}. Some studies focused on economic, demographic and human characteristics that can increase the likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur⁵ while others considered different individual characteristics, such as a high risk propensity⁶.

Furthermore, other authors^{7,8} also analysed perceptual and attitudinal variables as one of the most relevant factors leading entrepreneurial intentions to starting up a new venture.

These issues are of strategic importance also in Balkan countries - characterized by historically demographic and socio-economic assets- where a large part of the industrial sector has been strongly weakened and many industrial branches have almost disappeared. The current economic crisis contributed to exasperate labour market conditions even more than in other European regions, increasing unemployment within traditional industries.

In this paper, we focus on potential entrepreneurs, i.e. individuals who expect to start a new business in the next three years. Our empirical analysis is based on data drawn from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) related to the period 2007-2012 and referred to selected countries from the Balkan region (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia). We test our hypotheses using a pooled binary logistic regression on the relationship between start-up intentions and some entrepreneurial and socio-economic characteristics of individuals included in the sample.

Factors as lowest age class, perception of own skills and experience, opportunity as well as social capital mostly predict entrepreneurial intentions. At the policy level some recommendations will be hypothesized in order to translate the analytical findings into diagnostics tools and assessment to foster entrepreneurship in the countries under observation.

² Wennekers, Sander, Thurik, Roy, "Linking Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth", *Small Business Economics*, 1999, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 27-56.

³ Audretsch, David B., Keilbach, Max C., & Lehmann, Eric, *Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006.

⁴ Acs, Zoltan J., Szerb, László, "Entrepreneurship, economic growth and public policy", *Small Business Economics*, 2007, Vol. 28, No. 2-3, pp. 109-122.

⁵ Bessant, John, Tidd, Joe, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

⁶ Kihlstrom, Richard E., Laffont Jean-Jacques, "A General equilibrium entrepreneurial theory of firm formation based on risk aversion", *The Journal of Political Economy*, 1979, Vol. 87, No. 4, pp. 719-748.

⁷ Shapero, Albert, Sokol, Lisa, *Social dimensions of entrepreneurship*, in Kent, C.A., Sexton, D.L., Vesper, K.H. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of entrepreneurship*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1982, pp. 72-90.

⁸ Krueger, Norris F., "The cognitive infrastructure of opportunity emergence", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 2000, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 5-23.

The paper is structured as follows: section one focuses on literature background and state of the art while section three provides data and methods; section four summarises the results.

Finally, conclusions and some policy implications.

2. Theoretical background and State of the art

Due to global economy, fast economic changes and increasing technological development entrepreneurship has become a very important field of research and a topic for the institutional debate. Throughout the world, entrepreneurship shows different characteristics depending on the tradition and culture, political and legislative system, socio-economic condition and imitation. In less developed territories, entrepreneurship is seen as a strategy to face structural economic and social problems; then, the intentions to start new business are influenced by a complex mental process⁹.

According to Ajzen' Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)¹⁰¹¹ entrepreneurial intentions are mostly affected by personal attitudes, i.e. antecedents such as individual perceptions. Krueger and Carsrud¹² and Krueger¹³ explained that TPB model represents the linkages between human behavior and its main determinants. Subsequently, it is confirmed that entrepreneurial choice is related to intentional planned behavior¹⁴¹⁵.

Nevertheless, to give greater effectiveness to behavioral and cognitive approach, thematic research integrated TPB with other relevant models that corroborate and increase the predict intention. Accordingly, Bandura¹⁶ pointed out the relevance of the so called role model and self-efficacy in forming entrepreneurial choices by introducing these concepts for explaining human cognitive behaviour and relationships with entrepreneurial choices¹⁷¹⁸.

More specifically, role model explains the learning process through imitative behaviour, while self-efficacy approach is based on the belief in own skills and

⁹ Liñán, Francisco, Santos, Francisco Javier, „Does Social Capital Affect Entrepreneurial Intentions?“, *International Advances in Economic Research*, 2007, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 443-453.

¹⁰ Ajzen, Icek, „The theory of planned behavior“, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 1991, Vol. 50, No.2, pp. 179–211.

¹¹ Idem, „Perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, locus of control, and the theory of planned behavior“, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 2002, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 665–683.

¹² Krueger, Norris F., Carsrud, Alan, „Entrepreneurial intentions: applying the theory of planned behavior“, *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 1993, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 315–330.

¹³ Krueger, Norris F., cited works

¹⁴ Van Gelderen, Marco, Brand, Maryse, van Praag, Mirjam, Bodewes, Wynand, Poutsma, Erik, van Gils, Anita, „Explaining Entrepreneurial Intentions by Means of the Theory of Planned Behavior“, *Career Development International*, 2008, Vol. 13, No. 6, pp. 538-559.

¹⁵ Moriano, Juan A., Gorgievski, Marjan, Laguna, Mariola, Stephan, Ute and Zarafshani, Kiumars, „A Cross-cultural Approach to Understanding Entrepreneurial Intention“, *Journal of Career Development*, 2012, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 162-185.

¹⁶ Bandura, Albert, *Social learning theory*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1977.

¹⁷ Krueger, Norris F., cited works.

¹⁸ Liñán, Francisco, Chen, Yi-Wen, „Development and cross-cultural application of a specific instrument to measure entrepreneurial intentions“, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 2009, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 593–617.

abilities to reach the entrepreneurial condition¹⁹²⁰. Strictly related to the concept of self-efficacy the so called 'entrepreneurial event theory'²¹ showed that the intention to start up new firms depends on how an entrepreneurial activity is more desirable than other alternatives.

One more important point is that the above mentioned approaches permitted to include in a conceptual and empirical framework the important role of demographic and socio-economic variables: factors as age, gender, education, income, etc. are complementary to perception and attitude in explaining the intention of a potential entrepreneur to start up new businesses²²²³²⁴.

Accordingly, in this paper it was possible to organise the variables used into four groups: demographic (gender, age), socio-economic (education, employment status and income level); attitudes (past entrepreneurial experience, level of status and desirable career); and, finally, individual perceptions (perceptions of economic opportunities, skills and experience, fear of failure and social capital).

Demographic variables

Among variables influencing entrepreneurial intentions, gender differences cover an important role. Many studies emphasized the impact of gender with respect to the entrepreneurial behaviour²⁵²⁶. Minniti and Nardone²⁷ pointed out that gender differences are of main importance in explaining entrepreneurial intentions. Reynolds et al.²⁸ showed that men are more likely to start up new firms compared to females when applied to the US entrepreneurial system; by the way, other studies²⁹ demonstrated that geographical areas mostly characterized by agricultural activities are related to a higher start up probability especially for men.

¹⁹ Bandura, Albert, "Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency", *American Psychologist*, 1982, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 122–147.

²⁰ Liñán, Francisco, Santos Francisco J, Fernández, Jose, „The influence of perceptions on potential entrepreneurs”, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 2011, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 373-390.

²¹ Shapero, Albert, Sokol, Lisa, cited works

²² Reynolds, Paul, Storey, David J., Westhead, Paul, „Cross-national comparison of the variation in new firm rates”, *Regional Studies*, 1994, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 443–456.

²³ Dahlgvist, Jonas, Davidsson, Per, Wiklund, Johan, "Initial conditions as predictors of new venture performance: a replication and extension of the Cooper et al", *Study, Enterprise and Innovation Management Studies*, 2000, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1–17.

²⁴ Wagener, Stephanie, Gorgievski, Marjan, Rijdsdijk, Serge, "Businessman or host? Individual differences between entrepreneurs and small business owners in the hospitality industry", *Service Industries Journal*, 2010, Vol. 30, No. 9, pp. 1513–1527.

²⁵ Verheul, Ingrid, Thurik, Roy, "Start-up capital: Does Gender Matter?", *Small Business Economics*, 2001, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 329-345.

²⁶ Langowitz, Nan, Minniti, Maria, "The Entrepreneurial Propensity of Women", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 2007, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 341–364.

²⁷ Minniti, Maria, Nardone, Carlo, „Being in Someone Else's Shoes: the Role of Gender in Nascent Entrepreneurship", *Small Business Economics*, 2007, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp.223-238.

²⁸ Reynolds, Paul D., Carter, Nancy M., Gartner, William B., Greene, Patricia Gr., Cox, Larry W., *The Entrepreneur Next Door: Characteristics of Individuals Starting Companies in America*, Kansas City, MO, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2002 .

²⁹ Elam, Amanda, Terjesen, Siri A., "Institutional Logics: Gender and Business Creation Across 28 Countries", in *Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference (BCERC)*, June 2007, Madrid, Spain.

Age is considered one more demographic determinant in explaining entrepreneurial intentions. Literature highlighted that there are strong differences between young adults and other age groups because of the different interplay and impact with everyday opportunities and risks, as well as cognitive development stages. Boyd and Vozikis³⁰ considered that age is strictly related with entrepreneurial choice while Bates³¹ assumes that intention increases with age.

Some authors³² underlined that age has a negative influence on the likelihood to start up new firms and demonstrated that the likelihood to start new businesses is higher for young people. However, many studies don't explain the different behavior of individuals during their life course. This is due to the changes on the perception of opportunity that take place over time.

These considerations lead us to formulate our first hypothesis:

H_{p1}. The likelihood to have positive entrepreneurial intentions is higher for males than females and age positively affects such trend as we move into the lowest age group.

Socio-economic variables

Education level is another variable in explaining and affecting individuals' entrepreneurial intentions. Some studies explained that the higher is the educational attainment the more are skills and confidence in own capabilities for starting new ventures^{33,34}.

Ribeiro et. al.³⁵ explain that education has a strong impact on knowledge accumulation and transfer as well as positively influences young people's entrepreneurial intentions.

Among socio-economic variables, literature included employment status and household income as factors that directly influence entrepreneurial intention. For instance, some scholars³⁶ showed that a low rate of unemployment as well as business prosperity favour entrepreneurship.

At the same time, lower levels of household income are associated with positive entrepreneurial intentions³⁷. Then:

³⁰ Boyd, Nancy G., Vozikis, George S., "The influence of self-efficacy on the development of entrepreneurs", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 1994, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 63-77.

³¹ Bates, Timothy, "Self-employment entry across industry groups", *Journal of Business Venturing*, 1995, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 143-156.

³² Levesque, Moren, Minniti, Maria, "The effect of aging on entrepreneurial behavior", *Journal of Business Venturing*, 2006, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 177-194.

³³ Davidsson, Per, Honig, Benson, "The Role of Social and Human Capital among Nascent Entrepreneurs", *Journal of Business Venturing*, 2003, Vol. 18, No.3, pp. 301-331.

³⁴ Lam, Terry, Zhang, Hanqin, Baum, Tom, "An investigation of employees' job satisfaction: the case of hotels in Hong Kong", *Tourism Management*, 2001, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 157-165.

³⁵ Ribeiro, Domingo, "Approximate analysis of the influencing variables on the successful manager and entrepreneur within the international theoretical", in Roig, Salvador, Ribeiro, Domingo, Torcal, Vicente Ramon, Cerver Elvira (Eds.), *El emprendedor innovador y la creación de empresas de I+D+I*, 2004, pp. 121-130, Valencia, Universitat de València.

³⁶ Ritsilä, Jari, Tervo, Hannu, "Effects of unemployment on new firm formation: Micro-level panel data evidence from Finland", *Small business economics*, 2002, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 31-40.

³⁷ Liñán, Francisco, Santos, Francisco Javier, Fernández, Jose, cited works

Hp2a: The intention to start new firms is positively related with individuals characterized by the highest educational levels and unemployment status.

Hp2b: Entrepreneurial intention is positively related with a higher income level.

Attitudes

Regarding attitudes, social status may strongly influence individual behaviours and stimulate the comparison between own skills and desires with the most appreciated social symbols: then, this status can foster or discourage the choice to start up a firm. Consequently, a “desirable career choice” is influenced by the common sense and social status of the community³⁸. In fact, the so-called social norms show that the level to which individuals recognize entrepreneurial choice as more or less desirable³⁹. Moriano et. al.⁴⁰ show that social norms predict entrepreneurial intentions while others^{41,42} pointed out the positive relationship between social norms and entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, the impact of past entrepreneurial experience is also significant in shaping entrepreneurial intentions^{43,44}.

Hp3: Entrepreneurial intention is positively related with desirable career choice and previous entrepreneurial experience.

Perceived Opportunities and Skills

An important group of research^{45,46,47,48} focused on the positive relationship between opportunity and entrepreneurial intentions. The importance of this relation is connected to the fact that the entrepreneurial career has to be

³⁸ Cole, Harold L., Mailath, George J., “Postlewaite, Andrew, “Social norms, savings behavior, and growth”, *Journal of Political Economy*, 1992, Vol. 100, No. 6, pp. 1092-1125.

³⁹ Alvarez, Claudia, Urbano, David, Corduras, Alicia, Ruiz-Navarro, José, “Environmental conditions and entrepreneurial activity: a regional comparison in Spain”, *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 2011, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 120-140.

⁴⁰ Moriano et. al., cited works

⁴¹ Kautonen, Teemu, Tornikoski, Erno T., Kibler, “Ewald, Entrepreneurial Intentions in the Third Age: The Impact of Perceived Age Norms”, *Small Business Economics*, 2009, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 219-234.

⁴² Van Gelderen et. al., *op. cit.*,

⁴³ Shane, Scott, Venkataraman, Sankaran, “The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research”, *The Academy of Management Review*, 2000, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 217-226.

⁴⁴ Shane, Scott, *A general theory of entrepreneurship*, Edward Elgar, 2003.

⁴⁵ Krueger, Norris F., “The cognitive psychology of entrepreneurship”, in Acs, Zoltan, Audretsch, David (Eds.), *Handbook of Entrepreneurial Research*, London, Kluwer Law International, 2003, pp. 105-140.

⁴⁶ Mitchell, Ronald K., Busenitz, Lowell, Lant, Teresa, McDougall, Patricia P., Morse, Eric A., Smith, Brock J., “The distinctive and inclusive domain of entrepreneurial cognition research”, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 2004, Vol. 28, No. 6, pp. 505-518.

⁴⁷ Sarason, Yolanda, Dean, Tom, Dillard, Jesse F., “Entrepreneurship as the nexus of individual and opportunity: a structuration view”, *Journal of Business Venturing*, 2006, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 285-305.

⁴⁸ Liñán, Francisco, Santos, Francisco Javier, Fernández, Jose, cited works.

associated to a certain perceived opportunity business level capable to generate profits⁴⁹. Thus, potential entrepreneurs are strongly influenced by their perceptions on good business opportunities for the future. Opportunity fosters the willingness to start up new business and a business needs abilities and skills. Perceiving the entrepreneurial choice as an opportunity for future is a prerequisite for starting a new business; and this condition is essential even if individuals have all the characteristics for leading a successfully initiative⁵⁰.

In addition, Shane⁵¹ demonstrated that skills and experience have been empirically found to be positively related to entrepreneurial intentions. Individuals who believe in their own entrepreneurial skills have the highest entrepreneurial intention^{52,53}. It means that the self-perception of own abilities is an important variable to evaluate opportunities to start up new firms⁵⁴. Accordingly, we formulate the following hypotheses:

Hp.4a: Perceiving entrepreneurial opportunities positively affect individuals' entrepreneurial intentions.

Hp.4b: Perception of skills or confidence in own entrepreneurial abilities (self-efficacy) positively affect individuals' entrepreneurial intention.

Fear of failure and Social capital

Among perceptual variables, a high level of fear of failure may have a negative impact on entrepreneurial intention; thus, if potential entrepreneurs perceive a lower fear of failure their propensity to start up a new business will be lower⁵⁵. The economics literature shows that risk is strongly related to gain the highest profits and that women have a higher fear of failure than men⁵⁶.

⁴⁹ Shane, Scott, Venkataraman, Sankaran, cited works.

⁴⁹ Shane, Scott, cited works.

⁵⁰ Short, Jeremy C., Ketchen, David J., Shook, Christopher L., Ireland, Duane R., „The concept of “opportunity” in entrepreneurship research: Past accomplishments and future challenges”, *Journal of Management*, 2009, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 40–65.

⁵¹ Shane, Scott, *A general theory of entrepreneurship*, Edward Elgar, 2003.

⁵² Wang, Clement K., Wong, Poh Kam, Lu, Qing, “Tertiary education and entrepreneurial intentions”, in Phan, Philipp (Ed.), *Technological entrepreneurship*, Greenwich, CT, Information Age Publishing, 2002, pp. 55–82.

⁵³ Segal, Gerald, Borgia, Dan, Schoenfeld, “Jerry, Using social cognitive career theory to predict self-employment goals”, *New England Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 2002, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp.47–56.

⁵⁴ Liñán, Francisco, Fayolle, Alain, “A systematic literature review on entrepreneurial intentions: citation, thematic analyses, and research agenda”, *International Entrepreneurship Management Journal*, 2015, Vol. 11, No.4, pp.907–933.

⁵⁵ Shinnar, Rachel S., Giacomini, Olivier, Janssen, “Frank, Entrepreneurial perceptions and intentions: the role of gender and culture”, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 2012, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp.465–493.

⁵⁶ Noguera, Maria, Alvarez, Claudia, Urbano, David, “Socio-cultural factors and female entrepreneurship”, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 2013, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 183–197.

Bandura⁵⁷ underlined the role model in explaining different entrepreneurial intentions; it explains a learning path through imitation of other entrepreneurs; by the way, others⁵⁸ showed the importance of entrepreneurial network and the relations with other entrepreneurs.

This interaction represents a potential source for obtaining further information, knowledge and new innovative entrepreneurial ideas. In other words, social capital represents the knowledge that an entrepreneurial network provides⁵⁹.

Literature⁶⁰ also showed a positive and significant relationship between different measures of social capital and business creation. Furthermore, Liñán et al. (2011)⁶¹ confirmed the strong positive effect of entrepreneurial network in determining entrepreneurial intentions.

Consequently:

Hp.5a: Having a low fear of failure (risk perception) exerts a positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions.

Hp.5b: Knowing other entrepreneurs positively affects entrepreneurial intentions.

3. Data and methods

One of the widest and harmonized worldwide data sources providing information on entrepreneurship is the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). This international data source is composed by two cross-sectional surveys: the Adult Population Survey (APS) and the National Expert Survey (NES), which have been conducted on a yearly basis by GEM National Teams.

The Adult Population Survey (APS) is administered to representative national samples of at least 2,000 individuals to assess diverse facets of entrepreneurship. The APS questionnaire contains different modules and blocks, covering a wide range of variables, including intentions (expects to start a new business in the next three years), attitudes (agrees with the following statements: most people in your country consider starting a new business a desirable career choice, in your country those successful at starting a new business have a high level of status and respect), perceptions (knows someone personally who started a business in the past 2 years, thinks that in the next six months there will be good opportunities for starting a business, has the knowledge, skill and experience required to start a new business, fear of failure prevents you from starting a business) - all the former related to entrepreneurship-, demographic (age, gender), and socioeconomic (working status, education, income).

⁵⁷ Bandura, (1977), cited works.

⁵⁸ Singh, Ram, *Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition through social networks*, New York, Taylor and Francis, 2000.

⁵⁹ Ramos-Rodríguez, Antonio-Rafael, Medina-Garrido, José Aurelio., Lorenzo-Gómez, José-Daniel, Ruiz-Navarro, José, „What you know or who you know? The role of intellectual and social capital in opportunity recognition”, *International Small Business Journal*, 2010, Vol. 28, No. 6, pp. 566-582.

⁶⁰ Davidsson, Per, Honig, Benson, cited works.

⁶¹ Liñán, Francisco, Santos, Francisco Javier, Fernández, Jose, cited works.

