

# *Cogita*

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH JOURNAL**

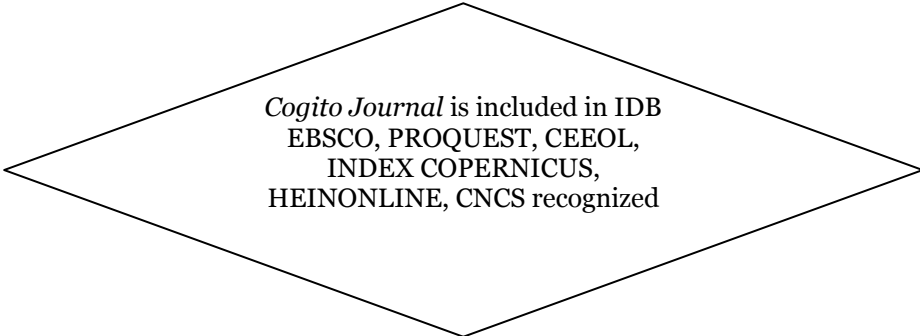
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# ETHICAL – MORAL DIMENSIONS IN “THE DESCRIPTION OF MOLDOVIA” (DESCRIPTIO MOLDAVIE) BY DIMITRIE CANTEMIR

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**Abstract:** *The article examines some dimensions of the ethical-moral nature of the Moldovans from the work of Dimitrie Cantemir “Description of Moldova” such as: being proud of their nation (Moldovans), truth reflection, the cultivation of good habits, the passive attitude of the Moldovans towards “science” (learning), Moldovans’ hospitality, military mastery, patriotism, the devotion towards church and Christian faith.*

**Keywords:** *Moldovans, ethics, nation, patriotism, traditions, good habit, Christianity.*

The work “Description of Moldova” (Descriptio Moldavie) was written at the advice of the Academy of Berlin (in Latin), having tangents with D.Cantemir’s appointment as a member of it. The year 2014 is an anniversary one since it celebrates 300 years since Dimitrie Cantemir’s nomination as member of the Academy of Berlin. Dimitrie Cantemir is the first Romanian of an Academy from abroad.

In a conceptual and value sense, the work constitutes a visit card of Moldova, a guide for everyone who wants to get acquainted with the Romanian nation (with Moldovans) and to their moral percepts and spiritual image. The book also comprises biographical aspects of the Lord Dimitrie Cantemir, but in a special way it describes three sections: the geographic part, the political part, the ecclesiastical and literary part. It is from this book that the Occident found out about Moldova, about its tragic destiny, about its lands and people, about its political and economic domain, about Moldovans’ traditions, customs, religion, language and dialect, about church possessions, about Moldovans’ letters. The “Description of Moldova” is also a fescue of habits, of moral norms and principles; of conduct through which a nation exists and asserts itself in world.

Generally speaking, the deductions of D.Cantemir in the domain of education foresee the necessity of an adequate moral law that would contribute directly to the affirmation of a conduct for “a good for all”, which is a good that would correspond to some states and orientations of increasing social development. First of all, we emphasize the fact that Dimitrie Cantemir is proud of his nation, is proud of the inhabitants of his country whom we have to praise, to love and to worship respectfully.

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We consider very important the fact that D.Cantemir, while characterizing the moral image of the Moldovans, applies to truth and notices that this is what namely does not allow us to boast our co-citizens since, *“it will be more drastically to them, when the mistakes they are making will appear before their eyes, instead of being told lies and flattered with a tender consolation and skilful defence and by that to believe that go well with those mistakes, for which the people with good “manners” mock on them”*.<sup>1</sup>

And the scholar was affirming that we had no reasons to boast Moldovans although they would merit this. It would be logical and obvious to emphasize that the references to truth are not determined since the discriminating conditions in which the Moldovans were, as well as the whole Romanian people, were absolutely cruel (M.Costin) and of course these ones damaged substantially their moral status, their whole moral physiognomy. The truth needs researching in all its complexity. Thus we have all the reasons to conclude that D.Cantemir, being a faithful person, considered those mistakes which were expressed in the Holly prayer “Patter Noster” as well as the final repenting doom that is the target of every man, of everyone who is faithful. In spite of the fact that the Moldovans have also good deeds, still, D.Cantemir thinks that focussing on the mistakes has a determining value namely in the context of final repentance.

Thus, D.Cantemir recognizes the fact that Moldovans have still “good habits”, even if these are not numerous. But at the same time he emphasizes that the small number of good habits is due to the fact that they do not know how and do not possess habits for the “manners” that are the best. The reason is the same, as we believe, the discriminating historical –objective conditions in which were the Romanian countries, the lack of cultural and educational institutions and, in general, the inferior level of society development, generated by the occupation. On the contrary, we have the reason to wonder the fact that even in those harsh times the Romanian nation could still maintain its verticality, even if basically damaged. Dimitrie Cantemir himself created genial works even in this terrible historical epoch. And the Moldovans were proving that “the courage and bravery is their mother and sister, ... all in general are courageous and brave, well-disposed to start a quarrel, but calm down to soon and reconcile again.”<sup>2</sup> In the same time the scholar regrets the fact that “peasantry rarely goes to army.”<sup>3</sup> So, it is not that peasantry that during Stephen the Great reign had a special patriotic role getting ready every time firmly to defend the country. Yet, all together are” joking and joyful and the heat is not too far from the mouth”.

In another context D. Cantemir notices, that “The Moldovans are not fond of learning, but mostly hate it. They know neither the names of the sciences nor of the beautiful crafts”.<sup>4</sup> While describing this aspect of the Moldovans’ life,

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<sup>1</sup> Dimitrie Cantemir, *Description of Moldavia*, International Letter Publishing House, Bucharest-Chisinau, edition initiated and coordinated by Adrian Vidraşcu and Dan Vidraşcu 1909, p.223-224.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p.224.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, p.224.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p.227.



D.Cantemir probably meant also that epoch, and the clear image would have been more complete in the case when there would have been mentioned also the princes of the country who were paying attention to culture and education. But, on the other hand, it is mentioned the idea that there were just priests who had to study, and for common people it was enough just to read, to write and to sign their name.<sup>5</sup> Hence there results the big faith of the peasants in church, in the servants of culture and of Christian values. But as we think, the most important is that every Christian while getting ready for the big repentance has the right to know his mistakes in order to interfere in their correction.

In our vision, the attitude of D. Cantemir towards the Moldovans who do not accept science (we mean the book, education in general) has the goal to present a sombre reality and at the same time to encourage his co-nationals to study. He wants to see them cultivated, trained and lovers of studies. And the encouragement of Dimitrie Cantemir to overpass these decreasing states is absolutely necessary to be achieved (in spite of the fact it is a specific and individualized encouragement).

The non-desire of the Moldovans to study is also generated, as we think, by the same discriminating socio-economic conditions which destroyed substantially their moral image. Being poor, deprived of lands and property, being attacked permanently by enemies, they had no time and neither real social possibilities for a better living. That is why the Moldovans, having no normal conditions of life, had simply to survive. And we have to admire the Moldovans of those “terrible times” who still survived and did not disappear from history as disappeared other nations of similar conditions.

In another context, Dimitrie Cantemir refers in a special way to their dignity as soldiers. In accordance to D.Cantemir’s appreciation, “the inhabitants from the law country, who used long time ago to live in war with Tatars, are better soldiers and wilder men than the others and are more rebel and unstable...”<sup>6</sup>. The scientist is proud of the fact that the Moldovans are very skilful in wearing and handling the weapons mentioning especially the mastery, the ability to use the arrow and the sword, through which they prove their true bravery with which they mostly break up in the mist cases in different wars.<sup>7</sup>

With a special satisfaction D. Cantemir retells about the hospitality of the Moldovans, which was proverbial, praising them and affirming that this quality was equal to that of true faith, and if te man was faithful truly, he was capable of great deeds. Being poor and not having the necessary thing for their daily live, still the Moldavians considered that anyone who enters their house has to be respected and honoured with “*shelter and dishes*” and this deed was considered worth of appraisal. They invite guests (travellers) with gladness, being happy to give them a helping hand in what they need, as if they were their brothers.

The Moldovans consider the reception of the guests as a special deed, that is why they look for travellers themselves and invite them to the table (dignity and honour). In fact this aspect – the hospitality is a distinctive feature of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p.227.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p.228.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p.225-226.

Moldovans because in this way the nations come closer, communicate, a fact that reflects their spirituality, and the people become closer, kindred in spirit, more merciful, and more helpful. In reality, one nation is a mirror for other nations and in this way necessary conditions for communal interests are created.

Dimitrie Cantemir refers to the fact that in their daily lives the Moldavians play different games, and one of the most widely spread was that of the “*caluseri*” which starts specifically (in hiding) and then spreads through all the market places and villages, lasting for ten days, covering the period between the feast of Ascension and the Descension of the Holy Spirit, and in this period they don’t sleep anywhere but only near the walls of the churches.<sup>8</sup>

According to their faith, they believe that this act must be deeply accomplished because if they sleep in another place rather than the church they will be “*haunted by ghosts*”. This ritual being very traditional has a tragical contents and ending. In this way if those two groups of wandering “*caluseri*” meet each other on their way, then this is necessarily followed by a fight. Consequently, the beaten group gives place to the winners and only in this way there comes peace.

According to the tradition of this ritual, the beaten group has to subdue itself to the winner for a period of nine years. And in case some of the members of the group are killed no one is judged. And anyone who wants to become a member of the group has to take part in all these activities for nine years. The absence from the group of one of its members is taken that he is haunted by evil spirits and ghosts. It is also considered that these rituals lead to the treatments of illnesses which develop in the process of the ritual.<sup>9</sup>

D. Cantemir gives an important place and role to the moral and Christian life of the Moldavians, stressing that this belief helped them to survive during their history. The Moldovans are devoted to the church and to the Christian belief, do not accept other religions and “*all the nation keeps to the eastern church and has no side thoughts for any covering of the faith and do not omit anything from anything that are the commandments of the church, and do not carry out anything forbidden by the church*”<sup>10</sup>. They consider that only the eastern church faith (the orthodox church is the genuine one), and that is why they reject all the religions especially the “*popish*”, in general they reject all the heretic religion, any “*heresy*”, remaining faithful to the eastern church.<sup>11</sup>

It is worth mentioning the fact which is very nicely described in the work according to which the Moldavians honour the icons of the saints, venerate them with respect and awe, listen to the Holy Scriptures in the church and keep the fasting periods. They also believe that they will appear at the final judgement, will be blessed by the miracle of the paradise, being convinced that the virtues which they possess will help them to overcome the “*smaller sins*” and these will be forgiven even *after their death*”. They also believe that the church has the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p.233.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p.247.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, 1909, p.247.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p.247.

obligation to raise to the heavens prayers and that the believers must manifest more possible mercifulness.

It is meaningful a fact mentioned about the role of the icons in the lives of the Moldavians and Dimitrie Cantemir emphasizes their honouring and the influence of the holy images on the souls of the people. Essentially, the icons represent real means for the spiritual revival of the people, and of the consolidation of the religious life of the people. The human mind created the reality of the salvation through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Through icons there happens a multiplication of Christian virtues, which lead to the much wished holiness. Here starts the religious and moralising role of the icon which cultivates in the souls of the believers aspirations to a spiritual progress and a real closeness to the divinity. Important to mention is that Dimitrie Cantemir defines the idea that the lack of education and science has a negative effect on the domain of belief. It is meant that the Moldavians are easily led astray by all kinds of heresies, venerating unknown gods and spiritual ideas such as Lado and Mano, Drăgaica, Devil, Zburătorul, Turca, Tricolici, Descânteac.<sup>12</sup>

In general, the encyclopedist attached a great attention to the role of the church in the moral formation of the Moldavians. The servants of the religious cult have a sacred mission to preach the Words of the Lord according to the true belief and without any change from the truth, and the truth about the belief is called to guide the lives and the souls of the believers on their true path, with a saint righteousness. The important thing is the belief, and even if the servant of the church had no much deep knowledge in the teaching of the church „*but they are filled with the Holy Spirit and nothing lacks from what is necessary for the benefits and leading and salvation of the Lord's sheep*”.<sup>13</sup>

From the remarks of Dimitrie Cantemir results the fact that the churches and the monasteries had an important role in the spiritual life of the Moldavians, these even by the fact of their existence created in a special spiritual atmosphere, a distinctive moral climate which inspired conviction and optimism in their lives. The moral and educational aspect is manifested even through the fact that the servants of God carried out different agricultural tasks in their free time from church service. Thus, the church as the house of the Holy God and the house of God on the earth represents the main institution of Christianity. In the very framework of the church a harmony was achieved between the heaven and the earth, between the earthly life and the afterlife. The churches and the monasteries concentrated the spirituality of the nation, its religious life, view through concrete manifestations and aspects, as well as through its connection with the rituals and the traditions existing in a certain historical epoch. The churches and the monasteries represented a shield of hope in the foundations of the social, economic, political and spiritual life of the country, being at the same time an adequate symbol of the national culture.

A speaking example in this respect is the fact according to which in Moldova there was a rooted tradition when the king and the boyars build a monastery they

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p.240-252.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p.253-254.

divide in equal parts their belongings between their children and the monastery. And then the Elders of the monastery took the obligation to assure an adequate image of them. Also, the monks of these monasteries are supervised and oriented to a dignified moral behaviour, full of honour and righteousness, and in no case may commit any unapropriate deed.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, from the above-mentioned results that the dimensions of the Christian morality denoted that now always what seems to us that is good does not necessarily possess that quality and is not accepted by the divinity. In some circumstances, if anything seems to us as sin (evil), in reality is not evil truly. And in cases when the moral judgement of the Divinity is different from the appreciation of the men, it happens that what is negative for the human being may be positive for God, then there appear situations when the man considers that he is good in the appreciation of the deed, but in fact expresses something else.

Being a faithful person and an adept of the Christianity Dimitrie Cantemir considers that the teaching of Christ is the rightest and most genuine knowledge which was a fidel guide in the "hard times". That is why the author considered that the defending of the faith as being the most important task and the only factor of our existence in time and space. Thus, the belief becomes not only a refuge and a real possibility, but also a first necessity to survive truly in this world.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p.260

# DISSEMINATION OF DEMETRIUS AND ANTIOCHUS CANTEMIR'S WORK IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

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**Abstract:** *The abstract is dedicated to the dissemination of Demetrius and Antiochus Cantemir's works in the eighteenth-century Germany. The author highlights the historical and cultural conditions that have aroused interest in the work of Moldovan scholar and his son. The circumstances of publishing The History of the Ottoman Empire and Descriptio Moldaviae of Demetrius Cantemir and The Satires of Antiochus Cantemir have been cleared up, proving that the familiarisation with Demetrius and Antiochus Cantemir's works in eighteenth-century Germany was not achieved from a simple literary curiosity, but for some cultural needs of German society.*

**Keywords:** *Cantemir's work, Berlin Scientific Society, Antiochus Cantemir.*

The work of Demetrius Cantemir was known in Germany during the life of the famous Romanian scholar. Its interception began with his election, on August 1 1714, as an honorary member of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin (Berlin Scientific Society at that time), with Baron Heinrich von Huyssen recommendation, being himself an honorary member of this Society, from Peter I entourage.

The interest continues in Demetrius Cantemir's work in Germany after the death of the Moldovan encyclopedist. Huyssen addressed with a letter from Moscow to Berlin, dated February 10, 1724, which stated that the sons of the late Prince Cantemir agreed that Berlin Society edit their father's work *Dacia antiqua et nova* (*Descriptio Moldaviae* later title). In the minutes of the Society we can meet a remark from November 1, 1724 confirming receipt of Demetrius Cantemir's map annexed to *Dacia*, sent by Huyssen [1,60]. The manuscript should be provided by the sons of Cantemir, who had addressed to Peter I with the request to continue their studies in Europe. According to Huyssen's letter, dated October 19, 1725, it appears that Peter I would have allowed Antiochus Cantemir to continue his studies in Europe: "... le jeune prince me rapportera, quand il se mettra en voyage, suivant les ordres que l'Empereur défunt a donnés en me présence" (... the young prince will inform me as soon as he hits the road, following orders that the deceased king gave them in my presence")[2,578].

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Baron von Huyssen aims to translate and edit in Germany and other works by Demetrius Cantemir. He wrote on March 13, 1726 to Daniel Ernest Jablonski, the Vice President of Berlin Society: "Si Mr. Frisch se trouve assez fort de traduire du livre Rusien imprimé icy in folio *De Religione Turcarum* par le feu Prince Cantemir, je pourrois le luy envoyer parcequ'isy on ne trouve personne désœuvré pour entreprendre cette version" ("If Mr. Frisch is sufficiently able to translate the Russian book printed in folio *Religion Turcarum* by Prince Cantemir, I could send it to him, because no one is able to make this version") [1.61]. Jablonski has voiced doubts about Frische's ability to translate *Книга сѹстема или Состояніе мѹхамеданскія религіи* by Demetrius Cantemir. Thus, the work has never been translated.

The translation of *Dacia* also delayed. Baron von Huyssen considered necessary some small changes in the text. In a message from June 3, 1727, he wrote to Jablonski that a certain Bech wanted to edit the book of Demetrius Cantemir: "Comme il a fait de bonnes observations en ce pais-là, j'ai cru qu'il seroit en estat d'augmenter *Daciam* Cantemiri, et en cette vue je luy ay conseillé ... il prist chez luy, comme il a fait, le manuscrit du Prince défunt sur *Dacia veteris et nova*. Il promet de l'envoyer ensuite à la Société augmentée de ses notes et additions suivant son *Postscriptum* et suivant la disposition de l'auteur défunt, fût ce malgré les héritiers, qui ont toujours promis vouloir les apporter eux-mêmes, quand ils commenceraient leurs voyages en Allemagne qui sont toujours différés" ("as you noted well, I thought he would be able to improve Cantemir's *Daciam* and from this point of view he did as I had advised him ... he kept the manuscript *Dacia Nova et veteris* of the deceased prince, and added his personal notes and additions in *Postscriptum* in accordance with the deceased author's arrangements. He promised to send it afterwards to the Society, despite the heirs, who always promised to do it, when they would travel to Germany, visits that were always postponed) [1.61]. However, *Dacia* manuscript did not reach Berlin. Antiochus Cantemir, appointed ambassador to England, took with him the manuscript, but did not find an editor. Only in 1769, in Hamburg, appears *Descriptio Moldaviae* in German translation [3135]. But we will talk about it a little later.