We analysed data from four Balkan countries that participated in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) that were collected on early basis between 2007 and 2012.

These countries are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, and Slovenia. The overall size of the pooled main samples differs by country but in most cases is about 13,000 respondents, ranging around a minimum sample of 10,306 for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a maximum of 16,100 in Slovenia. Furthermore, our samples are smaller than the complete GEM sample, because of some restrictions in data collection⁶². The number of individuals participating in the APS in these years according to our sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of observations by year, and percentage of positive entrepreneurial intentions of the sample.

	Year of the survey						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Sample size	5,937	7,298	7,435	7,395	9,618	7,393	45,076
Positive entrepreneurial intention (%)	10.4	10.4	10.9	9.3	12.9	17.3	11.9

Source: Own elaboration, GEM 2007-2012.

In our study we assessed entrepreneurship intentions using responses to the following question: “Are you expecting to start a new business in the next three years?” On the basis of the responses “yes” and “no”, we estimated entrepreneurial intentions selecting only those who have these intentions but have not yet materialized them at the time of the survey (i.e.: we excluded nascent entrepreneurs and owners of ventures from respondents). To evaluate the association between a number of socioeconomic, demographic, attitudinal, perceptual variables and entrepreneurial intentions, we used a pooled binary logistic regression model. The variables included in the regression model are described below:

Demographic

Two variables are considered: age and gender. For the present analysis age is reclassified into a categorical ordinal variable of five groups (24 or less, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and over 55), while the second is divided into males and females.

Socioeconomic

Three socioeconomic covariates are included in the model: education, working status and income. Three categories of the level of education are defined:

⁶² From 2003 to 2009 questions related to attitudes and perceptions were randomly assigned to groups of respondents. In 2010 were collected for the totality of interviewed individuals, and one year later the set of information on attitudes became optional.

incomplete secondary education or less, complete secondary education and tertiary education. Working status is divided into three groups: working (full and part time), not working at the present and others (housewives, students, retired, etc.). Income involves three groups' variable, which ranks respondents from the lowest 33% to the highest 33% level of income.

Attitudinal

Three explanatory dummy variables (agreement-disagreement) are included here: people who consider that starting successfully a new business is related to a high level of status and respect; past experiences are measured through a proxy dummy variable with two response categories: shut down a business in the past 12 months (yes or not); finally, last variable is people who consider as a desirable career choice starting a new business.

Perceptions

Four variables are added: good future opportunities for starting a business; considers having the knowledge, skill and experience required to start a new business; fear of failure prevents you from starting a business and a proxy for entrepreneurial social capital: knowing an entrepreneur personally. All the former are coded as dummies (yes, no). The analysis of the determinants of positive entrepreneurial intentions is based on the pooled data from six cross-sectional surveys (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012) containing in total more than 45,000 individual records. We added year and country dummies to model controls' to account for aggregate changes over time and space given the heterogeneous distribution of the observations. The summary statistics for all independent variables are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary statistics.

Domains	Variables		Positive E.I. (%)	Negative E.I. (%)
Demographic	Age	24 or less	25.6	11.8
		25-34	27.8	17.2
		35-44	21.0	20.5
		45-54	16.6	22.7
		55+	9.0	27.8
		Mean (years)	35	44
	Gender	Female	44.5	56.7
	Male	55.5	43.3	
Socio-economic	Education	Incomplete secondary education/less	25.6	14.2
		Complete secondary education	42.9	52.3

		Tertiary education	31.5	33.5
	Working status	Working	54.2	53.7
		Not working	26.0	18.7
		Other	19.8	27.6
	Income	Lower 33%	21.0	27.1
		Middle 33%	35.2	39.2
		Upper 33%	43.9	33.7
Attitudes	Level of status	No	33.5	35.0
		Yes	66.5	65.0
	Past entrepreneurial experiences	No	95.0	98.2
		Yes	5.0	1.8
	Desirable career	No	30.2	35.4
		Yes	69.8	64.6
Perceptual	Opportunity	No	65.6	79.8
		Yes	34.4	20.2
	Skills and experience(Self-efficacy)	No	25.3	55.1
		Yes	74.7	44.9
	Fear of failure(Risk perception)	No	63.9	51.7
Yes		36.1	48.3	
	Social capital (Role model)	No	49.1	67.8
		Yes	50.9	32.2

Source: Own elaboration, GEM 2007-2012.

4. Results

In this section we report the odds ratios from a logistic regression equation that predicts the odds of having entrepreneurial intentions versus not having entrepreneurial intentions for each of the independent variables considered (Table 3). This model allows us to distinguish among the characteristics of individuals with or without a proactive entrepreneurial “spirit”.

Table 3. Results of pooled binary logistic modelling of entrepreneurial intentions. Selected Balkan countries, 2007-2012.

Domains	Variables		Odds ratio	Sign. level
Demographic	Age	24 or less	6.23	***
		25-34	3.65	***
35-44		2.31	***	
45-54 (55+)		1.82	***	
	Gender	Female (Male)	0.75	***
Socioeconomic	Education	(Incomplete secondary education or less)	1.25	**
		Complete secondary education Tertiary education	1.44	***
	Working status	(Working) Not working Other	1.60 0.90	***
	Income	(Lower 33%) Middle 33% Upper 33%	0.99 1.15	*
Attitudinal	Level of status	(No) Yes	1.04	
	Past entrepreneurial experiences	(No) Yes	1.38	**
	Desirable career	(No) Yes	1.29	***
Perceptual	Opportunity	(No) Yes	1.56	***
		Skills and experience	(No) Yes	2.47
	Fear of failure		(No) Yes	0.64
		Social capital	(No) Yes	1.47
N				14945
-2 log likelihood				11749,68
r2 Nagelkerke				0,25

Source: Own elaboration, GEM 2007-2012. Statistic significance = *: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.005$; ***: $p < 0.001$.

There is a strong and positive relationship between entrepreneurial intentions and youth.

In fact, the odds of having versus not having entrepreneurial intentions of young adults between 25 and 34 years old is almost four times higher than those aged 55 and over. These results show that the expectation to start a business in the near future decreases when age increases.

As shown in Table 3, there is a clear gendered pattern on entrepreneurial intentions. The odds of females having positive versus negative entrepreneurial intentions are 25% lower than those of males. Thus, as hypothesized, individuals who expect to start a new business are less likely than those who do not to be females.

Respondents with higher levels of education were shown to be more likely than those with lower levels of education to have positive entrepreneurial intentions. Our results confirm that the odds were 1.25 times higher for those who completed secondary education than for individuals with incomplete secondary education or a lower educational level, and 1.44 times higher for those with tertiary education. In addition, the perception of having both the skills and experiences required to start a new business had an important impact on entrepreneurial intentions. The odds were 2.47 higher for those who declared having them than for those who do not.

A higher likelihood was also observed for other two of the perceptual variables considered in the model. Respondents with an optimistic view on future opportunities for starting a business were more likely (1.56) than those with pessimistic views to expect to start a new venture. The odds were also higher for those who personally know an entrepreneur (1.47).

The opposite trend was found for those who declared that the fear of failure prevent them from starting a business, the likelihood was 36% lower than for those who declared to be free from such a fear.

Not having a job during the reference week of the survey and the belonging to the highest 33% income level are positively linked with future entrepreneurial intention. Indeed, respondents who were not working had a likelihood 1.6 times higher of expecting to start a new business than individuals who were working full or part time. Regarding income, the odds of having positive versus negative entrepreneurial intentions are 15% higher for individuals with high income levels than for those pertaining to the lowest category.

Past entrepreneurial experiences, even if negative, positively influence entrepreneurial intentions in selected Balkan countries. In fact, the likelihood of expecting to start a new venture are 1.38% higher for individuals that have shut down a business than for those that have not been involved in a previous entrepreneurial experience.

No statistically significant associations were found for middle income levels and entrepreneurial intentions neither the perception of a higher status for entrepreneurs seem to be a determinant of entrepreneurship intentions in selected Balkan countries under analysis.

5. Policy implications

Encouraging entrepreneurship through comprehensive and knowledge-based public policies is a winning strategy to reduce unemployment and foster sustainable and inclusive growth. Our results confirm previous findings on the subject, and are in line with the statements of the socio-economic theory.

Demographic and socio-economic variables highlight that the likelihood to having positive entrepreneurial intentions is higher for men than women, and especially within the youngest age groups (Hp1). This evidence -that is part of the cultural values of a society- should be gradually correct because young people is concretely becoming the next generation of a country. By the way, such divergence is an expression of gender discrimination, in terms of income and capabilities. Accordingly, we need to adopt measures and practices addressed to foster female business growth, concretely adopting a clear gender equality policy and applying the “peer opportunity” principle.

Subsequently, we find that the intention to start an entrepreneurial activity is positively related to individuals having a higher level of education (Hp2a) and income (Hp2b); entrepreneurial intentions are also positively related to the unemployment status (Hp2a). This inconsistency may be explained through the aspiration of unemployed people to be employed, independently from the income level, because the main goal is the status of employed, characterized by perspectives of growing earnings, better social status, personal satisfaction, etc.

In this regard, a policy promoting self-employment should strongly support for the empowerment of risk propensity and the diffusion of entrepreneurial culture.

Variables such as social norms -as proxy of social climate, economic environment and individual experience (Hp3)- confirm that our countries claim for creating the basic conditions requested in the most of countries affected by unsatisfactory entrepreneurial opportunities (Hp4a) and experience (Hp4b). We mean that the existence of a social legal system (for instance, workers’ safety on the job) and targeted actions (internship, training, etc.) may be suitable ways to face production risk and support individuals’ entrepreneurial intentions.

However, issues such as the improvement of socio-economic and legal systems are requested by the *acquis communautaire*. Furthermore, these conditions contribute to mitigate the fear of failure and correct the assessment of risk levels (Hp5a).

By the way, these goals may be reached through appropriate policies aimed at improving knowledge levels, to get information and to establish different kind of relationships. Among these, we can refer to the capacity building, recommended by the EU, networking among firms and/or potential entrepreneurs and the cooperation between universities and firms on R&D. All the above tools are sources of knowledge and experience and, at the same time, best practices to build structural relationships and alliances.

Our results have shown that personal and professional networks are important drivers of entrepreneurial intentions. The support of government policy on financing innovation and research initiatives in strategic locations can generate favorable conditions for the increasing and strengthening of mixed public-private entrepreneurial ecosystems. Due to the typical relational character

of entrepreneurship and to guarantee the sustainability of these ecosystems, policies should point at the development of constructive networks at the local, national and international level. Building bridges to entrepreneurship among different actors across different levels not only reinforce the already existing ventures but also create an encouraging environment indispensable for the increase of positive entrepreneurial intentions among wider population groups.

6. Concluding remarks

Our findings demonstrate that young adults are characterised by a higher level of knowledge, skills and perception of opportunities, compared to middle aged individuals, who may be less responsive to changes in the socio-economic environment.

These findings are supported by a robust literature and consistent policy launched by the European Union to support networking among universities, research centers and firms, and the capacity building to empower knowledge and skills of potential entrepreneurs, as well as the capacity to face risk business and overcome or manage their fear of failure.

Furthermore, these results may be useful for intercepting policy decision-makers in order of addressing suitable policies. A key role is covered by social-economic and legal systems and other environmental factors that are considered a pre-requisite for stimulating the intention to invest in new ventures. For our sample, these policies may be a guide, either for enhancing the status of the EU members or for supporting the *acquis communautaire*.

Further research should incorporate macroeconomic and context variables for better and in-depth analysis of the dynamics of the entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs.

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TRUBECKOJ E LA CRITICA AL EUROCENTRISMO TRUBECKOJ AND THE CRITICISM OF EUROCENTRISM

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Abstract: *Multiculturalism, viewed as the attempt of contemporary societies to increase their inclusiveness, has as its foundation a pluralist epistemological approach. The paper intends to show how pluralistic epistemology has found a first and early accommodation in critical Eurocentrism and, more generally, the relationship between the European civilization and the cultural systems so-called "primitive", prepared by the Russian linguist Nikolay Trubetskoi in the early XX century.*

Keywords: *Trubeckoj, chauvinism, cosmopolitanism, eurocentrism, multiculturalism.*

Introduzione

Sciovinismo e cosmopolitismo sembrano l'uno l'antitesi dell'altro. Per il primo il dominio spetta alla propria cultura, intesa come individualità etnografica e antropologica. Per il cosmopolitismo il dominio spetta ad una cultura propria dell'intera umanità che annulla le distinzioni etnografiche perché riferita all'uomo in generale. Ebbene per Trubeckoj¹ questa differenza è solo apparente. Nella sostanza cosmopolitismo e sciovinismo sono lo stesso e identico fenomeno. Infatti mentre in quest'ultimo (cioè nello sciovinismo) quel nesso, tra cultura e gruppo etnico, è affermato e messo in primo piano perché ritenuto il vero punto di forza di una determinata cultura, nel cosmopolitismo quel legame è coscientemente respinto sul piano verbale mentre è operante sul piano effettivo dei processi di formazione culturale. Analizzando le basi storiche delle teorie cosmopolite Trubeckoj dimostra che tra quest'ultimo e lo sciovinismo vi è solo una differenza d'intensità del processo di sviluppo non di qualità². Vediamo come Trubeckoj individua le basi storiche delle teorie cosmopolite europee.

La cultura europea, vale a dire per Trubeckoj, quella romano-germanica, è il frutto di determinati gruppi etnici, in particolare dell'incontro tra popoli latini o latinizzati e tribù germaniche.

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¹ Il testo a cui si fa riferimento è N. Trubeckoj, *Evropa i čelovečestvo*, Sofia, 1920, trad. it., *L'Europa e l'umanità*, in Id., *L'Europa e l'umanità La prima critica all'eurocentrismo*, Einaudi, Torino, 1982, pp. 3-71.

² Scrive Trubeckoj: «*La differenza sta unicamente nel fatto che lo sciovinista, rispetto al cosmopolita, prende un gruppo etnico più ristretto; ma lo sciovinista prende un gruppo etnico non del tutto omogeneo, mentre il cosmopolita da parte sua prende un gruppo etnico determinato*», Ibidem, p. 12.

Gli scambi reciproci e successivamente la comunanza determinarono storia e costumi simili, rinsaldando il sentimento di una unità culturale. Unità culturale che, in un secondo tempo, è stata proiettata sul piano sovranazionale e pensata come propria dell'umanità al di là di ogni distinzione antropologica e etnografica. Verificato che sul terreno storico il vincolo cultura-ethnos, fatte salve le peculiarità di ogni singolo popolo, è attivo sia nelle teorie cosmopolite che in quelle scioviniste, sul piano psicologico i due fenomeni sono entrambi riconducibili ad una matrice comune: l'egocentrismo.

Che cosa è l'egocentrismo

In che cosa consiste l'egocentrismo sul piano squisitamente culturale? Esso consiste nel porre se stesso come perfezione e nel misurare l'altro sulla base della vicinanza o lontananza da sé. Ebbene l'egocentrismo è il contenuto specifico del cosmopolitismo romano-germanico. Storicamente gli europei hanno sostenuto che la superiorità della propria cultura sulle altre è scientificamente giustificabile. A tal fine essi hanno elaborato una specifica lettura del concetto di evoluzione. Questa interpretazione postula uno sviluppo lineare. I singoli popoli hanno percorso alcuni tratti della linea evolutiva, poi si sono arrestati. Altri invece, hanno proseguito lungo questa cammino il cui culmine è, oggi, occupato dai popoli romano-germanici.

Orbene, è proprio il carattere di scientificità di questo fondamento ad essere respinto con forza da Trubeckoj. Egli infatti, nega la scientificità del concetto di evoluzione elaborato dalle scienze sociali europee tra la fine dell'Ottocento e i primi decenni del Novecento. Anch'esso è intriso di egocentrismo.

Trubeckoj sostiene che accettando una simile immagine di evoluzione cadiamo in un paradosso: per comprendere in quale stadio evolutivo si trova una determinata cultura si deve conoscere l'origine e il punto di arrivo della retta che rappresenta l'evoluzione, ma conoscere l'inizio e la fine non è possibile senza aver preliminarmente ricostruito l'intero cammino evolutivo.

Quindi, accettando per vero un tale concetto di evoluzione ci precludiamo la possibilità di poterne dare una reale conoscenza scientifica. Possiamo solo irrazionalmente, cioè attraverso una intuizione, porre, arbitrariamente, una data cultura come inizio o fine del processo.

In realtà volendo rimanere su di un piano strettamente scientifico è possibile solo rappresentare spazialmente le varie culture, ponendo le una accanto alle altre quelle che presentano molti tratti comuni e via via a distanze crescenti quelle meno somiglianti.

Ma anche questa scelta metodologica non ci consentirà mai di ricostruire il quadro d'insieme dell'evoluzione e quindi d'individuare l'inizio e la fine.

Gli europei avrebbero dovuto abbandonare un simile concetto di evoluzione che conduce ad un circolo vizioso. Hanno invece preferito tenerlo fermo e con "una mostruosa *petitio principii*", come la definisce Trubeckoj, assumere la propria cultura come vertice e ricostruire a ritroso la catena evolutiva.

Trubeckoj enumera una serie di argomenti, tratti per lo più dalla storia, che gli europei pongono a sostegno della loro presunta superiorità e ha facile gioco nel dimostrare l'inconsistenza di questi argomenti. Mi preme tuttavia, invece

richiamare l'attenzione su un'altra linea argomentativa, tratta questa volta dalla psicologia, utilizzata dagli europei, per affermare la propria superiorità culturale.

Nella letteratura antropologica, etnologica e psicologica tardo settecentesca e ottocentesca era usuale l'accostamento tra i cosiddetti selvaggi ed i fanciulli. Si precisa che per "selvaggi" nella scienza europea del tempo si dovevano intendere quei popoli che per cultura e struttura psicologica si differenziavano maggiormente dai popoli romano-germanici.

Gli scienziati europei constatavano nelle loro esplorazioni che i "selvaggi" apparivano come degli adulti-bambini. In altre parole, si riteneva che il processo evolutivo dei popoli ritenuti primitivi, dal punto di vista psicologico, si fosse arrestato al livello infantile e, pertanto, nella scala culturale essi dovevano occupare i gradini posti più in basso. La confutazione di Trubeckoj di questa pseudoteoria è veramente geniale poiché opera con i medesimi strumenti teorici utilizzati dagli scienziati europei per elaborarla: la psicologia.

Trubeckoj chiarisce che è proprio il ricorso allo studio della struttura psichica che ci consente di spiegare come nasca questa "illusione ottica" che ci fa equiparare i selvaggi ai bambini.

La prima mossa di Trubeckoj è quella di rilevare, ponendosi dal punto di vista dei selvaggi, che anche questi ultimi percepiscono gli europei come adulti-bambini. Quindi, in primo luogo questa percezione non è prerogativa solo degli europei ma appartiene anche ai popoli cosiddetti primitivi.

Per spiegare questo paradosso Trubeckoj abbozza una vera e propria "dottrina psicologica" basata su 5 punti:

- 1) nella psiche individuale riscontriamo elementi innati ed acquisiti;
- 2) tra i caratteri innati distinguiamo quelli propri di ciascun individuo e via via, come sfere concentriche, quelli propri del gruppo familiare, quelli tribali, quelli che appartengono all'intero genere umano e più all'esterno quei caratteri innati che condividiamo con i mammiferi e, ancora oltre, con gli animali in genere;
- 3) i caratteri acquisiti dipendono dall'ambiente in cui gli individui vivono, dalle tradizioni familiari e dalla cultura del proprio popolo;
- 4) nell'infanzia tutta la psiche è costituita da caratteri innati; col tempo a questi si aggiungono quelli acquisiti mentre tendono ad attenuarsi o a scomparire del tutto alcuni caratteri innati;
- 5) di un altro individuo ci sono accessibili solo i caratteri che egli ha in comune con noi.

Questi 5 punti permettono a Trubeckoj di spiegare in maniera convincente ed esaustiva (bisogna tener presente che siamo intorno al 1910), le difficoltà comprensione e comunicazione tra diverse culture senza dover ricorrere al concetto di superiorità di una cultura rispetto alle altre.

Infatti, quando due soggetti appartenenti a culture molto distanti l'una dall'altra, vale a dire culture in cui le differenze sono massime, allora ogni individuo potrà cogliere dell'altro individuo solo i caratteri innati e, quindi, solo a questo livello potrà stabilirsi la comunicazione. Al contrario nessuna

comunicazione potrà realizzarsi a livello dei caratteri psichici acquisiti, data la loro assoluta differenza.

Assenza di comunicazione significa che i caratteri acquisiti non saranno percepiti dai soggetti in relazione per la ragione che i caratteri acquisiti sono fondati sulle tradizioni culturali intraducibili fra loro.

Quindi tanto più le culture saranno massimamente differenti, tanto più le rispettive strutture psichiche appariranno l'una all'altra come costituite solo da caratteri innati. Ma la presenza unicamente di caratteri innati è tipica della psiche dei fanciulli. Per questa ragione ciascuno apparirà all'altro, dal punto di vista psicologico, un bambino.

Questa è anche il motivo per cui i fanciulli pur appartenendo a culture massimamente differenti comunicano molto di più e più facilmente dei propri padri. Un discorso analogo può essere svolto per quanto riguarda il paragone tra la psicologia del selvaggio e quella dell'animale.

In definitiva ciascuno osserverà e riconoscerà nell'altro solo i caratteri innati perché presenti nella propria struttura psichica fin dall'infanzia e pertanto avrà "l'illusione ottica" di avere innanzi a sé una personalità elementare, come se quel soggetto si fosse arrestato ad uno stato primordiale dello sviluppo psichico.

I caratteri acquisiti invece non saranno mai traducibili perché reciprocamente sconosciuti ed assumeranno ai rispettivi occhi l'aspetto di stravaganze. Ma, vorrei attirare l'attenzione su un aspetto fondamentale dell'analisi di Trubeckoj: l'impressione è reciproca, vale per la percezione che gli europei hanno per le altre culture ma allo stesso modo per queste ultime nei confronti dei primi.

Epistemologie a confronto

Oggi su molti aspetti potremmo criticare le posizioni teoriche di Trubeckoj. Non siamo più certi della identificazione rigida tra cultura e etnos, muoveremmo fondate obiezioni alla netta separazione e autonomia tra le differenti culture, così come difficilmente ci riconosceremmo nella visione rigida e organica di cultura proposta da Trubeckoj.

Tuttavia non possono non stupirci alcuni aspetti che si presentano nel nostro autore in modo così precoce rispetto al dibattito che si svilupperà soprattutto, ma non solo, in Europa, negli Stati Uniti e in Canada a partire dalla fine degli anni sessanta del novecento.

Innanzitutto l'affermazione che la differenza non va intesa come una carenza o una assenza. Al contrario si afferma un diritto alla particolarità. Ciò che fuoriesce dalla linea evolutiva arbitrariamente tracciata non è deviazione. In questo significato, cioè come deviazione, viene rappresentata nelle elaborazioni narrative di coloro che costruiscono gerarchie, generalizzando propri assunti ideologici, ed in queste gerarchie le differenze sono poste al livello più basso e caricate di connotati negativi.

Trubeckoj critica quella che potremmo definire una epistemologia del pregiudizio, costruita sulla base dell'assunto che la realtà è indipendente dalle

rappresentazioni degli attori sociali, ed è il punto di partenza irrinunciabile di ogni catena definitoria³.

La conoscenza, in questa epistemologia del pregiudizio, che non può che presentarsi sotto forma di “conoscenza oggettiva”, pertanto scienza, non può essere in alcun modo determinata da una qualsiasi situazione o condizione del soggetto che la elabori o la affermi

Conseguentemente la verità non può consistere in altro che nella esatta corrispondenza tra conoscenza e realtà, una accurata duplicazione concettuale del mondo però del tutto inessenziale perché il linguaggio non aggiunge e non toglie nulla alla realtà stessa.

Ebbene in Trubeckoj possiamo osservare, pur tra molte difficoltà ed incertezze, la fase aurorale della nascita di una nuova epistemologia che tenta di rovesciare gli assunti del paradigma del pregiudizio⁴.

Innanzitutto la realtà è il frutto dell’attività degli attori sociali. Abbiamo visto come i caratteri psichici degli individui condizionino in modo determinante la percezione sociale e culturale dell’altro. Conseguentemente la conoscenza è intersoggettiva, cioè in primo luogo comunicazione sulla base della quale stabilire un terreno comune in cui confrontare i modelli concettuali costruiti dai soggetti in relazione (senza che si debba necessariamente convergere verso la elezione di un modello unico imposto a tutti).

La verità in questo contesto può significare solo ricerca di un accordo intersoggettivo il più ampio possibile (fermo restando che il pluralismo delle concezioni rimane il presupposto insopprimibile e che il consenso non può mai esser tale da impedire il sorgere di paradigmi alternativi).

Ovviamente, ed è questo l’aspetto su cui Trubeckoj, mostra maggiore vicinanza con le concezioni pluraliste contemporanee, il linguaggio è esso stesso uno degli ingredienti ineliminabili del processo di costruzione della realtà sociale. In Trubeckoj lo abbiamo visto soprattutto nella versione negativa, come illusione ottica prodotta dal linguaggio e dai costrutti concettuali della scienza europea, nello stigmatizzare come “inferiori” le culture non assimilabili a quelle romano-germaniche.

Ogni nuova visione del mondo che si affermi modifica l’universo sociale in cui compare. Non è difficile comprendere, nel confronto schematico, tra queste due opposte concezioni come la seconda scardini del tutto la prima (cioè il paradigma del pregiudizio), cioè la base storico-teorica su cui si innalza l’etnocentrismo.

Si deve far presente che la critica di queste posizioni non debba essere considerata solo come un esercizio di archeologia storica. Questo modello

³ Il maggior rappresentante del realismo moderno è senza dubbio J. R. Searle di cui si vedano in particolare „Rationality and Realism: What Is at Stake”, in *Deadalus*, 122, 4, 1993, pp. 55-83 e *Mind, Language and Society: Philosophy in the Real World*, Basic Books, New York 1998, trad. it., Id., *Mente, linguaggio, società. La filosofia nel mondo reale*, Cortina, Milano, 2000.

⁴ I teorici di maggior rilievo di un modello epistemologico che potremmo definire “multiculturale” sono P.K. Feyerabend di cui si veda in particolare *Science in a Free Society*, Nlb, London 1978, trad. it., Id., *La scienza in una società libera*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1981 e R. Rorty di cui si tenga presente il volume *Truth and Progress*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, trad. it., Id., *Verità e progresso. Scritti filosofici*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2003.

sopravvive, sotto mentite spoglie, nelle analisi di molti filosofi, storici, scienziati sociali contemporanei. Nei discorsi a la Huntington⁵ noi occidentali, fortificati dal possesso della libertà individuale possiamo agire come attori sociali e interagire con le nostre istituzioni sociali e culturali modificando così il mondo circostante. Gli altri i non occidentali non sono soggetti capaci di inventarsi (o, più correttamente, dovremmo parlare di costruire) il proprio mondo sociale ma sono sottoposti ad esso, tipizzato come organico ed immutabile.

Oppure un noto filosofo come Searle⁶ non ha remore nell'affermare che la cultura occidentale presenta livelli di eccellenza che altre non hanno ancora raggiunto e che non sappiamo se mai lo raggiungeranno. Un altro aspetto vorrei brevemente accennare in conclusione. Il Multiculturalismo rappresenta oggi una vera e propria sfida rispetto alla rappresentazione che di se stessi hanno gli occidentali, ma soprattutto rispetto alla propria storia. Questa ha impiegato alcuni secoli per conquistare e rendere effettivo quell'ideale greco della isonomia (tutti uguali davanti e sotto la legge), ove tutte le differenze che in passato, furono la fonte delle discriminazioni tipiche delle società premoderne furono neutralizzate, cioè trasformate in "fatti privati", incapaci di agire sul piano pubblico ovvero di trasformarsi in fatti e conflitti politici. Questo schema non è altro che il processo di formazione dello stato moderno in quanto weberianamente apparato burocratico-amministrativo. Ebbene si è cercato di estendere questo processo oltre i confini dello Stato: trattasi del concetto di cittadinanza universale, cioè produzione di unità formale e neutrale al di là di qualsiasi differenza etico-culturale. La crisi della capacità integrativa dello Stato, nella versione del *Welfare State*, ha però trascinato nella crisi anche quell'idea di cittadinanza universalistica. Da qui il riemergere delle particolarità e soprattutto delle pretese di riconoscimento che queste differenze avanzano proprio sul piano politico.

La storia ci ricorda che la politicizzazione delle particolarità, il far valere come immediatamente politiche le proprie specifiche differenze, è stata la premessa per l'esplosione di conflitti che oggi ci appaiono, al tempo stesso premoderni e tragicamente attuali. Quelli religiosi costituiscono un lampante esempio di ciò. In essi ritornano prepotentemente in gioco le identità collettive. Difatti il diritto alla differenza non viene attribuito in prima battuta al singolo individuo, che è il vero fulcro dello Stato liberale, e dell'epistemologia che ne ha accompagnato la nascita, ma ai gruppi.

Il pluralismo attuale aggiunge un ulteriore tassello alla disintegrazione delle basi sociali e culturali dello Stato liberaldemocratico occidentale, costringendoci a riconoscere che la nostra società e la nostra cultura sono molto più etnocentriche di quanto noi fossimo disposti a concedere, come, d'altra parte, Trubeckoj ci aveva rammentato con largo anticipo un secolo fa.

⁵ Di S.P. Huntington si tengano presenti i volumi *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1996, trad. it., Id., *Lo scontro delle civiltà e il nuovo ordine mondiale*, Garzanti, Milano, 1997 e Id., *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2004, trad. it., Id., *La nuova America. Le sfide della società multiculturale*, Garzanti, Milano, 2005.

⁶ Di Searle si vedano i volume citati alla nota 3.

Conclusioni

Posiamo porci alcune domande:

Quale atteggiamento devono assumere gli altri popoli nei confronti dello sciovinismo ed egocentrismo romano-germanici?

Ovviamente per Trubeckoj l'egocentrismo va combattuto poiché è un principio antisociale che distrugge ogni comunicazione culturale tra gli uomini.

Quindi, vanno combattuti tutti gli etnocentrismi e non solo quelli dell'Europa occidentale. Ma cosa accade quando membri di una comunità affermano la superiorità di una cultura diversa dalla propria ed invitano il proprio gruppo ad assumerla e ad assimilarsi in essa? Ebbene risponde Trubeckoj il carattere di una dottrina non muta in base alla personalità di chi la predica o la sostiene.

Altra domanda. Il cosmopolitismo europeo si diffonde rapidamente presso altri gruppi culturali. Come spiegare questo fatto? perché un intellettuale russo che disdegnerebbe l'idea di farsi portatore del nazionalismo di uno junker tedesco accetta di farsi sostenitore dell'egocentrismo romano-germanico?

Per comprendere questo paradosso Trubeckoj chiama in causa "l'ipnosi della parole". Universalizzare il particolare: in questo modo la cultura romanocentrica diventa "civiltà universale", il loro sciovinismo diventa cosmopolitismo.

Il cavallo di troia che ha permesso questa egemonia è per Trubeckoj la cultura materiale. Le opere di questa cultura materiale (manufatti congegni meccanici ecc.) che hanno una effettiva portata universale, veicolano come universali anche i concetti della cultura non materiale.

In definitiva la superiorità tecnica trascina con sé anche la possibilità di universalizzare contenuti culturali che non possiedono in se stessi la capacità di generalizzarsi.

La convinzione degli occidentali è che sia la vita istintuale sia i pregiudizi devono indietreggiare a fronte delle indicazioni della ragione e della logica. Solo su questi fondamenti scientifici si può innalzare una teoria. La forza in questo modello è messo ai margini. Eppure è possibile dimostrare che il cosmopolitismo poggia su basi che sono in radicale contrasto con le affermazioni di principio in esso sostenute.

La superiorità della cultura romano-germanica è scientificamente fondata a parere degli europei occidentali. Ma è proprio il carattere di scientificità di questo fondamento ad essere respinto con forza da Trubeckoj.

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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONDITIONS IN THE
ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN AGES AND THEIR REFLECTION
IN THE POEM *THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER* (1789, 1794) BY
WILLIAM BLAKE AND *THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN* BY
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING**

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Abstract: *“The Romantic and The Victorian Ages are the consecutive ages, and there is not a long time between them. That is why, the conditions in the society and the effects of the developments on both the social and literary environment are similar, and therefore some common themes can also be found in the literary works written in these ages. As Stephen Greenblatt also states, the literary texts are a part of culture and they reflect the cultures and the periods they are produced in, which means that this reflection is somehow inevitable. Likewise, The Chimney Sweeper (1789, 1794) poems by William Blake and The Cry of The Children by Elizabeth Barrett Browning reflect common concerns about the Romantic and the Victorian Ages. This paper aims to compare the stated poems of these poets in terms of child labor, social and family relationships, and religion; also according to the reflection in these poems, it tries to analyze whether the conditions about these issues in the Romantic Age made any progress in the Victorian Age.”*

Keywords: *Child labor, The Romantic Age, The Victorian Age, The Chimney Sweeper, The Cry of The Children.*

Introduction

Literature has mostly communed with culture throughout the history. By reading a text, the reader usually gets some hints about the periods, societies or ethos that the text has been written in. In *Culture*, Stephen Greenblatt dictates that “If an exploration of a particular culture will lead to a heightened understanding of a work of literature produced within that culture, so too a careful reading of a work of literature will lead to a heightened understanding of

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the culture within which it was produced.”¹ Based on this, it can be claimed that to some extent, the literary works represent the time, the place and the society they were written in, which means the characteristics of the periods in history can be found in the literature of those periods. Moreover, as Greenblatt also implies, literature is an accumulation, and the contemporary authors seem to be repeating the older ones and he calls it “exchange”, which links the poems of Blake and Browning in a different way. Briefly, because the literary works absorb the basic characteristics of the time in which they were produced, by analyzing *The Chimney Sweeper* (1789, 1794) by William Blake and *The Cry of the Children* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, one can observe the various aspects of the Romantic and the Victorian Ages.

As being among the leading precursors of the Romantic and the Victorian Ages, Blake and Browning mirror the conditions and the problems of these ages in their stated poems. The main figures in these poems are the children who are working under bad conditions and they are mostly abused or exploited by the society and family. As a result of this exploitation, the alienation of them is inevitable. When the reflections of the Romantic and Victorian Ages in these works are compared in terms of child labor, religion, and the relationships in both family and society, it can be deduced that especially from the perspectives of children, the conditions and problems in the working area, in society and family and in religion got worse from the former age to the latter in the end.

The conditions in the romantic and Victorian ages and their reflection in Blake’s and Browning’s poems

The life conditions in Britain were considerably influenced by the Industrial Revolution because after this revolution, lots of factories were built and many workers were employed, the population increased and accordingly the diseases were spread.² In addition to the mass number of workers and poor conditions in factories, the number of child labor enlarged in the Romantic Age³ and the Victorians tried to regulate this problem⁴; however, their success in the end is open to dispute regarding the themes in the literary works of that time such as *The Cry of the Children*.

COMMONLY, the figure of child is mostly connected with the idea of innocence and purity in the Romantic texts and poems; however, Blake deals with the child issue from a different perspective. He wrote two poems in 1789 and 1794 with the same title *The Chimney Sweeper*, and the difference between these poems is that the former belongs to *Songs of Innocence* and the latter does *Songs of Experience*.⁵ Though it superficially seems that Blake deals with the idea of the

¹ Greenblatt, Stephen. “Culture.” *Revealed* (n.d.): n. pag. Web. 7 June 2016, p.227.

² Montagna, Joseph A. “81.02.06: The Industrial Revolution.” *81.02.06: The Industrial Revolution*. Yale University, n.d. Web. 07 June 2016.

<<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1981/2/81.02.06.x.html>>.

³ Cox, Roger. *Shaping Childhood*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print. p. 102

⁴ Cox, Roger. *Shaping Childhood*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print. p. 183

⁵ Norton, George. “William Blake's Chimney Sweeper Poems: A Close Reading.” *The British Library*. The British Library, n.d. Web. 07 June 2016. <<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/william-blakes-chimney-sweeper-poems-a-close-reading>>.

development of a character in two poems; indeed, the main themes are the destructive sides of the child labor, and a harsh criticism on the society, authority and church. In both poems, children work as the chimney sweepers in poor conditions. In the first one, Blake says the sweepers sleep in chimneys, and he portrays this image by the lines 11-2: "That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned & Jack, / Were all of them locked up in coffins of black". Similar lines exist in the second poem, too: "They clothed me in the clothes of death"⁶, which implies the cloth that sweeper wears is like a coffin. In other words, the chimneys are like the coffins or graves for the little children. Instead of playing with their contemporaries, these little ones were made to work because of the harsh life conditions; that is why working is like death for them because it kills the innocent child and hope in every of them.

Likewise, Browning also handles the same subject; however, she seems more critical and sensitive on the child labor and its effects on children. In her poem, children are working in coalmines and they are living under the bad conditions. There are lots of lines that she criticizes how bad the working conditions are; but, shortly the lines 12-3 explain the main contradiction in the child labor issue: "They are weeping in the playtime of the others, / In the country of the free". She may imply that though Britain is a country which supports freedom for everyone, even for the slaves; the children of the very same country are not free because they are obliged to work instead of playing. Moreover, the children see themselves near to death in coalmines because what they all do all day is to work with the iron wheels which "are turning, all the day, and we with all!"⁷, so they "have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory / Which is brighter than the sun"⁸. To Browning, the children in the Victorian Age are like the children in coalmines; they cannot have fun of life because they always have to work. For this reason, "Alas, the wretched children! They are seeking / Death in life, as best to have!"⁹ Because, instead of the agony, bitterness and solitude in this world, the Victorian Age's children want peace and safety of death with the hope of a bit rest. All these lines show how pathetic the situation of working children was in Victorian Age.

On the other hand, the fact that the relationships in the society, especially in family are broken is another important point in the issue of children in Romantic and Victorian Ages as reflected in Blake's and Browning's poems. In both poets' works, the reader can grasp the claim that in the Romantic and Victorian Ages, the relationships were not strong; especially the children were not valued as much as it had to be. First of all, in Blake's poem (1789), the mother dies and the father sells the baby like a commodity though it cannot even speak; but weep¹⁰. Reading these lines, the reader questions the conscience and sentience of the father; because it is implied that the father acts like an insensitive man towards his own child. What's more, in the second poem, the child reveals the hypocrisy of his parents by stating that while he is weeping on the snow after cleaning the

⁶ *The Chimney Sweeper*, 1789, line 7.

⁷ *The Cry of the Children*, line 85.

⁸ *The Cry of the Children*, lines 139-40.

⁹ *The Cry of the Children*, lines 52-3.