A particular interest in the work of Demetrius and Antiochus Cantemir arouses in Germany in the mid eighteenth century, regarding the translation and editing in German of Antiochus Cantemir's *Satires*. Articles dedicated to Demetrius and Antiochus Cantemir were inserted in the magazine "News of fine arts" (Das aus der anmutighen Neuste Gelehrsamkeit), published in Leipzig under the direction of the renowned German Enlightenment philosopher, literature theorist Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766). The journal with a moderate liberal orientation appears under the aegis of the Society of Fine Arts in Leipzig (Die Gesellschaft der freyen Künste zu Leipzig) known in most European countries and presided by Gottsched. "News" inserted mainly information and reviews about editorial publications both from Leipzig and from Germany and abroad. The journal did not publish literary texts, but, besides reviews, it provided the readers with literary and historical studies and poetry. Regularly

were mirrored activities of the Society of Fine Arts in Leipzig. The magazine appears regularly (each 12 issues per year) by 1762.

Even in the founding, in April 1751, the journal printed a review in "London" edition [4] of 1750 of Antiochus Cantemir's *Satires*, translated into French, accompanied by a detailed biography of the poet. The fact, that namely that particular issue was supported by the French Enlightenment circles, and first of all by Montesquieu, gave the book a special significance. In the "News" review Antiochus Cantemir enjoys a high appreciation: "This was a man of exceptional talent and really great erudition, who honored his country in many areas. He was a faithful follower and successor of Peter the Great's upheavals and that is why Russia mourns for him so much" [5.383 to 384]. The review is written in a panegyrist style. The reviewer, who seems to be Gottsched himself (most of the reviews published in the magazine belong to him), says about Cantemir's satires that one can make a true impression about it just reading one in German translation. Thus, we can intuit the fine and elegant way of the author's expressing. Then the German translation of one of Cantemir's satires, created in Alexandrian style comes. The translation is performed after the French edition and comprises 200 verses, unlike 162 verses at Cantemir.

Also, in August 1751, in the "News" an extensive review for German edition (translated in English) of the Treaty of Demetrius Cantemir, is published *Ottoman empire history* (*Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches, nach seinem Anwachse und Abnehmen* beschreiben von Demetrie Kantemir, ehemaligen Fürsten in der Moldau. Hamburg, 1748; second edition: Breslau, 1751). The review praises Cantemir's work, told the history of the Latin manuscript of the book, brought by Antiochus Cantemir in London, where in 1737 had been launched the English translation made by "Magister Tindal" who wrote and read the treaty. Further it is stated that in 1743 the French translation appeared in four volumes of Joncquière's, but in this translation, the Cantemir's text is completely distorted, such a serious book is being displayed in a superficial style, so that the author is almost unrecognizable. Besides, the French translation abounds in omissions. Further, the reviewer (presumably would be the same Gottsched) performs a thorough analysis of the translation into German and exposes a wide biography of Demetrius Cantemir counting a list of his works. It also notes that the review has been mentioning recently about his son Antiochus Cantemir, thanks to the publication of *Satires* in French.

The following year, in July 1752, the journal "News of the fine arts" publishes a study review of the German translation of the Antiochus Cantemir's *Satires* performed by Baron Heinrich Eberhard von Spilker, coming out in 1752 in Berlin with an introduction by Christlob Mylius. Thus, the paper begins: "Our readers will remember information about Prince Cantemir's satires and the sample that we have presented about a year ago. Now we are pleased to inform you that the wish expressed then has been realized. Indeed, a brave baron was found who handles the pen as well as the sword and who translated into German all the pieces of the Russian prince". Immediately after this presentation, the reviewer from "News" renders Mylius introduction and Spilker's study about the satire and its history. It is noted that, among other things, Spilker says:

“Germany is a country too Slavish that throughout its heavy imagination to rise to the idea of morals justification” [5385]. As the reviewer objects saying “a little rough” that in Germany there is no criticism of morals. For these objects, as well as for addressing satire in the circles of Enlightenment in general, it is clear that the translation of Cantemir’s *Satires* was performed not only from a literary curiosity but throughout Cantemir’s satires, one was looking for straightening German morals, which wanted to find a support in the fight with social vices, example for mobilization of “heavy imagination”.

The journal presents a detailed biography of Antiochus Cantemir, praising his talent in the building of the new Russian literature: “In Russia long before there were rhymed songs and poems, but was not known any poet, besides Trediakovski, the Secretary of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, who wrote several odes and epigrams to praise the court. This poem was however quite clumsy and the language mottled with many foreign words. Prince Cantemir boldly threw them out of language and demonstrated that it is quite rich ... He was the first that decided to write poetry without rhyme - the translations of Anacreon and Epistles of Horace, who also had a success, thus in time, he would become a Russian Orpheus and Apollo” [5, 385-386]. Praising Antiochus Cantemir, Gottsched had been expressing his own aesthetic convictions, encouraging the removing of barbarisms in German.

Antiochus Cantemir’s satires are praised in this period in anti-Catholic circles in Germany. In Berlin, the former pastor of the Brandenburg community of French Protestants, Berlin Academy secretary Jean Henry Samuel Formé (1711-1797), follower of Cr. Wolf, published a review of the 1750 edition of Antiochus Cantemir’s *Satires* in his magazine “Abeille du Parnasse”, dated May, 2 1750. Formé reprints in the journal the *VI Satire*, briefly exposes Antiochus Cantemir’s biography, attaching a list of his works [10]. Gottsched corresponded with Formé and knew about his magazine. Some researchers consider the review of the 1750 edition of Antiochus Cantemir’s *Satires*, published in April 1751 in “Das aus der anmuthigen Neuste Gelehrsamkeit” a German translation made by Gottsched of Formé’s article published a year earlier in “Abeille du Parnasse” [6107]. At the end of the review Gottsched expressed the hope that “so will be translated into German and other satires” [7, 260-261].

It is important to note that the initiative to translate and edit in German the *Satires* of Antiochus Cantemir also belongs to Gottsched. The correspondence between him and Baron Heinrich Eberhard von Spilker was found. It is about 18 letters, the first dated from April 1751, in which the latter asks to be given a literary activity to the extent of his language capabilities (French, English, and Italian) and as a poet. Gottsched recommends to Spilker to translate in German French authors, including the *Satires* of Antiochus Cantemir. After some hesitations, Spilker accepts the proposition and during June-August 1751 he translates from French the I, III, IV, VII and VIII satires, adding his own notes and comments. The translation was difficult, so Spilker tried to give up on this burden several times. The German translator left the text writing to Gottsched.

In autumn 1751 Spilker finished to translate the fifth and sixth *Satires*, and the biography of Antiochus Cantemir, developing a preliminary study entitled



*Meditations on the beginning, utility and development of satire.* Baron looked forward to the publication of the eighth satire in German and consented not only to reject any fee, but also to contribute financially to speed up the volume's editing. But Gottsched does not manage to convince the publisher from Leipzig, as he insisted, to print in the same volume with Cantemir translations and Spilker's poems. Spilker withdraws the manuscript and tries to find a publisher in Berlin, what actually happened. This time, Christlob Mylius, the editor of „Berlinische privilegierte Zeitung” paper and follower of GELessing was concerned about editing satires. He is the author of an extensive introductory study declaring himself firmly against Montesquieu's theory about peoples' characters to be defined by climate, basing his arguments on the opinions of Antiochus Cantemir. The introduction ends with the following sentences: “Is the son of a peasant less capable than the nobles? Give him a model, a possibility and a guardian and he will overcome the sharpness of mind of many scholars and nobles, who would better bend over a plough than over books” [8,2]. In the biography of Antiochus Cantemir the following lines are highlighted in bold, probably by Christlob Mylius: “He did not think people would find happiness in the hands of the sovereign autocratic tyrant ... That's why he always admired English ordering, where the wise parliament limited the supreme power by such obstacles, that it can never rise above the law and he assures them that any Nero will not be able to go so far in his barbarity, to transform Rome into ash.” [8, XXII-XXIII]. Like the French translation, appreciated much in Jansenist and Protestant circles in France and the Netherlands, the German edition of Antiochus Cantemir's *Satires* gets a social-political current in Germany from the time of Friedrich II.

The German translation keeps intact Cantemir's attacks on the clergy and nobility, and the translator Spilker inserts in the text references to the German reality. For example, Varlaam in *Satire IV* does not hold rosary in his hands, but books of German Pietists Cubach and Arend, namely the treaty *Paradise* of the latter. Cantemir's idea that noble title must be a reward of true merits is used by Spilker in critics of patents trade of German nobles. He advises German nobles that instead of spending money on gambling and balls in France, to study States bases, like Peter I.

In 1752, Spilker interrupts relations with Gottsched and joins his opponents Mylius and Lessing. By the agency of Mylius, who edited Spilker's translations, Lessing gets to know the creation of the latter, as well as the *Satires* of Antiochus Cantemir, translated into German by Spilker. In a poetic addressing towards Baron von Spilker, Lessing opposes Gottsched's “lyrics squeezed with anguish” to Spilker's “natural and living poetry” [9187]. Lessing fully supports Mylius' idea expressed in the introductory study of the translation of Antiochus Cantemir's *Satires*, about spiritual priority of people over noble strata of German society. Thus, the *Satires* of Antiochus Cantemir, translated into German, played a particular role in literary polemics in Germany of Friedrich II.

Another phase of interception the work of Demetrius Cantemir in Germany is related to German translation and editing of *Moldavian Description*. A great merit in making the first edition of *Moldavian Description* is due to scholar,

historian and arcograph Gerhard Friedrich Müller, born in Germany and established in Russia. Looking for a publisher in Germany, GF Müller chose Leipzig. On June 4, 1762 he addressed a letter to Professor JG Böme from this town, who will become later famous among scientists by publishing various historical sources. Among other things, the letter stated: "... If the professor Böme will want to buy the Latin manuscript edition of Moldova, written by the former prince Demetrius Cantemir, then this can be done through publication into a certain number of copies" 10,89]. Perhaps professor J.G.Böme did not accept this proposition and the editing the work of Demetrius Cantemir was not achieved in these years. However, the correspondence between GF Müller and J.G.Böme allows us to assume that the subject of publishing *Moldovian Description* started to be present in his correspondence with German scholars a little time before [3132].

Since 1749 GF Müller was in a friendly correspondence with the German geographer Anton Friedrich Büsching (1724-1793). It was based on their common interests in history and geography and continued until the end of Müller's life (1783). A.F. Büsching, as a geographer, must have been interested in the work of Demetrius Cantemir, seeking to obtain it by all means. By the period of *Moldavian Description* publication (1769-1770), A. F. Büsching has written and edited numerous scientific works on almost all European countries and, of course, wanted his major work *Terra Description* to include, also, a work on Moldova. That fact, has led him to accept Müller's proposition to edit *Moldavian Description* of Demetrius Cantemir in his famous journal *Magazin fur die neu Historie und Geographie*, which appeared in Hamburg.

On February 21, 1769 A. F. Büsching communicates to GF Müller that the manuscript *Moldavian Description* will be published in German translation in his journal that will appear near Easter. It is very important the fact that, unlike other works edited by Büsching, usually in Latin or French, he prepared *Moldavian Description* for editing in German, wanting the work to be known by a larger number of readers. Thus, in the years 1769-1770 the *Magazin fur die neu Historie und Geographie* (vol.III-IV) publishes the first edition in German of *Moldavian Description*.

The German translation of *Moldavian Description* appeared in a separate volume in 1771 in Frankfurt. In those published in the journal *Magazin fur die neu Historie und Geographie*, this volume included Demetrius Cantemir's full biography, taken from the German edition of the *History of the Ottoman Empire*, published in Hamburg in 1745. In a brief foreword of this edition, A.F. Büsching mentions: "I cast for the first time to light this famous book, in translation from a Latin manuscript, offered to me, in the end, by State Councilor, Mr. Müller. How it reached him, one can find out by reading the meritorious preface, which follows immediately. I thought properly to translate the Latin original into German, so that those who do not know Latin may have the opportunity to use it" [11, 24]. The fact that the A. F. Büsching published this work is a proof that he considered the work of Moldovan scholar of a high scientific level [3,134]. The German edition of 1771 was the basis of the first Russian edition of 1789 and the first Romanian edition of 1825 of *Moldavian Description*.

The familiarization with the work of Demetrius and Antiochus Cantemir in eighteenth-century Germany was achieved not from a literary curiosity, but for some cultural needs of German society. Publication of the German editions of works of Demetrius and Antiochus Cantemir was a remarkable event in the history of cultural and scientific relations between Moldova and Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century.

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# CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN GLOBAL AGE

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**Abstract:** *The unity and the diversity of cultures is a major and challenging topic for modern philosophical thinking. On this ground, different schools of thought and explanatory models are facing each other. Of the multitude of factors that generate the differences among cultures, in this study I shall refer only to the importance of certain communication languages and means. I shall address in particular the differences between modern written culture and current media culture, based on the audiovisual and the new communication forms and technologies. The book and the screen are representative communication means for the two types of cultures.*

**Keywords:** *cultural model, cultural differences, written culture, media culture, image.*

## Managing cultural differences

The world is a mosaic of peoples, languages, traditions, spiritual practices, lifestyles and patterns of thinking. In a word, a kaleidoscopic array of cultures that interact in many ways. Diversity is a an obvious, empirically observable reality, “it jumps into your face”, as they say. By contrast, the unity of cultures is also a reality, but it belongs to the background, to the substance, to the universal structure of the human soul. Therefore, the unity is harder to be found, as it requires an additional effort to know, being hidden beyond the ethnographic show of the differences in language, beliefs, patterns, lifestyles and behaviors. This is the standard representation conveyed to us by the rationalist paradigm about the relationship between unity and diversity, a basic relationship for understanding the world and the human condition. We cannot deepen this topic in this paper, but it is important to also place the debates on cultural differences and typologies under the dome this perennial problematic of philosophical thinking.

The similarities and differences among cultures and societies were initially an object of direct observation, occasioned by the practical contacts among human groups, before becoming a theoretical issue. The awareness of the differences among cultures and their acceptance are processes that gained momentum as contacts and influences among peoples from areas having different cultural values and practices grew wider and wider. Ralph Linton, a brilliant representative of the school of American cultural anthropology, considers that the very notion of culture is an outcome of mutual understanding

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and varied interactions among different societies and cultures. „Throughout his entire history, man was only vaguely aware of the existence of culture and even this degree of consciousness was due only to the contrasts between the habits of his own society and the habits of the society he happened to come into contact [...]. So that, one of the most important scientific achievements of modern times was that the existence of culture was acknowledged”.<sup>1</sup> These interactions and influences are to be found throughout the history of humankind, but they have increased in modern and contemporary age, up to the current globalization.

Globalization has built up a complex and multi-layered network of interdependencies among societies, nations, states and regions of the world. Compared to the fragmentation and isolation of the societies some centuries ago, we can say that humankind is about to become a whole, in which all the parts are more deeper and deeper interconnected and interdependent. Nonetheless, the ethnic and cultural diversity of the world is not obliterated by the chain of these interdependences, although globalization is accompanied by phenomena of cultural uniformization or erosion of local identities and traditions, as stated in a recent UNESCO report on cultural diversity in the world of today. „Globalization is often seen as a unidirectional and unidimensional process, driven by the Western-dominated global market economy and tending to standardize, streamline and transnationalize in ways inimical to cultural diversity”.<sup>2</sup> However, reality is more complex than some approaches with an ideological substratum would like to represent it, which considered, until recently, that globalization would lead to the gradual erasure of national identities. There are, of course, standardization trends, but they are counterbalanced by a strong current aimed to reinstate local and national cultural identities. Moreover, culture is a creative process so that new forms of expression and new hypostases of diversity, stimulated by communication technologies and symbolic practices specific to the digital age.

Investigating from different angles the contradictory realities of contemporary world, the UNESCO report underlines that „cultural diversity has emerged as a key concern at the turn of the new century”.<sup>3</sup> Without sharing Huntington’s thesis on the possible “clash of civilizations”, the authors of the report express their concern that, after the end of the Cold War, in various parts of the world, we witness the expansion of identity conflicts, having mainly cultural (religious, ethnic, linguistic) motivations. When not associated with democratic principles, diversity is invoked by some extremist groups as a pretext to contest universally recognized human rights, as a justification for indigenist and separatist tendencies. Given the resurgence of these political orientations, the authors of this document consider that the way cultural diversity is approached is and will be crucial for the construction of our future. Knowing other cultures, removing any intolerant attitudes, resizing the relationship between “we and the

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality*, Bucharest, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing house, 1968, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO World Report, *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, Paris, Published by UNESCO, 2010. p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.

others”, protecting the universal cultural heritage, in its variety, and non-conflictually managing cultural differences are seen to be priority goals. Indeed, the last goal we have mentioned sums up the most difficult task of the world today. In a globalized world, it is important for individuals and for societies to learn „to manage diversity more effectively” - for this ultimately is the major challenge: *managing cultural diversity*.<sup>4</sup>

Similar views are found in the work of contemporary theorists. For instance, Dominique Wolton is a promoter of the idea that „another globalization” is possible, one which should not generate relationships of economic and cultural subordination among states and nations. He proposed the concept of „cohabitation”, which he defined as a formula of coexistence of cultural differences and of identities within a common framework, at the level of certain societies and on a global scale. Cohabitation would be a humanist political project, an alternative to interethnic conflicts and violence in various parts of the globe. For Wolton, the problem we are facing „is not so much to share what we have in common, but rather to learn to manage the differences that keep us apart.”<sup>5</sup> Hence, not to blur the differences, but to build practical forms of non-conflictual “cohabitation” among individuals and societies having different identities.

This is one of the keys to this issue. Managing cultural differences is not an abstract issue, but one that involves prosaic aspects, political and practical dimensions. Cultures have real carriers (individuals, groups, nations, societies) and cultures are different because their historical, social and human foundations are different. We should not imagine the dialogue between cultures as purely spiritual, as a gratuitous exchange of ideas. It always involves economic institutional infrastructures and media devices of their respective societies. The way the „dialogue” between religions was carried out along the years, within Europe as well, testifies to the difficulty of such projects. Therefore, Wolton considers that the cohabitation project implies several conditions: „the concrete experience of otherness; the tolerance towards one another; the reference to the universal as a means to avoid segmentation”.<sup>6</sup> Invoking the idea of the universal is extremely important in this context. Differences can be recognized as being legitimate as long as they do not exceed an accepted framework of normality. Diversity can not be invoked to justify terrorist actions, torture, violence, inhuman practices or dictatorial regimes. A real dialogue requires the prior acceptance of rules that will facilitate the understanding among people with different cultural identities. „If I succeed to communicate with someone else, we have to imagine a reference framework that includes both his universe and mine”, „we should postulate a universal horizon” which transcends our differences and allows us to understand each other.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Dominique Wolton, *Informer n'est pas communiquer*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2009, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 139.