¹⁰ *The Chimney Sweeper*, 1789, lines 2-3.

chimney, his parents “gone up to church to pray”.¹¹ Indeed, the child is complaining about their irresponsibility because to work and to gain money is the duty of the parents, not children. And, by saying “They clothed me in the clothes of death)¹², the boy also implies that his parents send him to death by sending him to chimneys because both seem equal to him, which proves the children see their parents as quite cruel and brutal.

Browning handles the relationship issue from a different perspective; she accuses all the older ones, not just parents. In her poem, the children blame their older generation and call them tyrant: “Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants, / And your purple shewn your path; / But the child’s sob in the silence curses deeper / Than the strong man in his wrath!”¹³ The reader can obviously see the broken bonds between the children and other people because it seems like children are excluded from the society and they hate every one of the people that make them work. Clearly, there is no connection between children and the others because as it is stated before, the child labors work in the coalmines and they do not have a chance to see even the sun, as a result of this, they have hostile feelings towards the humans who put them into mines like jails.

At last but not least, the irony and the sarcasm on religion draws the attention of the reader in both Blake’s and Browning’s poems. As it can also be understood from the poems, there was a lack of belief and trust in Church and God after the French Revolution in both Ages.¹⁴ As mentioned before, the boy in Blake’s poem (1794) criticizes his parents because they are going to church instead of work. In the end of the poem, he directly attacks at God, Church and King, which implies that in the Romantic Age, the society gradually inquiries the reliability of the Church. “They think they have done me no injury, / And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King, / Who make up a heaven of our misery”¹⁵. These lines are the exact evidence how angry and hesitant the boy is towards God, institutions and the authority. He regards these figures as the source of his misery and he thinks that God prepares more agony for him, which clearly indicates that there is no trust in him to God or religion.

The problem with God and religion is almost the same in *The Cry of The Children*. Indeed, Browning’s children in this poem are more direct and angry with God: “(For they call Him good and mild)”¹⁶. This line is absolutely explains how the children see God; they imply that others call God good but in reality neither the children believe He is good, nor they are close enough to God as the others to know if He is good or not. They have no connection with God and God “is speechless as a stone”¹⁷ for them because He does not hear, see or speak to them in the coalmine. All these quotations show that the children in coalmines are in such pessimism that they even hesitate about God because they feel

¹¹ *The Chimney Sweeper*, 1794, lines 1-4.

¹² *The Chimney Sweeper*, 1794, line 7.

¹³ *The Cry of the Children*, lines 156-60.

¹⁴ Cooper, James. “What Role Does Religion Play in Romantic Period Writing?” *Innervate* 6776th ser. 4.2041 (2011-2012): n. pag. Web. 7 June 2016. P. 127

¹⁵ *The Chimney Sweeper*, 1794, lines 10-2.

¹⁶ *The Cry of the Children*, line 122.

¹⁷ *The Cry of the Children*, line 126.

forsaken and forgotten by all the loved ones. That is why they lost their hope and faith for both their families and God or religion.

Conclusion

Consequently, as Greenblatt declares, the literary works reflect the periods they were composed in. In the light of this claim, when the Romantic and Victorian Ages are investigated from the perspectives in Blake's and Browning's poems, one can claim that the problems in child labor, family or social relationships and religion got gradually worse and ended up badly. Both authors' poems have a pessimistic atmosphere and they are full of with criticisms on working conditions, relationships and religion. The situation was so miserable that, the children knew that "if they do all their duty, they need not fear harm"¹⁸, and they wanted to "die before our time"¹⁹. Without the joy of childhood, support and love of family, and the belief in God, the children cannot find a place for themselves on this world and they gradually lose their hope and trust. Indeed, the last lines of *The Cry of The Children* are like a summary of the bitterness of the situation which after the Romantic children, the Victorian ones were in: "'How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation, / Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart, -"²⁰.

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THE MASK OF GENDER IN TOP GIRLS AND KADIN ERKEKLEŞİNCE (WHEN WOMAN BECOMES A MAN)

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Abstract: “Social issues like gender perception have always played a remarkable role in theatre not only in the Western world, but in Turkey as well, and for this reason the matter of woman on stage has been one of the most frequently addressed issues. Woman has always been trapped within her femininity by patriarchy that does embrace a dualistic approach degrading women into the other and abnormal, thus allowing no space for women to express themselves, while dignifying men as the standard and transcendent. Away from correcting the misjudgment related to their position in society, women are rather forced to represent the alleged justice of male power which does marginalize women on stage as well as in life. Such an oppressive stance leads women to masquerade their femininities in order to take a place in the society. However, gendered behaviors are not natural; rather they are imposed upon individuals as normative heterosexuality. In other words, gender can be defined as fiction which is constructed by society and is open to change. In this study, the gender roles imposed upon women are discussed. To achieve this aim, a brief assessment about women’s representation in English and Turkish theatres as well as their position in private and public spheres is discussed. In line with this purpose, the plays *Kadın Erkekleşince (When Woman Becomes a Man)* by Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar and *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill are analyzed with reference to the performative acts theory of Judith Butler.”

Keywords: Gender Roles, femininity, performative acts, *Top Girls*, *Kadın Erkekleşince (When the Woman Becomes a Man)*.

Introduction

The history of theatre both in England and Turkey expounds the reality that masculine power perspicaciously stereotyped the woman image on stage so as not to undermine patriarchal ideals. To put it differently, because the social order was mainly patriarchal, the rule makers were the kings, fathers, husbands, and the

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feudal system, and as a natural consequence, the theatre functioned as a means to sustain this gender gap. "The operations of theatrical representation are over-determined, fore-grounded, and made visible, thereby undermining, paradoxically, the construction of woman as body."¹ Accordingly, women, acting parts on stage, could not correct the misjudgment related to their position in the society, but rather they were forced to represent the alleged justice of male power which marginalized and oppressed women on stage as well as in public and private life.

Every society has its own rules concerning the expected behavior of women. Throughout the history of Turkey, the femininity has been one of the most momentous issues to be taken into consideration. Confined within domestic duties as a daughter, wife, and mother, and responsibilities, including chastity, silence, and obedience toward her male master, the woman has been unable to go against the principles that patriarchal system had invented. Before the Republic, the traditional patriarchal order of the Ottoman period regarded women as inferior and thus submissive to male ordinance. Contained within the rules of sharia, which was believed to encourage male dominance, women were forced to accept their subdued status both indoors and in public. However, the situation of Turkish women began to improve by virtue of some social reforms introduced in 1923 with the proclamation of the Republic. Several steps in direction to reform women's rights were taken; the legal differences between men and women were abolished, and polygamy was terminated. Furthermore, women were insured with the right to have willpower in the marriage decision as a result of the Civil Code of 1926. Within several years, women gained the right to vote, to work outside and stand for the parliament. Despite the rights women gained as a result of many revolutions, the social progress, taking account of women's status, was not embraced by the public easily. It was because the state of affairs precluded the Civil Code from being disseminated nationwide, and above all, Islam was misinterpreted by the authority. Therefore, in contrast to the legal improvements attributed to women in Turkey, the status of women remained the way it used to be; patriarchy was approved to be the prevailing ideology, ascribing administrative and legal rights merely to men while restraining women within domestic duties and responsibilities. As a result of the failure of enforcing the law concerning women's rights, the portrayal of women both on stage and in society was ruled out, whereas the power of patriarchy was encouraged beyond dispute.

Women's stance in english and turkish plays

Turkish plays, written before the Republic, handled the woman question from various perspectives, although almost all the plays underlined the superiority of male-dominated society, failing to find a way out of oppression and disparagement of woman. For the sake of example, the plays written during the Tanzimat Era and the Second Constitutionalist Period dealt with the realities such as arranged marriages, religious marriage ceremonies, bribe-price, and fellow wife as legitimated traditional perceptions of the period. However, in the wake of the World War II, the twentieth century theatre aspired to regain the

¹ Martin, C. ed., *A Sourcebook of Feminist Theatre and Performance* (London: Routledge), 1996, p.20.

missing values and addressed the issues which canalized the society into decline with a strong belief that merely theatre could provide awakening for the real life. Based on this point of view, the plays written and staged during the Republic Era might be interpreted as the representation of two divisions: Those who resign to mores, or those who resist their fate, but are condemned to suffer the consequences after all.

In the same vein, the history of the English theatre portrays the status of women as the ones who were forced to comply with the cognizance; silent, obedient, and virtuous model of womanhood. During the Medieval period, the woman issue was totally put out of action in public arena and private life; for this reason, to mention the role of women on stage was beside the point. The Renaissance, as the precursor of the innovations in almost every facet of life, ignored to incorporate women; social and legal regulations, fulfilled with the aim of enhancing the woman image, failed as a result of the male-dominated ideology of the period. Rather, the patriarchal structure did maintain the traditional status of women who were supposed to take care of children, help on the farm, and more importantly be submissive to their husbands on any ground. To put it differently, in the English history before and after the Renaissance, women did have few legal, economic, or political rights, but rather they were subjected to being submissive to their husbands, brothers, or fathers. Accordingly, the vision of order strengthened patriotic imperative and submission to the dominant and women were restrained in traditional gender roles that forced them to isolate themselves from the outer world, and consequently, the English theatre was regarded as “the basic location for cultural and political ideologies.”² That said, women characters were forced to create female images in step with the patriarchal system for centuries. The characters typically exemplified those who resigned to male stream, were silenced, and suffering passive women. In other respects, the female characters, challenging patriarchy were those who were merciless, wicked, shrewd, and blunt, and were condemned to be ruined or silenced inevitably. The plays written before the World War II were under the sway of patriarchy; however, the subject matter has changed in a way to deal with social problems, injustices, and ills that were ignored before 1950s. Especially after the emergence of the existentialist movement and many feminist theories and movements, the theatre has functioned to awaken interest in individuals through questioning fundamental imbalance existing in societies. Since 1970s, as a result of the issues that radical feminism deals with, women have become conscious about the oppression regarding their bodies that the “male culture made women’s bodies into objects of male desire, converting them into sites of beauty and sexuality for men to gaze upon”. By virtue of feminist movements, women have awakened to the reality that they have the right to control their bodies according to their own wishes. Therefore, the English theatre does present “a contradiction to the all male composition of classical theatre, provoking a break with the codes of the dominant culture.”³

² Cavus, R., ‘Early Modern England and Shakespeare’s Women As Cultural Representations’, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*. v.43. n.2. 2003, p.166.

³ Case, S.E., *Feminism and Theatre* (New York: Routledge), 1988, p.66.

Performativity theory within the plays reconsidered

Judith Butler is regarded as one of the most instrumental and progressive scholars concerning with identity and gender roles within subject constitution. Defining gender as something artificial and fictive, Butler does state that there is no sex/gender distinction because sex is gendered by birth as a consequence of cultural values. In other words, for Butler, it seems impossible to mention “the body” as something that pre-exists its social existence. “Gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a doing rather than a being.”⁴ The body is not a natural or given entity, rather it is fictional and dictated through discourses that are controlled and enjoined by male hegemony. As a matter of fact, the body is not a “mute facticity”⁵, but it is something gendered congenitally as a consequence of alleged social and cultural signs. In this sense, individuals are not free subjects to determine their own gender, but more of a part of “the script” that is always already written and “the subject has a limited “costumes” from which to make a constrained choice of gender style.”⁶ Based on this point of view, gender is fictitious and imposed upon individuals as normalized models, and language features in constructing these mythical gender identities as feminine woman and masculine man.

As a successful postwar playwright, Caryl Churchill is regarded as a dissenting writer due to the fact that she presents a different point of view via questioning the social troubles that are believed to be taboos and thence fixed. Generally dealing with the woman issue in her plays, Churchill does emphasize how women suffer the consequences of the attempts to subvert their gender roles which have been universally organized by patriarchy.⁷

First performed in 1982 in London Royal Court Theatre *Top Girls* is regarded as having great importance in international scene because of the theme the play handles. The play reflects a severe criticism on patriarchal social order and a double perspective on the woman issue as an independent and partially subversive subject under the mask of mannish attitudes, and as a submissive and capitulated object. The play begins with Marlene waiting for the guests in a restaurant. The reason for this meeting with five other women is the ironical celebration of Marlene’s promotion at the employment agency. The main issue to draw these women – Marlene, Isabella Bird, Dull Gret, Pope Joan, Lady Juno, and Griselda- together is to reveal different identities and experiences of each of them. The common ground for these women is that they all represent servile and marginal part of the society although they took considerable steps in life and achieved extremely difficult goals. The common fate of these women is that they have been silenced and punished and therefore become the scapegoats of the society as a foregone conclusion. No matter how successful or determined against the patriarchal system the women are, they have been forced either to

⁴ Salih, S., *Judith Butler*, (London: Routledge), 2002, p. 55.

⁵ Butler, J., *Gender Trouble*, (New York: Routledge), 1990, p. 129.

⁶ Salih, S. *Judith Butler*, (London: Routledge), 2002, p.56.

⁷ Churchill, C., *Top Girls*, London: Bloomsbury, 2007.

masquerade their real identities in order to survive within their male traps, or to stay silent and blind to the oppression.

The characters in *Top Girls* exemplify those who are oppressed and repressed by male hegemony at different times; the aim is to display that no matter when these women lived, they all suffered. What is interesting is that some characters are not even aware of the oppression that inhibits them from living their lives to the full. For instance, Lady Nijo is portrayed as a woman who is consent to male dominance by being subservient first to her father and then to the Emperor. "One night he even sent me out to a man who had been pursuing me. / He lay awake on the other side of the screens and listened."⁸ Because of her upbringing, Nijo seems only too glad to fall under the domination of male ordinance. "I can't say I enjoyed my rough life. What I enjoyed most was being the Emperor's favorite and wearing thin silk."⁹ Even when she tells her life story, she remarks incomprehensibly that she felt nothing when the Emperor took each of her children from her. The impassiveness of Nijo to such a touchy subject is that because she was disciplined in a way to obey men beyond question. Thus, Churchill presents Nijo as a woman who has normalized the oppression and marginal stance that the emperor drove her. When Marlene asks "are you saying he raped you?" the calmness of Nijo and her adaptation to male hegemony is felt from her reply: "No, of course not, Marlene, I belonged to him, it was what I was brought up for from a baby."¹⁰

In a similar manner, Griselda represents clean acceptance of male dominance. When she recounts her story regarding her marriage, it is clearly understood that she has already accepted to submit her husband on any ground. "But of course a wife must obey her husband. / And of course I must obey the Marquis."¹¹ In just the same way as Nijo, her children had been taken from her by Walter without any satisfactory explanation for the issue. Worse still is that Griselda believes whatever Walter did was to test her love for him. Marlene is shocked when she learns that Walter had taken her child and she asks: "But you let him take her? You didn't struggle?", Griselda answers in a normative tone that "it was Walter's child to do what he liked with."¹² In Western philosophy, women and their bodies are regarded as biological, corporeal and thus natural which sets the stage for the embodiment of women's bodies as deviant, abnormal and inferior. According to such an understanding, women are portrayed as sensual objects that just exist to satisfy and give pleasure to men. Griselda accepts her role just as a servant to Walter and she even normalizes the condition that he wants to marry a younger girl. "I had to obey him. He wanted me to help prepare his wedding. He was getting married to a young girl from France / and nobody except me knew how to arrange things the way he liked them."¹³

⁸ Churchill, C. *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 12.

⁹ Churchill, C. *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 4.

¹⁰ Churchill, C. *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 3.

¹¹ Churchill, C. *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 23.

¹² Churchill, C. *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 23.

¹³ Churchill, C. *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 26.

Given the fact that gender is a socially constructed norm, it means that it is unstable and at stake through social and cultural reforms which might disrupt the false belief that gender is the animation of sexed bodies. The argument that Beauvoir propounds “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” crystallizes the issue that gender is nothing more than social learning and adaptation which canalize women into subordinate gendered roles as chaste, silent, passive and obedient properties being subservient to men’s disposition. That being the case, subversion of power seems to be necessary to shift the order that does encourage male dominance. Butler defines gender in terms of performativity. “One is not simply a gendered body, but, in some very key sense, one does one’s body”¹⁴, through which Butler implies very fact that gender is a construction that has been shaped within male discourse and those who fail to represent their gender are punished again by masculine power.

To illustrate the construction of identity and gender, Pope Joan definitely reflects anti man-made woman type. She is personified as a woman who masquerades her femininity to subvert her gender role and to have a stance in life. She adopts a different identity through rejecting her femininity in order to devote her life to knowledge and learning. In this sense, Churchill presents Joan as a somewhat subverting character, yet also as a woman who is doomed to exact the toll of her resistance. “First I decided to stay a man. I was used to it. And I wanted to devote my life to learning. Do you know why I went to Rome? Italian men didn’t have beards.” Because Joan is obsessed with learning and truth, she is not supposed to perform her already determined gender role as a woman. Rather than dealing with domestic duties and wedding to male dominance, Joan does choose to be and act in a masculine style. “I didn’t live a woman’s life. I don’t understand it.”¹⁵ Disguising her femininity as a pope is not just for the sake of learning and maintaining her life in society; in fact, Joan is a total stranger to her body which can be deduced from her confession that she did not even realize her pregnancy. In other words, Joan does both negate her femininity and her gender roles as a woman.

As far as Marlene is concerned, she does also personify the woman who masquerades her femininity in order that she might continue her life. To that end, Marlene dedicates her life to her career and success that she could get through concentrating just on her work. Marlene, accordingly, does eliminate her role and duty as a mother, and rather, she internalizes a different identity which disregards her female attributes. For this very reason, Marlene is the one who is pictured as an unorthodox individual in the play. Rather than yielding to the rules of the society, Marlene adopts men’s perspective in terms of attitude and treatment. When she orders a bottle of wine, Nijo states perplexedly that “it was always the men who used to get so drunk.”¹⁶ It is easy to discern from the statement that Marlene represents a stance against gender roles that have been established for her sex.

¹⁴ Butler, J., ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory’ *Theatre Journal*. *The John Hopkins University Press*. v.40. n. 4. December, 1988.

¹⁵ Churchill, C., *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 4.

¹⁶ Churchill, C., *Top Girls*, Act 1, p. 4.

As an English playwright, Caryl Churchill deals with social and political issues that shape women's lives and experiences in a way to lead them into a war against traditional norms forcing them to conceal their femininities with the intention of taking part in social and economic spheres. The individualistic war that women are exposed to perform ends up with a judgment that leads women to make concessions and suffer from going beyond their gender roles.¹⁷ Especially in the working life, women are coerced to be successful through surpassing other women and what is more to the point, they must masquerade their real identities as women and act in a masculine manner. Marlene achieves her struggle to survive and be successful via performing her gender in an opposite way round. She is portrayed as a character who is successful but pitiless towards other people, most especially to her outside marriage daughter, Angie whom Marlene gives her sister Joyce to take care of her as if her own mother. As a woman, Marlene is supposed to be an ideal mother taking care of her daughter. However, Marlene regards Angie as an obstacle for her success and therefore she leaves her daughter because of her ambitions. Through such a situation Churchill displays the reality that women who attempt to manage their lives under their own steams causes them to make a choice either as a successful businesswoman or a devoted mother; in this sense, Marlene adopts the philosophy of success in order to vindicate the endeavor she attempted to push to the limits that persuade women to believe that men are superior to them in the society in terms social and economic status.

Deconstructing the ontological stance of gender is the main point that Butler does focus on. In this sense, Butler is critical of the notion subjecthood; there is no subject or doer behind the deed. In connection with this argument, Butler asserts that there are multiple identities within multiple identity formations which might destroy both the sex categories as male/female and the gender categories as masculine/feminine, which are in fact the "unstable discursive productions".¹⁸ What essentially creates the subject is the action itself, and "there is no gender identity behind the expressions"¹⁹ that are said to be its results. Accordingly, actions, which define male/female characteristics within cultural values, produce gendered identities as normal.