<sup>7</sup> Tvetan Todorov, *We and the Others*, Iași, European Institute Publishing House, 1999, p. 114.

### **Distinctions, classifications, typologies**

These preliminary considerations show that the present world, interconnected by the new media, will enhance the interactions among individuals and organizations belonging to different cultural spaces, will make ever more visible the differences among cultures and will put them into relations of cooperation or confrontation, both in physical and the virtual space. Anyway, today more than yesterday, the cultures feel an urgent need to get to know one another, to mutually understand their values, attitudes and languages defining them. Expanding intercultural communication is the factor which placed the topic of cultural differences at the core of current debates. In this area, several processes of an unprecedented scale should be mentioned, such as labor migration, tourism, student mobility, commercial exchanges, „deterritorialization” of activities, movement of goods and ideas, of capital and persons. Another factor, to be examined below, is the revolution triggered by the new communication technologies, which made possible the fast conveyance of information, images and messages among the interlocutors in different parts of the world, thereby overcoming the physical constraints and barriers.

To be able to properly relate to the rich and varied universe of cultures, we need complex, historical and structural analyses, from which we can draw comparisons, classifications and distinctions between the major types of cultures. The cultures, as collective transindividual structures, take today the form of national, ethnic, organizational or group cultures. National cultures are totalities, organic wholes, but we should not overlook also the internal diversity of these cultures. It is about minority groups and local traditions, different subcultures and lifestyles, depending on age, profession, area of residence, level of education. As occasional or lasting contacts among individuals, groups and organizations with different cultural structures grow more and more, the interest of these social actors in knowing the values, languages and specific behaviors of other cultural geographies is also growing stronger and stronger. The pragmatic motivations steer up the agenda of theoretical thinking. Thus, the theories on intercultural communication have implicitly become theories that have taken over the task of describing and explaining the differences among cultures, thus developing with a new methodological apparatus, the old concerns on this topic derived from the history of ideas, the philosophy culture and cultural anthropology.

In this sense, we can mention numerous attempts (some speculative, others based on empirical observations) to map out the world's cultural territory and to propose distinctions, classifications and typologies. Reading ancient or religious texts or of any other kind shows that they who wrote them were concerned to record such differences. Herodotus, the father of history, conveyed to us plenty of information and descriptions about the lifestyle, beliefs and cultural practices of the ancient people. Over time, the differences among cultures were explained by means of various factors (geographical, biological, historical, social and psychological) or starting from the predominance of fundamental values and attitudes towards life. Cultural anthropology and related disciplines developed analytical tools likely help us to penetrate into the internal structure of a culture, in order to define its identity, i.e. the elements that compose it (ideas, values,

attitudes, language, behaviours) and the functional correlations between them. The concept of “patterns of culture”, inspired by Ruth Benedict as the title of his book published in 1934, played a major role in comparative research, called cross-cultural studies, designed to determine similarities and differences between cultures and to group them together into relatively distinct categories.

Borrowing these approaches from the traditions of the interwar American anthropology, the founder of intercultural communication as a scientific discipline, Edward T. Hall, examined a series of factors that distinguish cultures, based on the idea that their visible aspects (behaviours, modes of action and communication) is rooted in the “hidden” structures of collective unconsciousness. Therefore, to adequately interpret the behaviours of individuals from another culture we must understand the meanings that are attached to these behaviours in that culture, to understand the beliefs, the particular vision of the world and “the deep biases and built-in blinders that every culture provides”.<sup>8</sup> A relevant criterion to differentiate the types of cultures is the people’s attitude toward time and how the activities are distributed in relation to a unit of time. According to this criterion, Hall expressively describes the differences between “monochronic cultures” and “polychronic cultures”.<sup>9</sup> The first category includes Western cultures (and partially the Nordic ones), where people carry out their activities sequentially, in a well defined way, in order, one after another. The second category comprises the East European, Southern and Asian cultures (of course, with certain nuances), where people carry out different activities simultaneously. Another criterion used by Hall is the importance of nonverbal language and of the context in communication acts. Thus, in “the low-context culture”, the accent falls on the pragmatic, efficient information, conveyed through the verbal language, whereas in “the high-context culture”, nonverbal languages, contexts and relational aspects have a high share in the communication process.<sup>10</sup> The polarity between Western and Eastern cultures is broadly reproduced in this case too.

Another well-known theory on cultural differences belongs to the Dutch anthropologist Geert Hofstede who believes that we can make an analogy between the elements bestowing identity to a culture and the programs operating a computer. Thus, the patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting of the individuals, which are learned and acquired through education and socialization, can be seen as “mental programs”, as “software of the mind”. “Culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social game. It is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others”.<sup>11</sup> Hofstede's contribution is also valuable since he developed an effective methodology (and a questionnaire widely used today) for measuring and interpreting cultural differences. Stating that “a dimension is an aspect of a

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<sup>8</sup> Edward T. Hall, *Beyond culture*, Anchor Press/Doubleday Garden City, New-York, 1981, p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 16-17

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>11</sup> Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, *Cultures and organizations, Software of the mind*, McGraw-Hill, 2010, p. 6.



culture that can be measured relative to other cultures”, he proposed the five dimensions: “power distance (from small to large), collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance (from weak to strong)”, which he later added another indicator: “long-term versus short-term orientation”.<sup>12</sup> In recent years, other similar theories have been developed, which classify cultures function of the predominance of fundamental values and attitudes.

Romanian culture has undergone throughout the years many influences, being situated in a geopolitical space of interference (and confrontation) among different cultural models, coming from the East and the West. Consequently, Romanian thinkers were particularly interested in the issue of identity and cultural differences and they developed several theoretical projects in this regard. It is worth noting the contribution made by philosopher Lucian Blaga, who elaborated, in the interwar period, a consistent theory on the universal and at the same time specific character of cultures. Cultural creations have both a symbolic function and also “a stylistic mark”, i.e. a particular physiognomy, conferred by a set of features that differentiate them. The symbolic dimension is a universal one, but it is always made manifest in particular stylistic forms, within a “stylistic field” shaped by factors which belong to the collective unconscious of an epoch, society and national community. The factors generating the differentiation of cultures are grouped by Blaga under the concept of “stylistic matrix”, a concept similar in function and articulation with the concept of “cultural pattern”. The main factors constituting the stylistic matrix of a culture are “the spatial and temporal horizons of the unconscious”, the dominant axiological accents, the values and meanings attributed to time, movement, history and human destiny, the preference for certain values in the order of creation.<sup>13</sup>

### **Means of communication and cultural patterns**

As we see, in order to differentiate cultures, the above mentioned typologies refer to the representations about space and time, the relations between man and nature, the preferences for certain values, the attitudes towards the others, the types of activities, the importance of contexts in the acts of communication, the stylistic orientation, the modes of thinking. Besides these factors, cultures differ also function of the predominance of certain types of languages and media. For instance, Yuri Lotman proposed a semiotic typology of cultures, depending on the predominance of the semantic or syntactic dimension in the languages of a culture.<sup>14</sup> From a semiotic point of view, cultures can be studied as a system of codes and as a system of messages. In Umberto Eco’s wording, semiotics study cultural processes putting in close correlation a “system of meaning” and a “process of communication”.<sup>15</sup> In other words, a coding system which ciphers up

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 31-38.

<sup>13</sup> Lucian Blaga, *The Trilogy of Culture*, in *Works*, vol. 9, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing house, 1985, pp. 179-180.

<sup>14</sup> Yuri Lotman, *Studies on the Typology of Culture*, Bucharest, Univers Publishing house, 1974.

<sup>15</sup> Umberto Eco, *Treaty of General Semiotics*, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing house, 1982, pp. 19-20.

various significances, messages, meanings. Codes and messages evoke the two dimensions of the sign: expression and meaning, form and content. Semiotics is more interested in codes, languages which are historically and culturally acknowledged convention systems. Messages can be variable, individual contents, whereas codes are collective, supra-individual creations, such as the language. Codes can be associated with the idea of cultural model, belonging to a community or a historical era. Likewise, codes are closely associated with the media, a certain way of encoding being compatible with certain channels and means of message conveyance.

As an extension to these remarks, it is natural to refer to Marshall McLuhan's theory, who proposed a novel criterion for differentiating cultures, namely the forms and means of communication that exert the strongest influence in a historical epoch or in a certain cultural space. This author's central thesis is that "societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the communication means among people than by the content of communication".<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the differences among cultures should be studied starting from this criterion, "the nature of communication means", and not starting from the elements of content: ideas, beliefs, values and the outlook on the world. McLuhan underwent a kind of Copernican revolution, reversing the traditional relationship between form and content. He imposed therefore a new idea, namely that the communication means, by their very nature, decisively influence the people's outlook on the world, the perception, the thinking and the organization of society. Communication means have a their own "message", a sustainable and unconscious influence on users, an influence overlapping over the influence exerted by the explicit content conveyed by the messages. This is the meaning of the famous phrase "the medium is the message".

Starting from these ideas, he argues that human history has gone through three distinct eras, which are differentiated by the nature of the predominant form of communication: cultures based on orality, modern written culture and the contemporary culture, when the audiovisual is prevailing. Orality, writing and the audiovisual bring about different cultural structures, forming different perceptive frames and ways of thinking. The transition from primary cultures of orality to written cultures, based later on printing, meant a gigantic breakthrough. Nonetheless, it was a slow, silent revolution, which spread over a long time-span, and which ended in modern, literate societies. This process practically overlapped over the process of modernization, triggering a chain of revolutionary changes in all the areas of human life. Much more problematic seems to be the second revolution, the current one, in which we all have our share, namely the faster transition from written culture to the audiovisual one. The new type of culture is related to the emergence and expansion of new communication technologies (the cinema, the radio, the television up to today's computers, with all their applications) and received different appellations from

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<sup>16</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Mass media or the Invisible Medium*, Bucharest, Nemira Publishing house, 1997, p. 232.

theorists: mass culture, cultural industries, popular culture, and more recently, the media culture.

The characteristics of this new type of culture were described with great analytical insight by McLuhan, in an anticipatory way, before that the audiovisual, the media culture or the image civilization (depending on what appellation were you prefer) to expand and dominate the surface of contemporary world. Few thinkers understood him when he spoke about the “global village” and “the retribalization” of the world through new communication technologies. He foreshadowed that the media system would produce “a mosaic world”, a “network world”, “a simultaneous world where “everything at once” dominates, where everything resonates with everything, as in an absolute electric field”.<sup>17</sup> It is a different world from that of written culture. Symbolic forms and practices to which the concept of media culture referred are “mediated by technological means of communication”, so they should be seen as “cultures of mediatization.”<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, our mental maps look now different from those provided by written culture. Of course, the three types of cultures coexist today, are co-present and active in our lives. New forms of communication pile up over the old ones, do not remove them, instead they restructure, reposition and combine them into unusual forms. The same happens with the types of cultures shaped by the three basic forms of communication. We should not imagine for a moment that the expression forms belonging to the oral culture or the established forms akin to written culture will be removed and replaced under the pressure of media culture. On the contrary, written culture and media culture coexist and interact, forming mixed hybrid structures. Nonetheless, the new communication technologies, also called new media (the Internet and its applications) will gradually displace the visions, attitudes and mental habits produced by modern written culture and generate other visions, attitudes and ways of thinking. Written culture loses its strategic position held the day before in favour of media culture, which gradually conquers new territories within the social space and the soul of its users. Therefore, a shift will occur in the cultural paradigm that will influence the lifestyles and social organization. These effects are seen primarily in education and in the forms of cultural expression.

Symbolically speaking, the cultural space of today witnesses the clash between book and screen, two fundamental means of communication which produce different modes of thinking and cultural models. Media culture may be associated with the idea of the screen, because we live in an era of “the global screen”<sup>19</sup> when we are surrounded by screens, from cinemas, televisions, computers, tablets, mobile phones to huge screens on the streets, stadiums and airports. These portals run endlessly images, of a kaleidoscopic variety. Image dominates and subordinates the word. Image is the central element in new media, forming a new, autonomous system of communication in the social space,

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<sup>17</sup> <sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 250.

<sup>18</sup> <sup>18</sup> Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012, p. 142.

<sup>19</sup> <sup>19</sup> Gilles Lipovsky, Jean Serroy, *The global screen. Culture, mass-media and the cinema in the hyper-modern age*, Iași, Polirom, Serroy, 2008, p. 8

a system which Manuel Castells calls “mass self-communication”, a form of communication which „has emerged with the development of the so-called Web 2.0 and Web 3.0”.<sup>20</sup> Finally, we should say that there are many critical approaches with regard to the negative impact of new communication technologies, especially the Internet, on culture and mental life of the users. The new digital environment needs to be studied and analysed from different angles of approach, in order to know its virtues and also its vulnerabilities.

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<sup>20</sup> Manuel Castells, *Communication Power*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2009, p. 64.

# THE SPLIT IN THE WESTERN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION: THE CONTROVERSY OVER KNOWING AND WHAT CAN BE KNOWN

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*The Split in the Western Intellectual Tradition:  
the controversy over knowing and what can be known*

**Abstract:** *This article argues that Kant attempted to but was unsuccessful in resolving the issue of whether or not emphasis should be placed on experienced phenomena (rationally analyzed) or if inquiry should include the possibility of discerning some underlying essence that is manifest as natural law. The controversy over unresolved issues related to epistemology and ontology subsequently led to the “Continental Divide” with dire consequences for Western Civilization that would eventually engulf the entire world. This article analyzes the issue from the perspective of the Philosophy of Religion and points out why complementarity has been successful in reconciling the seeming contradictions.*

**Keywords:** *Kant, experienced phenomena, natural law, philosophy of religion, epistemology.*

## Introduction

Throughout much of human history questions regarding epistemology and ontology were answered by religion. This means that at the foundation of every culture there had been no separation between religion (the most cherished beliefs of the culture) and observations of what is best for enhancing the human experience. This is an important point because there have been (and still are) societies where the cultural worldview provides answers to the question of ontology that describe existence in terms of complementarity. Cultural worldview, in this sense, has been a means of promoting a greater sense of complementary interaction between humans and nature, and more harmonious social interactions. In light of such examples there is no necessary difference between naturalism, religion (cultural worldview) and what helps a culture to flourish. This includes cultures that did not become extinct and continue to demonstrate an example of a cultural worldview that promotes Holistic well-being. In other words there are cultures that demonstrate a strong sense of

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complementarity between humans and nature, are respected in the international arena, score high on world happiness inventories, plus base their planning on naturalism and empiricism.

Although reliance on cherished cultural beliefs for answers on how best to address issues of epistemology and ontology now includes confidence in what is empirically reliable the quest remains the same: increase the range of beneficial interactions the culture is able to enjoy, produce strong flourishing societies, and how to score higher on the happiness inventory. This article argues that achieving these goals is based on gaining reliable knowledge of what is best for enhancing the human experience (epistemology); understanding the true nature of the phenomena that humanity is confronted with (ontology); and what is worth devoting time, energy, and resources to (teleology). One thing that has changed however is the fact of global interdependence (meaning that there are some aspects of these concerns that involve global issues thus, are shared by all cultures). In other words global interdependence means that a viable approach to addressing these issues takes into account the ontological nature of global social existence.

In the history of the Western intellectual tradition—from the Pre-Socrates philosophers down to today—there have been attempts to address and resolve perennial concerns. Aristotle was one of the first to use logical positivism to transform mythological and pure metaphysical claims into insights inclusive of observation and reason. Aristotle's explanation of the issues—in his *Virtue Ethics* and political economy—are increasingly proving to be relevant to addressing today's social psychological issues as well as concerns regarding political economy. Kant can also be considered as coming close to equating what had heretofore been religious concerns to what he envisioned would contribute to perpetual peace (that is if one takes into consideration his views on *Cosmopolitan Ethics*).<sup>1</sup> Kant recognized that Cartesian Dualism was creating a problem in human interactions (a problem resulting from human knowledge having a fragmentary nature) that began to be evident in the fragmentary nature of the human experience. He realized that if unresolved this would undermine the ethical basis for interpersonal and social relations as well as become detrimental to interstate relations, to peace, and to collective security.

Kant proposed a method for eliminating this epistemological problem by suggesting that there is a complementary interplay between the ontological ground of Being and human understanding.<sup>2</sup> However, unfortunately, Kant falls short of fully developing this claim by subsequently placing his emphasis on reason. Without clarifying the complementary connection between "raw existence" and the human experience we are left with a set of problems which are set for us by our rational natures and which is otherwise unsolvable.<sup>3</sup> If the

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<sup>1</sup> Firestone, Chris, *Making Sense out of Tradition: Theology and Conflict in Kant's Philosophy of Religion. Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*. (Firestone, Chris. & Palmquist, Stephen. Edts.). Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2006, 142.

<sup>2</sup> Kant, Immanuel. (translated copy 1996) *Critique of Pure Reason*. (Pluhar, Werner. Translator). Indianapolis, Indiana, Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 39- 40.

<sup>3</sup> Gardner, S., *Philosophical aestheticism. The Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy*. (Leiter, B. and Rosen, M. Eds.) (75-121). Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, 87.

interplay between the actual nature of things and the human experience cannot be clarified then what is it, actually, that we are forming knowledge about? That is to say that, if our conceptualization of reality is not grounded in an actual sensing of reality then our knowledge is actually groundless. For, if conceptuality is confined to the sphere of the conditioned it leaves us with the incapacity to ground knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

Science (academia), of course, realized the seriousness of the problem and there have been numerous attempts to resolve it: in the philosophical claims of Postmodernism, Post positivism, Critical Theory, and Pragmatism as well as in the scholarship plus theoretical positions of Quantum Physics, Neurobiology, and Social Psychology. In other words what had for millennia been religious concerns (epistemology, ontology, and teleology) remain pertinent issues for the contemporary human experience (how to be better-integrated within the fabric of *Being* and how to have more beneficial outcomes in all human interactions). This article explains the nature of the problem, the seriousness of the problem, and then covers the academic attempts to resolve the problem with an emphasis on the Philosophy of Religion, Quantum Physics, Neurobiology, Pragmatism, and Social Psychology. In this respect the conclusion will emphasize why—in addition to economics and politics culture, values, and cultural worldview (religion) are increasingly recognized as important factors in moving the global community toward flourishing, prosperity, and well-being.