Kadın Erkekleşince (When Woman Becomes a Man), written by Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar in 1916 and published in 1973 in modern Turkish by Mustafa Nihat Özön, has significance in that the play is in analogy to *Top Girls* in terms of the subject matter that is discussed in the present study. Regarded as one of the most prominent authors among his contemporaries, Gürpınar does represent the naturalist movement in Turkish literature with regard to his method to handle social and traditional problems and marital conflicts in a realistic way. Because of his style and the themes he deals with in his plays and novels, Gürpınar distinguishes from the conventional writers of the period.

¹⁷ Tycer, A., *Caryl Churchill's Top Girls*, New York: Continuum, 2008.

¹⁸ Nayak, Anoop and Mary Jane Kehily, 'Gender Undone: Subversion, Regulation and Embodiment in the Work of Judith Butler', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, v. 27, n. 4, 2006, p.460.

¹⁹ Butler, J., *Gender Trouble*, New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 25.

The play is about the story of a woman who negates the patriarchal order that passivizes women in a way to imprison them into their alleged feminine roles. The playwright presents many female characters that seem to be subservient to patriarchal order. However, Nebahat is portrayed as a self-conscious woman trying to stand on her own legs and being in a struggle for the vindication of women's independence from male order. As a background to *Kadın Erkekleşince*, the play takes place in the house of a family; Ali Tevfik Bey and Mebrure Hanım, the parents of Ali Süreyya, have a mind to marry him off to Memduha, a wealthy ward of the family. Mebrure Hanım is displayed as an ambitious mother who has dedicated her days to match her son with the little girl whereas Ali Tevfik Bey keeps quite and criticizes the way her wife assumes towards her husband and her son. Mebrure Hanım seems to be conservative in her attitude toward life, regarding women as the ruler of domestic domain, cooking, serving, and satisfying the needs of her male master. However, the lady of the house acts on the contrary when it comes to her own private life. When her husband indicates his disapproval about the way Mebrure Hanım and her neighbor plan a trick on Ali Süreyya, Mebrure Hanım attacks her husband in an unconventional way that majority of women could not dare to express:

Ali Tevfik Bey: What are you talking about? Are you two old women trying to teach the little girl how to get into bed with Ali Süreyya? If yes, please teach me also the way to do it well, you know, we got married without ever making sheep's eyes. We experienced deliquium afterwards.

Mebrure Hanım: (to the neighbor) Hear what kind of creature a man is. Neither in his 60s, 70s, or 90s, a man can fit several women into his heart. They are in disposition of a rooster.²⁰

Such an understanding causes women to isolate themselves from the external world. Consenting their dependence upon their husbands, children, and domestic work, women are compelled to accept their existence within their supposed gender roles. Despite the stance Mebrure Hanım maintains against her husband, she forces Memduha in a way to attract the attention of Ali Süreyya through her appearance. "O my dear, don't appear before him in such attire. Put some powder on, wear lipstick to hold attraction, and curl your hair. Wear a fascinating dress and learn how to become glamorous."²¹ Contrary to the strains of Mebrure Hanım, Ali Süreyya resists not to marry Memduha as he loves someone else. While his mother puts pressure on Ali Süreyya about the little girl, Ali Tevfik Bey confesses a repressed perception in an ironical way: "If the world was to be ruled by women, everything would be cleared up. They have such an indocile policy that they don't abstain from throwing a punch even to the right and reasonable when it comes to their own benefit."

Butler aims to subvert the false idea that real women do have feminine qualities. In other words, according to Butler, "gender is an illusion maintained by prevalent power following essential attributes."²² Women are regarded as

²⁰ Gurpınar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, İstanbul: Ozaydın, Act 1, Scene 4, 1974, p. 13.

²¹ Gurpınar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, İstanbul: Ozaydın, Act 1, Scene 4, 1974, p. 15.

²² Butler, J., *Gender Trouble*, New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 24.

females in that they represent feminine characteristics and men are identified as males so long as they have mannish attributes. Butler, however, rejects such identification and indicates the fact that one's sex does not imply his/her gender as a whole because social meanings create sex/gender assignment. In this sense, gender is what Butler calls performative. Woman is "a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or end [...] it is open to intervention and resignification."²³ In this sense, Nebahat is portrayed as a woman who reconstructs her identity and gender roles in an unorthodox way. Ali Süreyya and Nebahat get married by keeping the family unaware of the situation. When the young couple does want to visit Ali Süreyya's parents, they are rejected because of the anger of Mebrure Hanım. One way or another, despite her anger, Mebrure Hanım accepts to meet them. However, because of the embroilment between the parents and the couple, Nebahat and Ali Süreyya decide to move into a new house.

Ali Tevfik Bey: I am an open-minded man. I can't make my wife listen to me. I can't do anything about the past. But, I can deal with the present frankly. My wife treats you in an unfavorable way, yet I believe that you have the qualities and virtue of the modern womanhood. Your stance heralds the promising woman that would change the world.²⁴

"What are being performed are the cultural norms that condition and limit the actor in the situation."²⁵ Those constructed norms represent who we are in the society and force us to function our predetermined roles in accordance with cultural and social rules. However, Butler does claim that there must be a process that could subvert normative establishments; alienation from what is very well known. In other words, Butler invites individuals to challenge the roles that are imposed upon them beyond question. In this sense, Nebahat functions to symbolize the subversive subject especially when she draws up prenuptial agreement with Ali Süreyya. The decisiveness of Nebahat is clearly understood from the conversation with Ali Tevfik Bey.

Nebahat: The base line of our contract is that the woman and man are to be equal in all aspects... The conjoint could only be happy and compatible with each other as long as the given principle is embraced. The woman sitting at home, dealing with domestic duties while the man working outside and earning their keep is just an out-of-date custom from the dark ages.²⁶

Nebahat: The woman who is subject to her husband for a living is not independent. She is the slave of her husband. Over and above, such a husband may get mad and even beat her when his commands are ignored... There is no weapon for the woman to hold against the feudal lord. The woman is not a poor thing. The woman demands legal equality with the man.

²³ Butler, J., *Gender Trouble*, New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 33.

²⁴ Gurpınar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, İstanbul: Ozaydın, Act 2, Scene 11, 1974, p. 55.

²⁵ Olson, Gary A. and Lynn Worsham, (2000), 'Changing the Subject: Judith Butler's Politics of Radical Resignification', *JAC*, v. 20, n. 4, p. 730.

²⁶ Gurpınar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, İstanbul: Ozaydın, Act 2, Scene 11, 1974, p. 56.

First of all, the expression “woman” which connotes weakness should be removed from use.²⁷

Ali Tevfik Bey: Dearie, the nature demands it. Even it was as you said, how could we distinguish the sexes?

Nebahat: There is no gender gap... around the world; there is just one hominid line: human... The woman must become mannish in order to get rid of the weakness that patriarchy assumes.

Ali Tevfik Bey: I wonder how to do it.

Nebahat: Through equality in income and expense. By this means, the man's right to oppress the woman disappears. Yet, there is no possibility to speak of equality as long as the woman dedicates herself to cooking pots and beneath contempt domestic work.

Nebahat never compensates for her freedom as an individual, and accordingly, she negates gender roles in a way to act in contrast to man-made woman attributes. When they have a child, the uneasiness arises between Nebahat and Ali Süreyya. When they argue about the child care, Ali Süreyya reacts as “the nature determines the responsibilities of parents in a proper way. / To nurse the child on time, to clean the child's bottom, to put to sleep are the duties of the mother.” Negating her duties Nebahat justifies her occupation and accuses Ali Süreyya as self indulgence: “The woman's becoming mannish necessitates the man to become feminine.”²⁸

Nebahat: We'll share the responsibility of vacuuming the house, ironing, washings, the dishes, cooking, and etc. From now on, there is no distinction as the man's duty or the woman's duty, and no male hegemony in the house. You achieved such dominance through brute force in a traditional way. Today, the woman can also have the power to resist.²⁹

However, the attempt for subversion turns into punishment for her; Nebahat loses her child because of the neglect as a result of her hard working days. The play ends with the speech of Ali Tevfik Bey:

The woman strives for becoming mannish. Is it right to change the roles that the nature has determined for the two sexes? The marriage has become such a loose tie between the couples that it doesn't have the power to hold them together.³⁰

Conclusion

The key facts concerning women in Turkey and in England have been strengthened through literary texts which try to impose patriarchal ideologies of the period. While the woman under the oppression of a patriarchal system has become an object of society, male-domination has been flattered as the only authority, to put it another way, men have been regarded as the king of family

²⁷ Gurpinar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, Istanbul: Ozaydın, Act 2, Scene 11, 1974, p. 57.

²⁸ Gurpinar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, Istanbul: Ozaydın, Table 1, Scene 1, 1974, p. 69.

²⁹ Gurpinar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, Istanbul: Ozaydın, Table 1, Scene 1, 1974, p. 69

³⁰ Gurpinar, H.R., *Kadın Erkekleşince*, Istanbul: Ozaydın, Table 3, Scene 1, 1974, p. 79.

and society, ruling over religious, political, legal, and economic institutions. Accordingly, the literatures of both countries have been accredited with the role to maintain this patriarchal order. Given the fact that literature does play a significant role in the creation and consolidation of power, a literary text contributes to the traits of the society as well as it reflects that perception in which it is produced. The criteria of being a woman is determined and defined by power politics which justifies patriarchal domination and predetermined gender roles. Such a perception undermines the woman as a subject and drives her to despair as being subservient to male hegemony. "Gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again."³¹ Individuals are confined within their gender roles constructed and governed by the society, and imposed upon human beings via reward and punishment practices. The female characters in two plays reveal the fact that neither through masquerading their identities nor through becoming mannish in real terms they achieve freedom from the chains of patriarchal blocks. Therefore, the gender role the individual does perform is pre-established by the dominant forces and no matter how determined and strong a woman is, the subversion of gender roles seems to be a long-termed issue which requires the alteration of all values and judgments within a society.

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SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLINGUISTIC TRENDS IN THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

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Abstract: *Translation-research is a specific, experimental way to understand the formation of the structure of the translated text and the creation of a translation that is faithful to the original. In order to understand what is going on in translator's mind, the translation-research relies on the psychological aspects of the translation process based on an introspective observation. In the translation activity, which is a creative process between the author and the translator, arise "conflict" situations. The temporal medium, the dual nature of translation, the fundamental differences between the process of an artistic text creation and its translation must be considered in the process of transforming the original into the second material reality.*

Keywords: *translation-research, psychology, experiment, introspective observation, temporal medium, translation duality.*

Nowadays, in the translation theory, the topic of the translation-research causes significant interest to some researchers. The questions and the answers that we find in Bogdan Ghiu's works can be classified as a concept of *translation-research* with the following stages: *translation - research - formation - creation* that reveal the critical- innovative potential of the translation and resonate in the works of the theorists who are familiar in practice with the translation process. "Translation – is a research and the research - is a trans-interpretational mediation. That is why the translation should become / retrieve as a spirit and as a recognized formative practice of a scheduled academic activity (freedom, responsibility) at least with the purpose to exclude the hard (copy-paste) or the soft (paraphrase) plagiarism during the translation activity. The translation, as Michèle Leclerc-Olive noted, is an attempt "to avoid the imposed normativity" of concepts, that is, to create, to grope, to feel the need for some local re- "conceptualization"¹.

Krivoturova's works raise one of the key questions of the translation studies - the relationship between the author and the translator from the standpoint of the multiple socio-linguistic theories with an emphasis on the psychological aspect. The researcher, based on the approach that has become an axiom stating that the author of the original text and the translator are, in fact, creators, makes at the same time a very significant remark, namely: during the creation of their works, a

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¹ B. Ghiu. *Translation of (as) Theory, Archimedes's Point*, on

<http://atelier.liternet.ro/articol/16702/Bogdan-Ghiu/Despre-traducere-o-perspectiva-franceza-de-lucru.html>

relationship that can be treated as a conflict arises between them. "...The text itself, which is reflected in translator's mind, is a phenomenon of mentality, and inevitably, is a dichotomy of the ideal, spiritual, mental and material (of the material substrate)."²

These conflicting states encourage the translator to mobilize his/her creative talents of the discoverer connecting to the translation process the thinking, the memory, the emotions, and the sensations. And, unconsciously, the subconscious connects to the translation process as well.

The mentality determines the understanding of the ethnic elements of a different culture. The mismatch between the cultures leads to a misunderstanding of the many inconsistencies in the languages included in the translation process. This applies, above all, to the fundamental concepts, the meanings and the values of the source text (translated text). Thus, it appears that when the text author's mentality does not match with the basic consciousness of the interpreter, the translation is unreal. However, this happens in terms of theory. How, then, in practice, is performed the translation, "the understanding of the other" - the oldest communicative human activity? According to Krivoturova's opinion, the following things contribute to the understanding of the foreign language text "...the anthropological universals, which include: the living space, the survival activities, the emotional palette, the intellectual space..."³

This, of course, refers to the text hermeneutics, to its interpretation, on which depends the quality of the future translation, that is, whether the text will lead the translator or the translator will lead the text, giving thereby the priorities to the translation. "The degree of the control and the depth of the correction depend on the existential (ethical and social) experience of the translator, which determines more or less the subjective-objective and semantic-valuable processuality of the text. <...> "Conflict's pacification occurs only when the translator finds the most appropriate translation option."⁴

Considering the vast amount of researches on the translation's artistry, the theoretical aspects of its features in the historical, theoretical and practical application present a broad and heterogeneous field for research, since for a long time (and sometimes in the current period, too) a synthetic approach was applied to it, wherein, it did not stand out as an individual sphere, but was seen as a general translation or was ignored at all.

However, since the very beginning of the translation studies, it was and it is still a lot of doubt related to the possibility of the existence of a comprehensive theory on the artistic translation. The main arguments in this regard are the provisions (the opinions) that the translation - is an art, not a science, it is a specific type of practical activity, the higher degree of which is the art of translation.

In this area, of interest are the relevant works of the Russian researchers of the literary and translation processes, for whom the tradition plays an important role.

² Y. Krivoturov, *Interpretation Strategies in Linguistics, Translation and Didactics*, Chisinau: ULIM, 2015, p.127.

³ Y. Krivoturov, *Interpretation Strategies in Linguistics, Translation and Didactics*, Chisinau: ULIM, 2015, p.128.

⁴ Ibidem, p.128

V.K. Mignard-Beloruchev, considering the problems of the linguistics and translation, summarizes the data on the synchronized, written, and informative translation in the media, not highlighting, herewith, the features of the translation of fiction, however, citing examples of the failure translation of one of the artistic works of A.S. Pushkin. Many translation aspects, of course, are similar and apply to all the types of translation, and, at the same time, he admits that “translation - is not only the units of the language and speech, the subjunctive or conditional mood, the terminology and the international words, translation – is also the person who performs unusual manipulations with the units of the speech, with the terms and with the international words, it is also his/her way of thinking and his/her capabilities.”⁵.

One of the leading Russian translation theorists V.N. Komissarov also does not provide a clear definition of the artistic translation by bringing the principles of the translation into a single complex: “The incorrectness of the formula “translation - is an art, not a science” does not mean that the nature of the object the translation studies explore, has no effect on the explanatory power and the objectivity of the translation concepts. The linguistic theory of the translation is engaged in the study of the translation’s language mechanism, the laws, which are caused by the interaction of the linguistic systems involved in the speech communication process. It reveals something common that unites all the acts of translation, distracts from the characteristics of each particular translation which reflect not only the laws of this kind of activity, but also the strategy of a particular translator, his/her professional competence, principles, which he/she is guided by consciously or unconsciously, choosing one or another translation version”⁶

Nevertheless, V.N. Komissarov notes that the aspects of translation related to the translator’s personality remain out of sight. In our opinion, the excessive theorizing and generalization overlook not only these aspects, but also the specific differences of the translated texts, due to which arises the rejected formula “translation - is an art, not a science.” There is no doubt that not every translation is an art. However, the blurring between the text varieties and the speech varieties of translation provides opportunities for different interpretations.

Psurtsev approaches the problem of translation theory⁷ little differently, approaching it not only from the standpoint of the linguistic theories, but also in terms of interconnectedness between the translation and the interpretation, placing in the top corner the text of the translation, bearing the imprint of the interpretive processes as a form of the secondary text. He considers the study of the interpretation and especially the study of the text analysis techniques as a way to the objective criteria of research. He attaches great importance to the stylistic

⁵ R.K. Mignard-Beloruchev, *Translation and Text Linguistics*, in: *Problems in Text Translation Interpretation in works of Russian linguists of the late 20th - early 21st centuries*, Yerevan: Lingua, 2009, p. 238

⁶ V.N. Komissarov, *Intuitiveness of Translation and Objectivity of Translation Studies*, in: *Problems in Text Translation Interpretation in works of Russian linguists of the late 20th early 21st centuries*, Yerevan: Lingua, 2009, p.60

⁷ V.D. Psurtsev, *Toward the Problem of Translation and Interpretation of Literary Text: On an Adequacy Criterion*, in: *Problems in Text Translation Interpretation in works of Russian linguists of the late 20th early 21st centuries*, Yerevan: Lingua, 2009.

approach and offers an additional criterion for the adequacy of the translation of fiction. Thus, *he distinguishes the artistic translation in the theoretical aspect of the translation activity.*

Analyzing the ratio of the various features of the artistic text, he stops on the aspect of meaning formation (in the generation as well as in the perception), noting that “the specificity of the artistic text (...) consists in its creator’s and interpreter’s fundamental absence of the “just obvious” and the “one-dimension meaning” guideline. (*Therefore, the antipode of the artistic text is the text with no such guideline.*)”⁸

In this connection, the role of the figurative and associative components becomes an additional criterion. Just the figurative and associative components stylistically mark the artistic text. It should be also noted Psurtsev’s very significant remark that is directly relevant to the translation: “(...) the original text and the text of the translation (...) in their givens are linear, whereas the brainchild and the meaning are voluminous.”⁹

This thought can serve as a key to the interpretation of many works performed by different translators in different temporal contexts.

The translation practice, namely, the penetration into the laboratory of the translation process can give new impetus to the theoretical thought in the field of the artistic translation: “The research field of a specific translator is unique and differs from any other type of research. However, very few people know and talk about this. A translation viewed in such a way is a matter of (meta) -research, which is completely new, in other words, virgin, that is, a research of the Future¹⁰.

The “translator-coauthor” combination is found in some works. The Moldovan poet and translator Leo Butnaru, wondering who this mysterious person is – the translator? - a discoverer of ways, or their continuator who carries on them compositions from spaces with ethno-linguistic contours? He sums up, “in either event, the re-created composition is owned by two creators, being a part of the two literatures, multi-tenant, indicating a certain degree of universalization of the carried out translation. (...) The translator-coauthor must have imagination, linguistic mobility and resourcefulness, which are subordinated to a good taste, to a sense of proportion and artistic stability, allowing him/her to select out of a variety of interpretive options the most expressive and functional at the detail level or in general.”¹¹

The “translator-coauthor” definition still seems controversial to us.

It is necessary a clear understanding of the creative specifics of the process of creating a literary work and the specifics of the translation process while re-creating the original text into the receiving language. We will consider only the main,

⁸ Ibidem, p.251-252

⁹ Ibidem, p.255

¹⁰ B. Ghiu. *Translation of (as) Theory, Archimedes’s Point*, on <http://atelier.liternet.ro/articol/16702/Bogdan-Ghiu/Despre-traducere-o-perspectiva-franceza-de-lucru.html>

¹¹ Leo Butnaru, *Translations from World Poetry*/selction, introduction and bibliographical notes by Leo Butnaru; afterword by Barbu Cioculescu. Chisinau.: I.E.P. Stiința, 2004 p. 32-33

fundamental factors of interaction between the two creative personalities, two psychosocial and ethno-linguistic systems, while creating and re-creating a work.