The first section of the article traces the roots of the intellectual issue (regarding epistemology, ontology, and teleology) back to its classical foundation. The second section explains why controversy over these concerns had such dire political, economic, ethical, and social effects on Western Civilization that ultimately engulfed the entire world (especially evident during the 20th century). The third section explains recently emerging views on human interactions that contribute insight into how to *Constructively* manage global interdependence. The concluding section explains how academic attempts to resolve the split in the Western intellectual tradition became the foundation of views on how humanity can become better-integrated within the fabric of *Being*, increase the experience of well-being plus, have more mutually beneficial and satisfactory interactions (this includes an improvement in interactions between humanity and the environment).

### The Pursuit of Reliable Knowledge Concerning the Nature of Existence

The pursuit for reliable knowledge concerning the nature of existence implies an inquiry into how humanity can experience a sense of being better-integrated within the fabric of existence. That is to say knowledge that would help humanity encounter existence in a way that enhances human well-being. For Socrates such insight was tantamount to self-knowledge, “When Socrates asked the *Delphian Oracle* what is the highest knowledge? The answer came, ‘Know Thyself.’” The world famous Confucian expert Tu Weiming describes self-knowledge in a similar way. In essence, self-knowledge means

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 87.

gaining clarity on the nature of existence and the dialectic connection one has with creation. In other words self-knowledge provides clarity into the relationship between the self (one's sense of individuality, subjectivity, or ego) and the total scope of reality (objectivity, intersubjectivity plus, *Absolute Being* and, the connection between self and the phenomenal world).

Thus, according to Confucianism, "Self-knowledge is nothing more than the realization of one's authentic nature."<sup>5</sup> Aristotle touched on the same theme (also from a social psychological perspective) by describing the sense of self as a "mirror reflection of one's most significant social relations (the good that one is able to perceive reflects the *Virtuous* character of the perceiver).<sup>6</sup> His philosophy of mind describes the sense of self (consciousness) as potentiality that is actualized by character development then demonstrated in interactions and encounters. In other words Aristotle did not think of self-knowledge in terms of a self in distinction from others (and other things) but as an interaction between "what is out there" which is mirrored by or reflected by "something that is in here"<sup>7</sup> (the semiotic perceptive of how humanity processes perception). The signal or sign makes an impression, and the impression shapes a conceptual interpretation. "Something 'out there' in the environment signals interaction or engagement however, the interpretation is dependent upon the integrity of 'what is in here'".<sup>8</sup> The conception of the interaction is the basis of self-consciousness.

Aristotle's notion of the self as identifying with rather than in contrast with the surroundings is a critical attempt to reform Platonic idealism (Plato believed in a universal, perfect, higher essence that is imperfectly manifest as form(s)). Aristotle avoids the dualism by establishing a complementary connection between appearance (*legetai kath' hypokeimenou*) and that which is manifest as appearance (*en hypokeimenôi estin*).<sup>9</sup> Emile Durkheim (considered by many to be the *father of sociology*) concurs with this viewpoint by offering a similar explanation of the human-nature relationship and human perception. *Durkheim asserted, in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, that the perceptual recognition of complementarity initially played a primary role in human self-formation, the social formation of a culture, and initial expressions of the human understanding of an appropriate relationship with the environment.*<sup>10</sup>

To fully understand the shift away from complementarity and back to Dualism one must understand the influence of Rene Descartes' proposed return

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<sup>5</sup> Wei-Ming, Tu., *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*. Albany, State University of New York Press, 1985, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. (Crisp, Roger. Trans.). Cambridge, UK., Cambridge University Press, 2004, 179.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, (Hamlyn, D. W. Trans.). Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002, 24.

<sup>8</sup> Miller, Leon, *Peirce's Response to Skepticism: Offsetting the Impact of Skepticism on Global Interactions*. Arisbe: The Peirce Gateway, 2012, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, Martin, *The End of Philosophy*. (Stambaugh, Joan. Trans.). Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973, 5-10.

<sup>10</sup> Durkheim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. (Fields, Karen. Trans.). New York, The Free Press, 1995, 85, 100-102.



to idealism. That is to say that Descartes' influence prompted a resurgence of idealism which highlighted the value of essence (Descartes prioritized mind or consciousness which he believed is the seat of the essence of being and was superior to material form(s)). Descartes had a tremendous impact on Enlightenment thought which meant that he influenced devaluing that which is related to the natural realm (which like Plato he thought is inferior to the realm of pure essence that he associated with mind). Descartes' influence resulted in doubts: about the reliability of the sensuous, the physical, and the reliability of natural evidence (derived from the senses), thus doubts that observation is a reliable basis for information about reality. If consciousness is independent and autonomous, as Descartes suggested, it enjoys *the essence* by turning in on itself (cut off from raw existence). The most drastic consequence of Descartes' proposed solution to the problems of epistemology and ontology was the resultant dualism reflected in subject-object, mind-body, and nature-human schisms.

Kant recognized that the problem holding back the realization of Enlightenment ideals was related to skepticism which Descartes attempted to resolve but actually only complicated. For—as Hegel pointed out in *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy, Expositions of its Different Modifications and Comparison of the Latest Form with Ancient One*—the Enlightenment ideals were diminished with the hold that skepticism had developed on Europe.<sup>11</sup> Skeptics doubt the human ability to gain knowledge of the essence of Being and in this respect refuse to accept that reliable knowledge about the ontological ground of being is possible. “William James (a pioneer of American psychology) characterized skeptics as plagued with fear (of various types) which causes them to maintain a focus on protecting themselves from their fears rather than embracing greater virtues, principles and values.”<sup>12</sup>

This is not to say that suspension of belief, withholding judgment, the rejection of dogmatism, and the rejection of dogmatic authority have no merit. A value for open-mindedness is reflected in Socrates' skepticism and the suspension of bias is the basis of Constructivist inquiry. What is called into question and what Kant attacked was the Hobbesian type skepticism where the other is suspect because the other is believed to pose a threat to one's interest. In the Hobbesian sense of self-other dualism—because the other is believed to pose a threat—the other has to be either assimilated, dominated, or eliminated. This viewpoint on human interactions was in opposition to Kant's ethic of mutuality (the basis of human rights) and in conflict with his Constructivist notion of what enhances human interactions.

What Kant attempted to do was take the cognitive capacity that Descartes had left isolated from nature, from a Holistic sense of self, and from Being, and connect it to the ground of Being by means of a complementary link that he

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<sup>11</sup> Hinchman, Lewis, *Hegel's Critique of the Enlightenment*. Gainesville, FL., University Presses of Florida, 1984, 95.

<sup>12</sup> James, William, *The Will to Believe: and other Essays in Popular Philosophy*. New York, Longmans Green and Company, 1907, 18, 23, & 26.

believed would result in better human interactions (interpersonally, socially, in interstate interactions, and in relationship to nature) plus, more reliable knowledge. As well, he implied that the ontological nature of existence can be explained as a complementary interplay between humanity and the essence of Being.

In this respect it can be argued that Kant laid the foundation for an interactional (Constructivist) understanding of how knowledge is acquired (through complementary interplay between a fuller scope of humanity's consciousness capacity, phenomena, and underlying reality). Such an interplay, he argued could elevate human judgment to a level of genius.<sup>13</sup> This would be completely consistent with Kant's interactive ethics and interactive notion of what improves human existence. Kant's Transcendental Psychology—with its assertion that self-knowledge is connected with the transcendental unity of self-consciousness—offered tremendous potential that would gradually be embraced by those social psychologists who are concerned about integral being and Holistic well-being (as will be one of the major points stressed in the following sections of the article).

Carl Jung, himself, testified to the potential that Kant's notion of complementarity offered for providing insight into the connection between the ego (cognition, individuality, particulars) and the whole or Universal (archetypes, true self, or species consciousness).<sup>14</sup> Jung recognized in Kant the premise that self-knowledge is derived by extending the range of human consciousness (opening of normal consciousness to the deeper capacity to enable intuiting Universal consciousness). In other words self-knowledge (as referred to by Socrates), the true self (in Jungian terms), or self-actualization (in Maslow's terms), results from a consciousness *awakened* by perception of (or perhaps conceptual realization of) the semiotic nature of existence.<sup>15</sup> William James concurred by defining self-knowledge as perception of the essential continuity between phenomena (usually thought of as not-self), the Universal—which is *superimposed* on all phenomenon or all particulars, and self-consciousness (the sense of being a particular however necessarily superimposed upon by the Universal which is transpersonal).

#### The Need for Reflection on what holds-back the Enlightenment Agenda

Kant failed to fully develop his complementarity theory resulting in two things: subsequent criticism of his failure to resolve the Enlightenment crisis he set out to reform plus, the necessity for future Critical Theorists, scholars, scientists, and ethical philosophers to attempt resolving this crisis in the Western intellectual tradition. Kant's failure is ascribed to as the unresolved contradiction

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<sup>13</sup> Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Judgment*. (translated by Pluhar, Werner.) Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1987, 174.

<sup>14</sup> Jung, Carl, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. (Jaffe, Aniela. Ed.). (Winston, Clara. & Winston, Richard. Trans.). New York, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1963, 70-74.