First, let us consider the concept of *temporal medium* we proposed.

In our understanding, *the temporal environment* – is a collection of ethno-social, historical, cultural, mental and psychological personal and public dominants in the period of formation, existence and creative activity of the creative personality. The leading modern psychologists indicate the relationship between the laws of the influence of the psychology and the most important aspects of our daily lives. The beliefs, the obedience to authority, the prejudices, the conformity, the dissonance and the self-attribution, the nonverbal communication, and even the subliminal influence are linked to the social and psychological impact. “The social influence is omnipresent. It is carried out everywhere and always. It is a part of the world order.”¹²

The specific interpretation of the facts and phenomena of the world are activated in the human mind on the basis of the following principle: “everything that happens *within us* (the mental processes), is primarily determined by *the external factors*. (...) One of the founders of the social psychology, Kurt Lewin, a long time ago, gave us a simple equation: the behavior is a function of two variables - the unique personality of the individual and the situation in which he or she performs the acts.”¹³

It is not possible for the writer as well as for the translator to move over this or to abstract from it, as they both still are, in spite of the importance of recognizing their individual dispositions in the sphere of influence, under the influence of a second, no less important component of the influence - *the power of the situation*. This applies to all aspects of the literary process from the point of view of *the temporal medium*, part of which is the socio-psychological factor.

One cannot imagine the modern translation studies without taking into account the historical factor. We adhere to the viewpoint one of the greatest historians of our time, Fernand Braudel, formulated¹⁴; he who put emphasis on the harmonization of the times, on the meaningful explanation of the true temporal rhythms as the most reliable means of penetrating into the depths of the historical reality; he who “tirelessly fought against the danger of knowledge fragmentation.”¹⁵

Understanding the translated text, the composition that is significant to the national and world cultures, without a comprehensive, synthetic look at it as at a product of the social, psychological, moral, religious, aesthetic, political, ideological, scientific, technological, economic, cultural and other space-time factors’ focus can not issue an adequate presentation of the original and its author. In order to denote the synthesis of the interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of the “author-translator” creative process we offer a generalizing term - *temporal medium*. The Russian researchers raised this issue in the last century’s 20-ies.

¹² F. Zimbardo, M. Lyayppe, *Social Impact*, S-Pb: "Peter", 2000, p. 15

¹³ Ibidem, p.51

¹⁴ F. Brodel, *Structures of everyday life: the possible and the impossible*, M.: Progress, 1986

¹⁵ Y.N. Afanasyev, Fernand Braudel and His Vision of History. Introd. to: Fernand Brodel. *Structures of Everyday Life: the Possible and the Impossible*, M.: Progress, 1986, p.10

The problem is more difficult the farther in time parameters the translator is from the composition he/she re-creates in another language. Even as a contemporary of the author, the translator can not ignore the factor that the original creation's temporal medium preceded the translation process. We should not however forget translator's temporal medium and his/her ability to overcome both his/her own subjectivity, and the impact that the *actual* temporal medium produces upon the subjectivity.

Thus, we arrive to the ascertaining that the translation is a *secondary* activity. We can not raise the question of the co-authorship "author-translator" from this perspective. The *co-authorship* - is an equitable joint creation of like-minded people, but the translation – is a "post factum" process, the process of re-creating the literary original in an alien cultural- informational space in the garb of another language.

But, translation as a secondary activity is paradoxical, since the paradox lies in the fact that according to its cultural-informational essence, every full artistic re-creation of the original is *primary*, because it has no equivalent in the target language, even if there are other translations of the same original. *The reason for the paradoxical situation is that each of the translation bears the imprint of the translator's personality and, so to speak, translator's temporal medium.*

The well-known translator and literary critic Ginzburg makes it clear that the pointing finger that defines translator's place as an intermediary between the author and the reader, demanding greater rigor in the transmission of all shades of style and of the outlook of the epoch to which the original composition belongs, deprives the translator of a certain independence. He clearly defines his position without denying the careful approach to the script: "...without having his/her own worldview, without having his/her own style the translator is not able to cope with this task."¹⁶

The nature of the translation lies in its *duality*: on one hand, it is secondary, on the other hand – it is *primary*. The reason for this should be sought in the similarities and differences of the process of creation of the original and the translation.

The main differences between the authoring and the translation work at the creative -psychological level consist in the fact that a) author's mental energy is directed to his/her own creative materialization of *his/her own imaginary* object in the *autochthonous* linguistic space; b) translator's mental energy is directed to the materialization of *someone's real object* in a different *ethno-linguistic and cultural space*; c) the author is *free* in his/her creative process; g) the translator is *dependent* on the original and the quality of his/her work is directly proportional to the *empathy*, that is, his/her ability to experience in parallel the same emotions the author experienced in the process of creating the original; and we would like to add the ability to get used to *author's temporal medium*, i.e., the translator must have three types of empathy:

- *emotional*, based on the mechanisms of projection and imitation of other reactions;

¹⁶ L., Ginzburg, *My Heart is Broken*, M.: Soviet Writer, 1983, p. 20.

- *cognitive*, based on the intelligent processes: comparison, analogy, etc.;

- *predicative* manifest itself in the anticipation of someone's reactions in certain situations. This point is particularly true for author's motivation and for the motivation of the characters of the translated work.

Let us refer in more detail to *the similarities and differences of the creative imagination of the author and the translator*. Let us emphasize that in author's case as well as in translator's case, it proves the artistic view of the world, the same nature of the images production by processing the mental components acquired in past experiences.

The author as well as the translator appear to have an *active imagination* in the process of their work, i.e., a combination of figurative and abstract thinking, taking the form of a special internal activity, which consists of the desired image, the dream - a necessary condition of the delayed implementation. However, the above-mentioned tandem "author - translator" has *different* kinds of imagination:

a) *creative* - the author, suggesting independent imaging, implemented in the new original works which are unique, and what is more, the novelty can be *objective*, when the images and the ideas do not repeat anything present in the experience of others, or *subjective* - if something previously created is repeated, but for the author it is new and original;

b) *re-creating* - the translator, the imagination of whom is deployed on the material of an already created description, "it is based on the creation of certain images, according to the description"¹⁷

Thus, the translator re-creates the source material in a different ethno-linguistic environment through the *voluntary and involuntary* shaped means that are at his/her disposal.

We would like to specify, that the *voluntary imagination* is characteristic for solving the targeted artistic tasks, and the *involuntary imagination* - is inherent in dreams and meditations. This includes the intuition as well as the heuristic insight. That is, we are facing with different kinds of creative imagination.

Those who still hope to replace the personal translation process (denying it for its originality and artistry) by the technical, machine translation should note that "the creative imagination often acts as an acting logical thinking. In the strict sense, the logical thinking is possible when there is enough information, or it can be obtained in a logical way. And if the information is not enough and it is not possible to get more of it, then the intuition and the creative imagination help, creating the missing links and linking the facts in the system"¹⁸ until it is possible to find the real facts. Such a role of the creative imagination is *not the same* in different areas: thus, in the scientific search its role is *somewhat less than in the literary work*"¹⁹

¹⁷ S.Y. Golovin, *Dictionary of a Practicing Psychologist*, M.: AST, 2001 p.103-105.

¹⁸ Ibidem, 106.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 106.

The machine translation, as a product of scientific and technological research, is far from the literary creation, as the process of the artistic translation, based on the artistic and re-creative imagination of the translator.

“A human never came down to a character that could be covered entirely with an acceptable simplification. It is a vain dream of many. As soon as one comprehends this character in its simplest aspect, one is again convinced of human’s usual difficulty”²⁰.

The similarity of the author's creative process and, consequently, - that of the translator, is especially noticeable in *the lexical-grammatical and stylistic spheres*. “Where does the vocabulary of the translation come from, what is it formed of? Is the translation only the translation of the meanings or it includes translator’s own lexis, accumulated day-by day in the everyday life, or is it subtracted from the books? There is a professional ability to seize the fresh word on the fly, to pull it from the read book.”²¹To the translator happens the same as to the author of the text, as noted the poet accurately: “Poetry - / is the same extraction of radium / In a gram is a prey / during a year - labors / One harasses / for a single word / thousands of tons / of verbal ore... / ”²²

All the nuances of the found right word, the transfer of its own contextual and intertextual semantics, the whole process of translator’s re-creation of the original text in the syntactic, stylistic, metrical, and even in the phonetic system of the target language fully comply with the author's creative quest.

Translator’s creativity includes the most important component – searching the methods to transfer the author's artistry by the means of the target language, which, ultimately, are the original findings of the translator, the more valuable the closer they are to the author's manner of writing. “Of course, the translator has not a box of tricks, with “graphic means.” Like the original poet, he/she takes them from the life, from the ambient, with the only difference that he/she takes them only at the behest of the script ... ”²³

Author’s original, primary imagination leads to the source of the material nature of the text, to the original product.

The translator gets the heavy lot of performing a double job: to experience for the original’s author all the way from the image to the poetic word in the source language, i.e., to penetrate the code of the author's language and thinking, and then overcome the path of bringing the poetry into an embodied text in the receiving language that is accessible to the perception of the foreign language readers. This can be called the creation of **a second material nature** of the original work of art, dressed in a foreign body, but retaining the spirit and, to the possible extent, the artistry of the source.

²⁰ F. Brodel, *Structures of everyday life: the possible and the impossible*, M.: Progress, 1986, p.596

²¹ L. Ginsburg, *My Heart is Broken*, M.: Soviet Writer, 1983, p.11

²² V.V. Mayakovsky, *Selected Lyrics. Poetry and Poems*. Chisinau:Artistic Literature, 1980, p.150

²³ L. Ginsburg, *My Heart is Broken*, M.: Soviet Writer, 1983, p. 11

Conclusions

1. The issue on the separation of the artistic translation process from the other types of translation aroused long ago. The common, universal criteria for the translation activity's results partially cover the necessity of this scientific tool of the artistic translation's needs. A clear sign of the artistry (by Psurtsev V.D.) of the text and of its translation consists, before all, in *the absence of the meaning's one-dimensionality*. According to this, the image-associative component is the marking of the original text's and its translation's artistry. The systematization of the researches in this area leads to the hypothesis about the specific regulatory approaches to the artistry, taking into account the elaborations of the theoretical national schools and directions.

2. The basis for the translation process research, for the development of the whole theoretic apparatus of the translation activity is the tandem author / translator, author's text / translation's text. Despite this, many aspects remain outside the field of view of the translation theory. The translation practice, namely, the penetration into the laboratory of the translation process, will give new impetus to the theoretical thought in the field of artistic translation.

3. The concept of *the temporal medium* we proposed represents a capacious, economical synthesis of many components from the linguistic point of view, and contains in itself the figurative-associative semantic relationship between all these components. The content of the concept as a reflection of the spirit of the epoch, in principle, is not new: the research of the leading contemporary socio-psychologists and historians confirm the existence of a common socio-psychological factor of impact on the entire society and on the individual, which, in some cases, has a formative influence on this factor.

4. The translation can be called the creation of a *second material nature* of the original artistic (poetic) work, clothed in a foreign body, but retaining the spirit and, to the possible extent, the artistry of the source.

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STRUCTURAL AND DERIVATIONAL ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH BIOTECHNOLOGY TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract: *The article is devoted to the research of the features of forming the terminological system of biotechnology in English. It is carried out structural and derivational analysis of English biotechnology terminology. The sources of forming the biotechnological terms are explored. The analysis of the actual material allowed to single out the most productive ways of terms formation as well as their structural types.*

Keywords: *biotechnology, term, terminology system, structural types, derivational analysis, forming the terms.*

Introduction

In the last decade it is rapidly increased interest of linguists and specialists of various fields of science and technology to problems of branch terminological systems, due to the growing flow of scientific and technical information, the integration processes of sciences, increasing processes of term creation.

The last factor is especially important for biotechnology due to the escalation of environmental problems, depletion of non-renewable energy resources, rising prices on them. All this predetermined the global interest to the issue of biosafety, namely the protection of society, civilization and the environment from the harmful effects of dangerous biological organisms and their products that are in natural or genetically modified biological objects.

It is often discussed problems of terminology and due to the increasing use of computer technology to create terminological data banks, electronic industry dictionary.

Today the publications of mixed type (branch dictionaries on electronic and paper carriers are the most popular. They combine characteristics of explanatory manuals, training, translating and ideographic dictionaries in the structure that provide a user with quick access to necessary information.

Therefore, one of the main targets of modern terminography is finding lexicographical set of parameters that would provide optimal combination of several types of dictionaries in one. Creation of such dictionaries and data banks is impossible without standardization and unification of terminology vocabulary, study of linguistic problems of terminology, identifying features of term creation

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in each field of knowledge. This causes “need of depth study and further development of methodological aspects of building terminology”¹.

Today „there is no doubt that it is necessary to learn the terminology, recognizing its naturalness and the regularity of existence in the system of popular language for solving problems of terminology correctly, scientifically. Taking into consideration the study of terms should be conducted by linguists and terminologists (representatives of the areas of science and technology)”².

As a tool by means of which scientific theories, laws, principles, regulations, terms and their combinations are formed, the terminology is an important part of science and technology³.

It should be noted that “the terminological vocabulary is a particular layer of specially cultivated vocabulary that promotes science and culture of the people”⁴. Therefore, it requires a systematic review and regulation not only in the individual national languages, but also on international level. Theoretical and practical work in the field of terminology conducting in the world indicates that it is provided great value as an important branch promoting international cooperation in the field of scientific and production activities.

Observations of the development of science and technology, new means description of denotation in the relevant terminological systems, creation and replenishment of different branch terminological dictionaries is one of the main tasks of linguistics and lexicography in terminology.

The analysis of the scientific literature

The solution of theoretical problems – determination of the term nature as a sign of special concepts, finding derivational potential of terminological vocabulary, study of general trends of terminological systems development is in the focus of a number of researchers.

Problems of theoretical foundations of ideographic description of vocabulary and terminology have been studied by A. Reformatsky, G. Vinokur, C. Ozhegov, D. Lotte, S. Korshunov, Yu. Karaulov, S. Nikitina, N. Vasilyev, A. Prokhorov, I. Getman, V. Tabanakova and others.

In Ukrainian linguistics over the past decade terminological science is presented by numerous works from various fields of social activity: cybernetics, economics, medicine, linguistics and so on. However, English biotechnological terminology has hardly been studied in domestic terminological science.

In this connection the question arises about the features of formation of terminological systems of biotechnological branch based on structural and derivational analysis of English biotechnological terms.

¹ Kulebakin, V.S., *Raboty po postroeniyu nauchno-tekhnicheskoy terminologii v SSSR i soveteskaya terminologicheskaya shkola/ Lingvisticheskie problemy nauchno-tekhnicheskoy terminologii*, M.: Nauka, 1970, p.15.

² Gorelikova, S.N., *Priroda termina i nekotorye osobennosti terminoobrazovaniya v angliyskom yazyke / Vestnik Orenburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, Vol. 6, 2002, p.131.

³ Superanskaya, A.V., Podolskaya, N.V., Vasileva, N.V., *Obshchaya terminologiya. Voprosy teorii*, M.: Nauka, 2004, p.9.

⁴ Volkova, I.N., *Standartizatsiya nauchno-tekhnicheskoy terminologii*, M.: Izdatelstvo standartov, 1984, p.126.

The purpose of the article is to carry out structural and derivational analysis of English biotechnological terminology.

Structural and derivational analysis of biotechnological terminology

Since the term is a unit name in a particular scientific field, we define biotechnological terminological system as the totality of lexical items that relate to the concept of “biotechnology” and express its conceptual content, revealing evaluative or pragmatic meaning.

Biotechnological terminology is a young terminological system which is under stage of formation, therefore the study of general trends in the development of terminologies in English, Ukrainian and Russian languages and some of their features is interesting, in our view, both theoretical and practical views. The study of derivational and syntactic types of modern biotechnological terms, research of their derivational potential, finding syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations and term links at different levels of the hierarchy are the actual problems.

Formation of terminological systems of biotechnology is closely connected with the formation of Biotechnology as a scientific field. Despite of the fact that biotechnology began at the end of the twentieth century its terminological system is the formation associated with all course development of genetic and biological issues beginning from ancient times.

Methodology of biotechnology research contributed to the convergence of science and the humanities, and fundamental and applied scientific activities. As a result at the beginning of the twenty-first century Biotechnology transformed into a comprehensive integrative science that combines scores sections and directions. Biotechnological terminology contains a large number of terms borrowed from the terminology of contiguous disciplines – biology, genetics, ecology, bioethics, philosophy, sociology, psychology, law.

From the viewpoint of formal expression a large number of biotechnological terms has been compiled with using term components of Greek and Latin origin, borrowed from biology and genetics terminologies.

Since terminology of Biotechnology has wide and branched semantic connections with contiguous terminologies, a clear distinction between it and others is impossible.

After the necessary clarifications we formed a working variant of agricultural biotechnology terminology, which is the main subject of our research in the volume of 1,000 units.

Biotechnological terms distribute by their structure in this way: one-word lexemes – 502, combination of words – 498.

Among one-word terms there are simple words - (24%), derivatives - (38%), complex - (38%).

Dominated word building suffixes are:

-ion (*bioaugmentation, bioremediation, pollination, hybridization, polymerization, population, selection, expression, recombination, replication, reproduction, transcription, transformation, translation, duplication*),

-ing (*cloning, splicing, sequencing, inbreeding, engineering, crossing (breeding), mapping, profiling*),

-ance (-ence) (*dominance, inheritance, sequence, resistance*),

-er (*transfer, marker*).

Such word building prefixes are used more frequently:

Anti- (*antibiotic, antibody, anticodon, antigen, antimicrobial, antisense RNA, anti-oncogene*),

Trans- (*transgenic, transcription, transformation, translation*),

Re - (*regeneration, replication, remark (replica), recombinant, recombination*).

Binomial expressions, i.e. terms, composed of two full meaning words, are mainly the following structural types:

N + N (*nucleotide sequence, pesticide resistance, resistance management, semantic codon, stem cell, radiation genetics, gene therapy*),

A + N (*structural gene, asexual reproduction, bacteriostatic agent, biological resources, monoclonal antibody*),

N + Prep + N (*culture of cells, hybridization of cells, labeling of foods*),

Past Participle + N (*biobased products, linked genes/markers, relaxed plasmid, conserved sequence, applied research*),

Present Participle + N (*flanking region, joining (J) segment, immortalizing oncogene, reading frame, transforming oncogene*),

N + Gerund (*cell engineering, gene splicing, mutation breeding, molecular farming, chromosome walking, antigenic switching, alternative splicing*).

There are properly word combinations and lexical units with transitive status among the trinomial word combinations: *gene expression profiling, genetically modified organism, plant-incorporated protectants, single nucleotide polymorphisms, herbicide-tolerant crop, polymerase chain reaction, recombinant DNA molecules, recombinant DNA technology, soil conservation practices, open reading frame, variable surface glycoprotein*.

A small number are prepositional constructions among the trinomial word combinations:

vertical transfer of genes.

There are properly word combinations and lexical units with transitive status among terms, consisting of four words: *restriction enzyme cutting site, restriction fragment length polymorphism*.

Among term word combinations the greatest share belongs to two words. There are 403 of them. There are 81 trinomial word combinations. The rest is 14 word combinations with four components. The maximum number of words in composition of term word combinations is four words.

Such apportionment of terms for lexical length is made agree with typical meanings completely: according to S. Grinev terms which length does not exceed 4 words amount to 98-99% terminological vocabulary⁵.

The most typical meanings of lexical length are 1-3 stems, they make up almost 99% of the total number of biotechnological terms.

The most typical meanings of derivational length are 1-5 morphemes (about 97%). The most typical meanings of graphic length are 7-20 letters (82%).

The apportionment of biotechnological terms for lexical, derivational and graphic length indicates that optimizational processes take place in the vocabulary field, as well as in the language generally.

Structurally simpler and shorter terms are easy to use, but possibilities of the combination of two or three morphemes or five or six letters are too little for the denomination of the vast quantity of professional concepts.

Shorter terms do not always satisfy the user also from the perspective of accuracy, since it is quite difficult to express the content of complex concepts through two or three signs, considering that for the characteristics of one sign it is necessary one root morpheme or derivational morpheme at least.

On the other hand, the long terms, which provide more opportunities for adequate representation of a large number of complex professional concepts are repelled by language in accordance with the law of saving speech efforts.

So in the process of formation and development of terminology as a result of conscious or nonconscious selection, in consequence of competition between terms preference is shown for such terms which has length approximately 20-50% of the maximum.

Units of shorter length function in the language to create the most important and often used terms (that meets the requirements of saving speech efforts), and more length terms are to express particularly difficult, but less frequently used concepts (that meets the requirements of accuracy).

Researchers note the steady growth and spread of multi-component terms in the language of science, determined by the need of reflection of new discoveries of their innovative implementation in all spheres of society. Multi-component terms are characterized by the ability to identify different object characteristics on a level of specific/subspecific nomination without additional descriptive definition: *living organ donation, artificial antibody library, plant-incorporated protectants, gene therapy, gene mapping, genomic library*.

Terminology of Biotechnology reacts to processes in society immediately. Discussion of ethical and environmental problems of humanity is causing penetration in terminology lexical units that has relation to the object /phenomenon denoted by the subject of language. For example, *ecological risk, environmentally friendly, environmentally safe, acceptable risk, food safety*.

This phenomenon is quite natural, because on the one hand, there is interaction of terms of biotechnology and literary language, on the other, there is an increase of level of ecological, moral and ethical consciousness in modern society. It is interesting to compare the high percentage of ecologically significant

⁵ Grinev, S.V., *Souremennyye issledovaniya evolyutsii terminologiy / Nauchno-tekhnicheskaya terminologiya: sb. nauch. trudov*, M.: Akademiya, Vol. 2, 2003, p.128.

terms compared to terms that mark the moral and ethical aspect of biotechnology. This imbalance is due to the lack of officially standardized, accurately differentiated terminological units in the conceptual paradigm of biotechnological science that has developed.

Conclusions

Thus it is possible to conclude that English terminological system of biotechnology is formed at the intersection of terminological systems of all combined by it natural and humanities sciences and has strongly pronounced interdisciplinary character.

Although the development of biotechnology is not a priority of only English and American scientific community, it is served by only English terminological system in which the leading role belongs to multi-component terms that semantically reflect global and national specific changes in biological and biotechnological sciences, technological re-equipment of modern agricultural production, food industry, medicine, advances in genetic engineering.

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PORTRAITS OF MAXIME DU CAMP'S TRAVELING COMPANIONS

FIGURES DE COMPAGNONS DE VOYAGE DANS LES RÉCITS DE MAXIME DU CAMP

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Abstract: *Maxime Du Camp was well-known in the French literary history as Gustave Flaubert's close friend and travel companion, together with whom he undertook a very important journey to the Middle East, which he described in his travel accounts. This article aims to illustrate the way in which Du Camp portrayed his traveling companions in his travel notes, diaries, and letters: Flaubert, their dragomen, and servants, as well as the way Du Camp himself was depicted in Flaubert's Correspondance.*

Keywords: *travel companions, Flaubert, dragomen, travel notes, correspondence.*

À plus de cent ans après sa mort, l'écrivain Maxime Du Camp est resté très largement à redécouvrir et, s'il n'avait pas été pendant trente-sept ans l'ami et le compagnon de voyage de Gustave Flaubert, il serait probablement aujourd'hui un auteur pratiquement inconnu. En 1848 les deux écrivains entreprennent un voyage en Orient dont l'itinéraire nous fournit le modèle de ce qui sera plus tard un parcours idéal: Egypte, Palestine, Liban, Asie Mineure, Constantinople, Athènes, Grèce. Pendant leur grand voyage ils ont cimenté des sentiments qu'ils renforceront et détruiront à bon escient le reste de leur vie: ils ont suivi des cours particuliers d'arabe, ils ont pris des notes sur une multitude de sujets pour s'instruire et compléter leur penchant pour l'anthropologie sociale et culturelle, mais surtout pour fondre tous leurs acquis dans des moules littéraires, dans leurs fictions. Ils ont traversé ensemble des expériences-limite qui ont soudé leur amitié. Du Camp évoque tous ces aspects vers la fin de sa vie dans ses *Souvenirs littéraires*.

On connaît plus sur l'attitude de Du Camp envers Flaubert en tant qu'ami et compagnon de voyage que sur celle de Flaubert envers Du Camp. L'étude de son œuvre nous a amené à conclure que Du Camp, en voyageur vaillant et solitaire, se met en spectacle, se singularise dans des épreuves singulières lors des aléas du voyage, afin de mettre en valeur sa virilité. Il assure la sécurité de Flaubert, le protège, se sent responsable envers la mère de celui-ci, et, de surcroît, comme on l'a déjà affirmé, il ne mentionne même pas son grand ami dans les récits de leurs

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aventures et leurs mésaventures cependant communes justement pour s'éclairer seulement lui-même.

A son tour, dans sa correspondance, Flaubert parle de leur relation non sans nuages, de l'arrivisme parfois non dissimulé de Du Camp, y compris littéraire, qui s'éloignait très fort de ses conceptions. Il le loue avec modération et se reconnaît comme une sorte de maître à pensée de ce jeune impétueux:

Je suis bien aise que Max t'ait plu. C'est une bonne, belle et grande nature que j'ai devinée du premier jour et à laquelle je me suis accroché comme une trouvaille. Il y a entre nous deux trop de points de contact dans l'esprit et dans la constitution pour que nous nous manquions. Voilà quatre ans que nous nous connaissons, c'est comme s'il y avait un siècle! tant nous avons vécu ensemble, et par des fortunes diverses, par des temps de pluie et de soleil. Aime-le comme un frère que j'aurais à Paris. Fie-toi à lui comme à moi, et plus à lui qu'à moi-même car il vaut mieux que moi. Il y a chez lui plus d'héroïsme et plus de délicatesse. La gentilhommerie de ses manières ne fait que sortir celle de son cœur. Moi je suis plus grossier, plus commun, plus ondoyant. J'ai le fumet plus âcre. - Il ne faut pas croire ce qu'il peut te dire de moi sous le rapport littéraire. M'aimant comme il m'aime il est partial sans doute. D'abord je suis un peu son maître. Je l'ai tiré de la bourbe du feuilleton où il serait maintenant enfoui pour le reste de sa vie - si ce n'est étouffé - et je lui ai inspiré l'amour des études sérieuses. Il a fait depuis deux ans de grands progrès. Il a maintenant un joli talent. Il en aura un beau plutôt. C'est surtout le sentiment et le goût qui dominant en lui.

(lettre à Louise Colet du 14 octobre 1846)¹

Plus tard, leurs relations deviennent plus orageuses, ils se disputent souvent, les blessures et les ironies de Flaubert sont profondes et manifestes, comme le montre la lettre ci-dessous qu'il adresse à Du Camp en juillet 1852. Nous la donnons en entier puisqu'elle est révélatrice des hauts et des bas qui ont marqué leur amitié:

Mon cher bonhomme,

Je suis peiné de te voir si sensible. Loin d'avoir voulu rendre ma lettre blessante, j'avais tâché qu'elle fût tout le contraire. Je m'y étais renfermé, tant que je l'avais pu, dans les limites du sujet, comme on dit en rhétorique. Mais pourquoi, aussi, recommences-tu ta rengaine? et viens-tu toujours prêcher le régime à un homme qui a la prétention de se croire en bonne santé! *Je trouve ton affliction à mon endroit comique, voilà tout.* Est-ce que je te blâme, moi, de vivre à Paris, et d'avoir publié, etc.? [...] Tout ce que tu pourras me dire, je me le suis dit, sois-en sûr, blâme ou louange, bien et mal. Tout ce que tu ajouteras là-dessus ne sera donc que la redite d'une foule de monologues que je sais par cœur. [...] Quand à mon poste d'homme de lettres, je te le cède de grand cœur, et j'abandonne la guérite, emportant le fusil sur mon bras. - Je dénie l'honneur d'un pareil titre et d'une pareille mission. Je suis tout bonnement un bourgeois qui vit retiré à la campagne, m'occupant de littérature et sans rien demander aux autres,

¹ Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance: année 1946*, Éd. Danielle Girard et Yvan Leclerc, Rouen, 2003.

ni considération, ni honneur, ni estime même. Ils se passeront donc de mes lumières. Je leur demande en revanche qu'ils ne m'empoisonnent pas de leurs chandelles. C'est pourquoi je me tiens à l'écart. - Pour ce qui est de les aider, je ne refuserai jamais un service, quel qu'il soit. - Je me jetterai à l'eau pour sauver un bon vers ou une bonne phrase, n'importe de qui, mais je ne crois pas que pour cela l'humanité ait besoin de moi, pas plus que je n'ai besoin d'elle. Modifie encore cette idée, à savoir que, si je suis seul, je ne me contente pas de moi-même. C'est quand je serai content de moi au contraire, que je sortirai de chez moi, où je ne suis pas gâté d'encouragements. *Si tu pouvais voir au fond de ma cervelle, cette phrase que tu as écrite te semblerait une monstruosité.* [...] Prends ton parti sur ma caducité précoce, sur mon irrémédiable encroûtement. Il tient comme la teigne; *tes ongles se casseront dessus, garde-les pour des besognes plus légères. Nous ne suivons plus la même route, nous ne naviguons plus dans la même nacelle.* Que Dieu nous conduise où chacun demande! Moi, je ne cherche pas le port, mais la haute mer. - Si j'y fais naufrage, je te dispense du deuil.²

De nouveau un peu plus tard, Flaubert parle à sa maîtresse, Louise Colet, dans des termes très catégoriques et peu valorisants pour Du Camp de l'abîme qui s'est creusé entre les deux compagnons de voyage de jadis:

Nouvelle! Le jeune Du Camp est officier de la Légion d'honneur! Comme ça doit lui faire plaisir! Quand il se compare à moi, et considère le chemin qu'il a fait depuis qu'il m'a quitté, il est certain qu'il doit me trouver bien loin de lui en arrière, et qu'il a fait de la route (extérieure). Tu le verras, à quelque jour, attraper une place et laisser là cette bonne littérature. Tout se confond dans sa tête, femmes, croix, art, bottes, tout cela tourbillonne au même niveau, et pourvu que ça le pousse, c'est l'important. [...] Pour lui, ce bon Maxime, je suis maintenant incapable à son endroit d'un sentiment quelconque. La partie de mon cœur où il était est tombée sous une gangrène lente; et il n'en reste plus rien. Bons ou mauvais procédés, louanges ou calomnies, tout m'est égal. Et il n'y pas, là, de dédain. Ce n'est point une affaire d'orgueil. Mais j'éprouve une impossibilité radicale de sentir à cause de lui, pour lui, quoi que ce soit, amitié, haine, estime ou colère. - Il est parti, comme un mort, et sans même me laisser un regret. Dieu l'a voulu! Dieu soit béni! La douceur que j'ai éprouvée dans cette affection (et que je me rappelle avec charme) atténuée, sans doute, l'humiliation où je pourrais être de l'avoir eue.

(lettre à Louise Colet du 5 mars 1853)

Mais dans le voyage en Orient, à part Flaubert, un compagnon de voyage indispensable est le **drogman**, personnage capital qui doit assurer la communication entre l'occidental et l'oriental. C'est un homme à tout faire, qui peut avoir des fonctions bien diverses: interprète, domestique, guide, garde de corps, cuisinier, représentant une «version dégradée du drogman officiel»³. Du Camp, comme d'ailleurs la plupart des auteurs de récits de voyage en Orient du XIX^e siècle, présente souvent une image dévalorisante du drogman - vu comme un être incapable, futile, quasi caricatural, qui dérange et suscite des

² *Ibidem.*

³ Sarga Moussa, *La relation Orientale*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1995, p. 14

commentaires ironiques moqueurs du voyageur. Il est souvent décrit comme étant «imbécile», «crétin», d'une «bêtise croissante et excroissance» qui, au lieu de transmettre fidèlement les messages entre les interlocuteurs, les induit en erreur à cause de son incompetence. Il est même incapable de faire des choses qui sont normalement très simples. L'auteur décrit son drogman Youssef dans ses *Notes de Voyage*: «Il est un druze stupide, qui sait assez de français pour ne pas se faire comprendre et qui, comme le vieux des voyages, paraît éprouver de grandes difficultés à mettre son cheval au trot». ⁴

Le drogman est parfois, un personnage parasite, qui ne fait qu'importuner le parcours du voyageur par sa lenteur et impuissance. En Grèce, en essayant de quitter Lévhadhia, le voyageur est obligé de renvoyer à plus tard son départ à cause du drogman, qui est incapable de faire bouger les chevaux : « Notre drogman qui, comme Thomas Dilatoires «n'est point mièvre ni éveillé », a beau faire barouf, il ne réussit pas à les faire aller en avant, la pluie les effraye, ils redoutent les mauvais chemins et nous sommes forcés de rester au khan.» ⁵En guide, le drogman fait aussi preuve de sa superficialité et son inefficacité, ce qui fait de lui la cible de l'ironie de l'écrivain, qui va jusqu'à le diaboliser. A Constantinople, c'est à cause de lui que la visite des voyageurs au vieux Sérail, aux mosquées de Sainte Sophie devient un échec: «grâce au drogman qui nous guidait et volait comme un beau diable, cette visite a été mal faite».

Parfois Du Camp montre plus d'indulgence envers l'incompétence de son interprète. C'est le cas de l'italien Joseph Bricchetti, qui l'a accompagné dans son voyage en Egypte, et dont l'auteur décrit l'idiolecte exotique, lui consacrant quelques lignes dans le *Nil*:

Son langage, mélangé d'arabe, de français et d'italien, était quelquefois difficile à comprendre; il avait inventé le verbe «ganter» qui lui servait à exprimer toutes ses idées. À la seconde cataracte, comme j'allais monter avec lui sur Djebel-Aboucir, il me dit: «Allomesprincipier à ganter la montagne»; c'est-à-dire: nous allons commencer à gravir la montagne. Il disait: Il faut bien «se ganter» à dromadaire; ce poulet est trop maigre, il ne «gante» pas bien; et de tout ainsi.⁶

Toutefois, il convient de noter que le voyageur lui reconnaît des mérites importants pour le bon déroulement de l'expédition, ce qui fait de lui un personnage même agréable: «Il ne se grisait jamais, ne me volait pas trop, obéissait rapidement et me fut d'une grande utilité sur le Nil.»⁷ Le drogman sert non seulement comme interprète, mais aussi comme garde de corps auprès des autres compagnons de voyage, dont le rôle très important est celui de protéger les voyageurs dans certaines régions contre les attaques des voleurs, des pillards, des bédouins, etc. Sur la route de Saint-Saba à Jérusalem, par exemple, il est escorté de ses «trois scheiks, de quatre arnautes, de deux moukaris», de Joseph – son drogman, de son domestique, tous armés « jusqu'aux dents ».En Egypte, un des compagnons de voyage les plus importants et qui suscitent son intérêt est le

⁴ Maxime Du Camp, *Voyage en Orient (1848-1851), Notes*, éd. Giovanni Bonaccorso, Messine, Peloritana, 1972, p. 322.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 530.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 114

⁷ Maxime Du Camp, *Le Nil*, Paris, Pillet fils aîné, 1854, p. 245, p. 86.

matelot. Pendant des mois entiers son équipage de voyage est formé également de douze matelots, que l'écrivain décrit comme des héros, qui par leur dévouement, leur hardiesse, leur sacrifices incessants, sont jour et nuit au service du voyageur:

Pendant trois mois et demi je les ai vus ainsi, tout le jour et quelquefois la nuit encore, maniant leurs avirons, luttant contre le vent contraire, maigris de fatigue, dormant à peine quelques heures. [...] souvent ma barque s'ensablait; alors les hommes laissaient là les rames, dépouillaient leurs vêtements, se jetaient à l'eau, et avec de grands efforts soulevaient la quille engagée dans le lit du fleuve. On entendait des cris étouffés qui ressemblaient à des gémissements, puis les cris s'accéléraient, se précipitaient, devenaient rapides, gais comme un appel de fête, et la barque reprenait sa route.⁸

Le dynamisme de la narration, les effets sonores, renforcés par ceux visuels, composent un tableau spectaculaire, dramatique, qui est mis en contraste avec l'image sereine, contemplative, détachée du voyageur, qui se donne à voir comme un être supérieur pour lequel l'équipage semble exister uniquement pour être à son service, pour graviter autour de lui: il respire «à grands poumons les bons parfums de la nature, pendant que les matelots remorquaient la cange à grande peine»⁹.

Du Camp avait imaginé au départ pour l'Orient que le domestique amené de France pourrait assurer toutes les tâches matérielles nécessaires à un voyage de ces proportions: faire et défaire la tente, faire la cuisine, surveiller les chevaux et les bagages, assurer la protection, prendre soin des armes, entretenir les vêtements. En réalité, il y sera à la tête d'une «véritable troupe d'hommes et d'animaux»¹⁰: drogmans, domestiques, guides de jour et de nuit, cuisiniers, matelots, palefreniers, chameliers et muletiers, saïs, aéronautes, scheiks et moukaris. Les compagnons de route ne sont pas toujours agréables, comme celui qui l'accompagne de «Martigny au Gand Saint-Bernard» dans le voyage en Italie. C'est une guide que Du Camp caractérise de «silencieux et obtus»¹¹ et dont la présence est complètement ignorée puisque inutile. Le voyageur admire le paysage hivernal, la flore magnifiques, la beauté des champs, remarque aussi la saleté des villages comme celui de Boremier, mais «le guide ne dit rien», il est seul à s'émerveiller, à s'étonner devant tout ce qu'il rencontre.

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⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 137

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 136

¹⁰ Claudine Gothot-Mersch, *Voyage en Orient de Gustave Flaubert*, Paris, Gallimard, 2006, p. 202.

¹¹ Maxime Du Camp, *Orient et Italie. Souvenirs de voyage et de lectures*, Paris, Didier, 1868, *op.cit.*, p. 143.

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SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE IMAGINARY OF SPACE AND TRAVEL IN THE PICTURESQUE MAGAZINE

QUELQUES CONSIDÉRATIONS SUR L'IMAGINAIRE DE L'ESPACE ET DU VOYAGE DANS LE *MAGASIN PITTORESQUE*

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Abstract: *This article approaches a few aspects of space and journey imagery which were specific to an encyclopedic magazine destined for the general public, distributed in the 19th century: Le Magasin pittoresque. The question we aim to answer is the following: what vision on otherness is proposed by this publication which intends not only to train but also to educate by distributing moral principles besides worldwide images. How does Le Magasin pittoresque solve the tensions between the major trends that characterize it – the interest in otherness (remoteness) as well as its ethical and collective landmarks, since they seem to be somewhat contradictory: a journey ultimately involves mobility and decentering, while a moralizing approach would rather be synonymous to balance and stability?*

Keywords: *travel, space imagery, press.*

Paru en février 1833, le *Magasin pittoresque* est le premier périodique illustré de facture grand public diffusé en France. Il se propose tant d'instruire que d'éduquer ses lecteurs; il véhicule non seulement des connaissances encyclopédiques, mais aussi des normes éthiques. «A toute question nous espérons avoir une réponse prête, en nous tenant attentivement à la hauteur des connaissances, des découvertes, des productions des beaux-arts, en appelant tour à tour nos artistes, nos écrivains, à représenter, à dire ce qui est vrai, ce qui est beau, ce qui est utile [...]»¹ affirment les rédacteurs.

Les représentations de l'espace occupent une place de choix parmi les matières du recueil. Ainsi, au fil de sa première année de parution parviennent au lecteur des textes et des gravures ayant pour objet Paris (notamment la Fontaine des Innocents, la galerie d'Orléans au Palais Royal, Notre-Dame), Constantinople, la cathédrale de Rouen, le Parthénon, la cataracte du Potomac, l'Ecosse, l'Inde, Venise, l'Italie, les pierres celtiques de la Bretagne ainsi que d'autres figures d'endroits glanés à travers le monde. Cet intérêt pour un ailleurs plus ou moins lointain n'est pas, loin s'en faut, le fait du seul *Magasin pittoresque*. Au contraire, le contexte où paraît la publication marque le début de la massification des

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¹«A tout le monde», *Magasin pittoresque*, 1833, p. 1.

voyages: l'engouement pour les déplacements au long cours caractérise alors un public érudit de même que populaire qui deviendra de plus en plus large. La figure de l'explorateur recule devant celle du voyageur, voire du touriste.

Mais comment le *Magasin pittoresque*, périodique moralisateur tout autant que soucieux d'éducation, s'y prend-il pour élaborer des images du monde? Comment cet ouvrage, qui prône les joies du foyer, l'attachement à la famille, la stabilité et l'équilibre, aborde-t-il un sujet redevable en définitive au décentrement: la vastitude du monde? Nous essayerons d'y apporter une réponse dans ce qui suit.

D'abord, dans sa déclaration d'intention, le recueil se présente de la manière suivante: « un vrai Magasin [ouvert] à toutes les curiosités, à toutes les bourses, [où] on [...] trouve des objets de toute valeur, de tout choix: choses anciennes, choses modernes, animées, inanimées, monumentales, naturelles, civilisées, sauvages, appartenant à la terre, à la mer, au ciel, à tous les temps, venant de tous les pays, de l'Indostan et de la Chine, aussi bien de l'Islande, de la Laponie, de Tombouctou, de Rome ou de Paris, [...] tout ce qui mérite de fixer l'attention et les regards, tout ce qui offre un sujet intéressant de rêverie, de conversation ou d'étude.»² Outre le fait que le magazine a pour ambition d'emmagasiner la totalité de ce qui existe, l'univers se présente comme pluralité d'espaces irréductibles dans leur singularité, immensité amalgamée et miroitante. Mais cette perspective, qui pourrait passer de prime abord pour chaotique, dévoile en définitive un principe d'organisation: les derniers deux termes renvoyant à des endroits enregistrés par le recueil indiquent le rapprochement d'un ici. Car, avant de se clore, la liste déroulant tant les matières du *Magasin* que la diversité du monde rappelle Rome – haut lieu de l'Antiquité, repère de tout un espace européen et enfin Paris – synthèse de la France, haut lieu de la francité. L'univers s'organise finalement en cercles concentriques: entouré par un espace mitoyen européen, le centre en serait français.

Un autre article révélateur de la conception du *Magasin* sur l'espace est celui consacré en 1859 aux «Lacunes de la géographie». A une époque où les derniers vides de la carte du monde sont en train d'être comblés et où la maîtrise épistémologique du globe paraît triompher, le recueil appréhende l'immensité et même la vanité de cette entreprise. Confiant aux pouvoirs de la science, applaudissant à toute nouvelle avancée technique ou géographique, caressant la foi dans un avenir serein et dans le permanent perfectionnement social et individuel, le périodique semble pourtant, cette fois-ci, se méfier des capacités humaines de tout comprendre et de tout savoir.

Tout le monde connaît cette anecdote d'Alexandre le Grand encore enfant. Il étonnait fort les courtisans par la tristesse avec laquelle il apprenait les succès de son père. On lui en demanda la raison: «Mon père, dit-il, va finir par conquérir le monde entier, et ne me laissera rien à faire!»

Alexandre mourut avant d'avoir poussé ses conquêtes aux limites du monde alors connu. Aujourd'hui, le voyageur qui, à l'aspect des progrès

² *Ibid.*

faits par la géographie depuis soixante ans, de la précision de ses études géographiques et de la belle exécution de nos cartes, répéterait pour son compte et celui de ses confrères, l'exclamation noblement jalouse du fils d'Olympias, ferait preuve d'une grande légèreté ou d'une insigne fatuité de savant. Le domaine de la volonté humaine est immense, mais celui des résultats individuels assez borné. Voir tout un pays dans ses moindres détails, son relief, ses eaux, le réseau de ses routes, ses villes, ses villages, quel travail! Que sera-ce donc s'il s'agit de voir ce même pays sous tous les aspects, population, langues, productions naturelles de toute sorte, hygiène, statistique, travaux publics?³

Devant l'immensité d'un horizon fuyant, face à un ailleurs incertain et pluriel, le regard du *Magasin* se tourne vers l'ici. L'incomplétude du savoir sur le lointain soulève des doutes également quant à l'emprise sur l'espace français de même que le souhait de comprendre et de faire sien au moins ce dernier. Le recueil continue sa réflexion:

La France, certes, est une contrée sur laquelle il a été beaucoup écrit; mais en a-t-on dit la moitié de ce que l'on en doit dire? Sa grande carte topographique est-elle terminée? En a-t-on une seule carte agronomique bien faite? une seule carte ethnographique indiquant la distribution des langues et des patois? Peut-on nous citer un seul bon Atlas de géographie comparée, analogue à ce qu'on fait en Allemagne?

Je disais il y a quelques mois au directeur d'un grand institut géographique allemand que je m'occupais à terminer une carte très détaillée de la Guyane française, contrée aussi intéressante que mal connue à tous les égards.

«Ah! vous êtes bien un Français! me dit mon interlocuteur. Vous vous occupez d'une colonie éloignée, et votre propre pays attend encore une bonne carte générale et une description satisfaisante?»⁴

Telle que la construit le *Magasin pittoresque*, la mappemonde n'est pas plate et lisse, objet d'une appréhension neutre ou égalitaire de l'espace. Au contraire, s'il se penche volontiers sur des espaces autres, le recueil essaie prioritairement de forger une épaisseur au tout proche national. L'une des manifestations de cet intérêt est le fait même de pointer si besoin les manques des autres entreprises de saisie du même territoire. Selon toute apparence, à l'aune du périodique, se rendre maître de l'ici paraît l'emporter sur la familiarisation avec la vastitude de l'ailleurs, le soubassement de la découverte du monde étant les certitudes sur l'espace national.

En outre, en tant qu'instrument de lecture du territoire français, le *Magasin* s'avère être un document assez original. Non seulement parce qu'il est un produit de presse et qu'il comprend, comme tout ouvrage pareil, des contenus à parution discontinue, mais aussi en raison de sa facture encyclopédique. Les écrits les plus représentatifs qui offrent à leurs utilisateurs des grilles spatiales sont sans

³« Des lacunes de la géographie. I.- L'Europe et l'Asie », *Magasin pittoresque*, 1859, p.207.

⁴ *Ibid.*

conteste les guides. Face à ce genre de recueils, qui relèvent d'une certaine technique d'appropriation de l'inconnu et de familiarisation avec des contrées plus ou moins lointaines, outils achetés et utilisés en principe à une fin unique (la mise en route), les représentations de lieux que comporte le *Magasin* sont grandement différentes.

Il est vrai que parfois, tout comme les guides, la publication fait des recommandations aux voyageurs. Elle leur conseille par exemple de visiter certains monuments. Ainsi, une fois à Reims, ceux-ci devraient voir absolument l'église Saint-Rémi, endroit qu'ils ignoreraient pour la plupart et qu'ils se dispenseraient de visiter dès qu'ils ont vu la cathédrale: «C'est un grand tort, commente le recueil, et ils seront amplement dédommagés de leur peine s'ils se dirigent vers l'extrémité du faubourg dont la vaste église [...] est aujourd'hui l'église paroissiale, après avoir été église d'abbaye». ⁵Pourtant, à quelques exceptions près, le périodique n'appréhende pas ses usagers comme mobiles. Ceux-ci ne sont pas forcément censés se déplacer. Les représentations d'espace ne s'organisent guère selon la dynamique du parcours. Les images de villes notamment consistent surtout dans des figures de monuments, témoins du passé et chefs-d'œuvre d'architecture; ce sont des espaces uniquement construits, ne comportant que rarement des interstices de circulation. Tandis que le guide conçoit la lecture qu'il offre de l'espace comme précédant ou accompagnant le cheminement de son lecteur, dans le *Magasin pittoresque*, au contraire, lecture de l'ouvrage et pratique effective du sol se trouvent disjointes. Dans le cas du périodique, le discours sur l'espace ne requiert guère l'épreuve du terrain; celui-ci ne s'élabore pas comme une étape préparatoire et/ou simultanée du voyage et les relevés spatiaux qu'il met à la disposition de ses lecteurs se suffisent souvent à eux-mêmes sans exiger le regard ou le pas d'un spectateur sur place.

En plus, le *Magasin pittoresque* n'incite pas forcément son public à prendre la route. Dans sa livraison de 1853, on peut lire ceci:

Le voyageur que l'humeur inquiète, le désir de voir entraîne si loin de chez lui, est semblable à l'ambitieux qui, établi dans quelque village, ayant un peu de bien et une douce existence, s'avise un jour de souhaiter la fortune. C'est une déesse qui ne visite point les lieux retirés. Il faudra changer de pays, courir après elle de ville en ville [...] C'est assez dire qu'on se lasse avant d'avoir ce qu'on veut; car même si l'on parvient à saisir la fortune, on n'est pas beaucoup plus avancé. Fortune et contentement sont deux; on n'a pas l'un avec l'autre [...] ⁶

Le *Magasin pittoresque* a du mal à s'accommoder des voyages loisirs. Ceux-ci ne répondraient à aucun besoin et seraient l'expression d'une propension inquiétante à l'oisiveté. Ils témoigneraient d'un tempérament déséquilibré, voire dangereux. A l'encontre de la curiosité et de l'instabilité du voyageur, les rédacteurs du recueil prônent l'égalité d'humeur, la paix de l'âme, la constance et le répit.

⁵ «Eglise Saint-Remi, à Reims», *Magasin pittoresque*, 1851, p.176.

⁶ «Un paysage», *Magasin pittoresque*, 1845, p.72.

Qu'ai-je fait? se dit-on alors: j'avais le repos, je l'ai changé pour l'inquiétude; j'avais la réalité, je l'ai laissée pour suivre une ombre. Cela dit, on est trop heureux de revenir à son humble maison, de reprendre les occupations utiles de chaque jour, les entretiens honnêtes avec ses voisins sur le pas de la porte.

Heureux qui vit chez soi,

De régler ses désirs faisant tout son empli.

La Fontaine l'a dit. Il a peint dans ses fables l'humeur inquiète du voyageur et celle de l'ambitieux. Leurs caractères sont semblables [...]⁷

Une quarantaine d'années plus tard, dans l'article intitulé «Le carnet d'un voyageur»⁸, le *Magasin* consigne de nouveau des réflexions relatives aux déplacements au long cours. Le tourisme est devenu entre temps une pratique assez répandue grâce notamment au développement des chemins de fer et le recueil adapte quelque peu son discours aux nouvelles réalités. Cette fois-ci, ses considérations sont plus indulgentes, mais, somme toute, hautement compatibles avec les affirmations ci-dessus. En effet, s'il ne désapprouve plus les voyages, pourtant il ne les appréhende toujours pas en tant que temps et espace de liberté. Au contraire, pour se justifier, ils devraient impérativement respecter des règles strictes, qui les muent en véritable parcours spartiate. Le désœuvrement est impitoyablement banni. Le périodique condamne à l'occasion des comportements qu'il prend pour dénaturés, à savoir des écarts à la norme qui est la sienne: «il est une race de soi-disant voyageurs pour lesquels le déplacement c'est le voyage», dit-il, des «impatiens qui ont avant tout besoin de se mouvoir», des «désœuvrés», des «demi-vivants», qui ont «une préoccupation unique: faire le tour du monde à la vapeur, en moins de quatre-vingts heures, pour sortir du banal». Ceux-ci «vont devant eux sans rien voir». Enfin le *Magasin* résume: «A eux l'espace! ils le dévorent sans épargner. D'ailleurs nul souci d'étude.»

Pour le recueil, «le voyage exige, au contraire, de l'étude et de la réflexion»; «les vrais voyageurs veulent tout voir» et «pour rien au monde [ils] ne s'embarrasseraient d'un souci vulgaire». Ce qui suit à cette réflexion est une liste exhaustive des connaissances que celui qui part devrait rassembler, somme de savoirs correspondant au champ épistémologique de l'époque, ce qui montre de la part du *Magasin* une ambition encyclopédique, un désir foncier de tout comprendre et de tout synthétiser: celui qui prend la route «sera tour à tour astronome, topographe, géologue, paléontologue, minéralogiste, naturaliste, anthropologue, linguiste, ethnographe, antiquaire, statisticien, économiste». Enfin la publication explicite sa vision du voyage: «Parcourir le monde, c'est acquérir. A contempler la nature, on devient plus candide et plus fier; à voyager, on s'améliore.»⁹

Le voyage ne devrait aucunement être une pérégrination insoucieuse, mais au contraire une source d'enrichissement et perfectionnement personnel. Il y aurait également un art de bien voyager, une démarche faite de rigueur et de

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.71.

⁸ «Le carnet du voyageur », *Magasin pittoresque*, 1883, p.146.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.147.

méthode. A l'époque de l'avènement des déplacements collectifs, le recueil considère donc que l'avancée dans l'espace devrait correspondre aussi à une avancée intellectuelle de même qu'à un progrès dans la voie qui mène à un autre soi-même, un soi-même meilleur que le précédent. Ainsi l'enjeu du voyage ne serait aucunement l'emprise sur l'espace, sa possession par le corps. L'élément spatial n'assume au bout du compte que le rôle de moyen, d'outil desservant des desseins d'un tout autre ordre, à savoir rationnel et moral. Faute d'atteindre de telles visées, le voyage serait raté.

Encore un exemple qui éclaire de la vision sur les déplacements que propose le *Magasin pittoresque* à ses usagers. Dans un article consacré à Châlons-sur-Saône en 1845, cette ville représente, d'abord, pour le voyageur qui vient de Paris, un espace de plaisir et de liberté. C'est un endroit privilégié où celui-ci oublie «la diligence, ses durs coussins, son air nauséabond et la poussière», une sorte d'antichambre du midi. Déjà «le désir entrevoit Lyon, Avignon, Marseille, la Méditerranée» et «on devine Gènes, Livourne, Cibita-Vecchia, Rome!». Pourtant, quant au retour dans la capitale, le ressenti du voyageur traversant de nouveau Châlons ne s'identifie pas, comme on pourrait l'imaginer d'après ses réflexions à l'aller, à une nostalgie des paysages méditerranéens. Aucun regret ne pointe d'avoir laissé derrière soi des moments de plaisir baignés de soleil. Au contraire, ce qui l'emporte cette fois-ci, c'est le désir de rentrer et de se retrouver au plus vite chez soi.

C'est pourquoi les paroles de Dormont de Belloy sont censées exprimer le mieux les pensées de celui qui revoit de nouveau, après s'en être éloigné, son espace familier:

Plus je vis d'étrangers, plus j'aimai ma patrie.

On a tant vu, tant admiré, qu'on n'aspire plus qu'à une seule chose: rentrer chez soi, embrasser sa famille, ses amis; reprendre ses bonnes vieilles habitudes; redevenir Parisien; raconter et se souvenir.

A l'aune des exemples ci-dessus, il devient évident que le *Magasin pittoresque* ne prêche aucune forme, plus ou moins évidente et consciente, de nomadisme. Le temps de cette pratique qui privilégie l'horizon fuyant et l'absence de repères n'est pas encore venu. D'autant moins au sein d'un ouvrage qui cherche à poser, voire à raffermir, des jalons collectifs, notamment éthiques. Selon les rédacteurs du *Magasin pittoresque*, éprouver l'espace n'aurait pas de valeur en soi. C'est dans sa vision des déplacements plus que dans leur traitement que le recueil s'éloigne le plus des guides. Si, pour ces derniers, l'expérience du voyage est fondamentale, leur usage la desservant et y contribuant amplement, pour le périodique de Charton, le vécu n'est que secondaire et s'inscrit dans la poursuite d'une double visée instructive et éducative, sans laquelle il serait même pernicieux.

Enfin, le recueil met en scène une certaine dynamique centripète, qui réduit le différent au même, le lointain à la proximité. L'espace au-delà des frontières est souvent comprimé par l'en-deçà. «La *Guienne*, le *Béarn*, le *Roussillon*, le

Languedoc et la *Provence* [sont] notre Espagne et notre Italie¹⁰; encore, «[...] à deux pas de Paris [il y a] des spectacles que nous allons souvent chercher bien loin dans les pays étrangers, et que nous croyons uniques»¹¹; une autre fois, le recueil se demande: «Mais d'où vient que l'on croit nécessaire d'aller jusques en Grèce ou en Italie pour voir de belles ruines? Le Languedoc et la Provence en possèdent d'admirables. Les théâtres d'Arles et d'Orange offrent des restes plus importants qu'aucun monument semblable de la Grèce ou de l'Italie. Où pourrait-on trouver un coin plus pittoresquement riche que le théâtre d'Arles?»¹² La France est régulièrement présentée comme synthèse des beautés des autres pays, contrée diverse qui rassemble tout ce qui n'existe ailleurs que séparément et dont la variété est aussi richesse. En raison du transfert de substance qui s'opère, l'ici rassemble souvent le lointain, ce dernier n'apportant pas toujours de nouveauté irréductible au familier.

Le mécanisme mis en place le *Magasin pittoresque* pour enregistrer la géographie du monde s'avère tributaire tant à une ouverture qu'à une quête de racines. La curiosité pour le lointain, par ailleurs une curiosité pesée, tenue en bride par la rigueur de l'observation, s'entremêle à la volonté d'attribuer une identité et une épaisseur à la France. L'univers paraît ainsi conçu à la manière des poupées gigognes qui s'emboîtent; la vastitude du monde comprend plusieurs cercles concentriques, l'ici national en étant le plus épais. Il s'agit d'un centre et à la fois d'une garantie de stabilité dans la représentation du monde. En plus, la France est un ici qui est déjà un ailleurs. Sa primauté parmi les figures d'espaces de même que la manière d'élaborer son image en font dans le *Magasin pittoresque* un juste-milieu entre le désir, centrifuge, de (faire) connaître le monde et celui, centripète, de promouvoir des valeurs stables.

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¹⁰ «Les ruines de Saint-Rémy», *Magasin pittoresque*, 1835, p.167.

¹¹ «Le château de Marly», *Magasin pittoresque*, 1848, p. 105.

¹² «Restes du théâtre antique à Arles», *Magasin pittoresque*, 1858, p. 398