<sup>15</sup> Michel, Mariela. Andacht, Fernando, & Gomes, William, The Relevance of Secondness to the Psychological Study of the Dialogical Self, *The International Journal for Dialogic Science*. Volume 3, Number 1, 2008, 306.

between his initial assertion in *Critique of Pure Reason* and the fact that this seems to contradict with the ingenious claims he makes about aesthetics and the psychology of perception in *Critique of Judgment*. That is, after making his marvelous claims about semiotic perception (a complementary interaction that provides a means by which humanity can be better-integrated with the underlying nature of existence and with each other) he—in the end—claims that the ground of Being is unfathomable. This implies that *knowledge is groundless* and that concepts are cut off from “the thing within itself.” Then the question remains. What are we forming concepts about? Or why is the human pursuit of knowledge not resulting in outcomes that enhance relationships, contribute to more beneficial interchanges, create outcomes that are mutually satisfying and because it helps to create less disruptive human interactions?

Thus, the culmination of the Enlightenment—as was true with Descartes initial Enlightenment claims—did not resolve the problem of skepticism but exasperated the problem (which became increasingly apparent with rising crisis in Europe that gradually engulfed the world: ethical, economic, political, interethnic, interstate crises and the apparent split in the Western intellectual tradition. That is to say that transcendental idealism rather than resolving the epistemological and ontological problems (inherited from Western intellectual history) merely made the problem more apparent with Dialectic Materialism subsequently becoming a serious attempt to revise the conceptual basis of Western history.<sup>16</sup> The split—which eventually was evidenced as a divided Europe—as anyone familiar with European history knows—was rooted in interpretations of Kant (German transcendental idealism). However, Dialectic Materialism—the claim that the Western intellectual, social, economic, and political system(s) have unresolved contradictions that could result in crisis—became the doctrine that fueled an ideological warfare that ultimately led to a bipolar global stand-off.

Thus, the issue of how to carry the Enlightenment aims forward by means of the Modernity project was also hampered by the impact of skepticism that dominated international relations. The major concerns can be described as issues regarding the notion of power, the role of knowledge in generating power, the effects of power on human interactions, and its impact on international relations. The issue was also complicated in that the perspective of classical skepticism was intensified with a new modern skepticism. In its classical form there was an aspect that emphasized that the use of *power-over* (to gain or protect ones interests) is justified and that power-over—to *maximize utility*—is justified in relationships.

Thus classical skepticism, throughout history has always influenced the position of Realism (the belief that values and norms matter less than material capabilities or values matter less than the increase of material capabilities

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<sup>16</sup> Günther, Gotthard, *Cybernetics and the Dialectic Materialism of Marx and Lenin. Computing in Russia: The History of Computer Devices and Information Technology Revealed.* (Trogemann, Georg. Nitusssov, Alexander. & Ernst, Wolfgang. Ed.) Wiesbaden, Germany, Vieweg+Teubner Verlag Publishers, 2001, 317-319.,

primarily measured in terms of military and economic power). Historically Realism dominated approaches to human interactions and intercultural relations.<sup>17</sup> The belief dating back to the pre-Socrates philosopher Thucydides was that “Imperialism is based on certain traits inherent in human nature, which are believed to be universal. Egoistic individuals pursuing wealth and security are seen to be behind all political struggles. Thus power politics is ultimately rooted in an egoistic human nature.”<sup>18</sup> Classical skepticism not only has “Doubts regarding the human intellect’s self-sufficiency but even doubts humanity’s aptitude toward moral improvement. Such doubts have justified attitudes toward international relations theory that are characterized as ‘self-help,’ hard power, and power politics.”<sup>19</sup>

Modern skepticism is distinct from ancient skepticism because it not only doubts rationalism but as well has doubts about the nature of the external world. This doubt has had an impact on globalization because it engenders a view that the international arena exists in a *state of anarchy*. International Relations theorists argue that those burdened with such skepticism will not accept the Constructivist claim that democratic, rational deliberation can be applied to the international arena. Without this reconsideration of the traditional approach to international relations there will be no acceptance of the role of culture and values plus it reduces the significance placed on norms and principles in IR theory and methodology. Thus, without properly addressing skepticism approaches to effectively shaping global stability will be inadequate.

There were repeated warnings that the dilemma regarding knowing and what could be known could produce dire consequences if continued to be unresolved. This prompted enormous intellectual effort toward understanding the best approach to epistemology and toward understanding how humanity fits best within the fabric of Being. However, the full recognition that the split was apparently non reconcilable became evident during the period leading up to the First War. This period marked a heightened crisis in Europe with the average person increasingly realizing the mounting problems in politics, economics, morals and ethics, as well as in science (which would only increase as a result of the onslaught of WW I). Thus, it became apparent that the depth of Moral Skepticism was hampering Western Civilization’s effort to realize its hoped for Enlightenment aims. This has been especially problematic as Moral Skeptics believe that the criteria for interaction is how much it satisfies self-interests.

Because the philosophical issue of the time centered-around the effort to manage humanity’s earthly existence—by means of transforming humanity’s natural existence—the acquisition of and application of knowledge would prove to

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<sup>17</sup> Miller, Leon, Peirce’s Response to Skepticism: Offsetting the Impact of Skepticism on Global Interactions. *Arisbe: The Peirce Gateway*, 2012, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Freyberg-Inan, Annette, *What Moves Man: The Realist Theory of International Relations and its Judgment of Human Nature*. Albany, The State University of New York Press, 2004, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Monoson, Sara. and Loriaux, Michael, Pericles, Realism and the Normative Conditions for Deliberative Action. *Classical Theory in International Relations* (Jahn, Beate. Ed.). UK, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 49-50.

be a major concern (given the meaning, significance and transformative power of science and technology in the human experience).

“The devastation of World War One made strikingly evident the fact that the unresolved nature-human dichotomy with its anxiety producing tension (which humanity has attempted to mediate by means of science, reason and technology) had put humanity on a path that culminated in unparalleled destruction.”<sup>20</sup>

The issues in dispute are important because they are related to the link between conceptions of the human experience; conceptions of power and how power is employed in human interactions, conceptions of the method, goals and methodology of philosophy and science plus, how knowledge is applied to human interactions.<sup>21</sup> Post World War One Europhiles had hopes of quieting the worries over these issues by generating some sense of improved cooperation between the people of Post-World War One Europe but the intellectual split (the crisis in Europe) only became more apparent (plunging Europe into a Nietzschean nihilism—the most extreme form of skepticism).<sup>22</sup> This was evident in the Great Depression, World War II and the Cold War.

Resolving the Dilemma (a more widely accepted epistemology and ontology)

As the last century progressed scientists and philosophers began to realize that what Kant feared (that the fragmentary nature of knowledge would become increasingly evident in the fragmentary nature of the human experience) was beginning to be realized. Thus, there was an almost concerted effort to resolve the dilemma of why knowledge did not yield better insight into how to have more mutually beneficial and satisfactory human interactions (the problem was especially evident in interstate interactions, interethnic interactions, and interactions with the environment). Niels Bohr’s was successful in devising one of the most influential attempts to resolve the dualistic dichotomy between the subjective—what is taken to be self (however a sense of self that seems threatened by aspects of what is *perceived as not self*)—and the raw nature of existence the Universals which are essentially superimposed on what is taken to be the self thus essentially interconnecting particulars).

Bohr’s solution is referred to as the principle of complementarity. His exposition of the principle also emphasized its epistemological value for providing more accurate information regarding what seem to be paradoxical aspects of reality. “However, scholars also acknowledge that it contributes to resolving the problem of the discontinuity between underlying reality and the human ability to conceptualize the ontological nature of existence.

It has grown in popularity because it seems to offer a means of addressing dichotomies in other sciences and in philosophy.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Miller, Leon, *The Influence of American Pragmatism on the Principle of Complementarity*. Estonian Annual Philosophical Conference. Tallinn University, 2012, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Miller, Leon, Peirce’s Response to Skepticism: Offsetting the Impact of Skepticism on Global Interactions. *Arisbe: The Peirce Gateway*, 2012, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power*. (Kaufmann, Walter. & Hollingdale, R., J., Trans.). New York, Vintage Books, 1967, 2, (p.3).

<sup>23</sup> Kafatos, Menas, *The death of the science-philosophy dichotomy?* The Washington Post, 2011.

In addition, it has grown in popularity because it seems to be complementary with the latest views of biology, neurology, psychology and the philosophy of mind. Complementarity allows a more accurate analysis of fundamental reality which even today is designated as being marked by “uncertainty” because from a “bottom up” perspective it seems that it can be reduced to something non-discernible while from a “top down” perspective it is a clearly discernible as enormous complexity. The principle of complementarity offers reconciliation between what heretofore had seemed to be diametrically opposing descriptions of the fundamental nature of existence.

Philosopher of Mind John Searle believes that the new paradigm provides empirical evidence that from the “top down” perspective creation displays a complexity that can be described as a full manifestation of intentionality (a life generating principle that perpetually manifests itself through forms as the Universal).<sup>24</sup> Thus, complementarity emerged as an epistemological and ontological principle that offered reconciliation to long-standing controversies within and between the world’s wisdom and philosophical traditions. Complementarity, grew to become widely accepted as an explanation of the fundamental nature of existence while at the same time resolving disputes between the sciences, between science and philosophy plus, within and between Eastern and Western intellectual traditions. These seeming contradictions primarily regard epistemology and ontology, the relationship between subject and object, plus the connection between the material objects of reality and creation’s vitalizing life force. However, complementarity also provided insight into the essential connection between underlying reality and the human ability to intuit/conceptualize the ontological nature of existence. A part of its popularity is due to the fact that it has been established as the fundamental paradigm for current views of science and philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

Above all the principle of complementarity provides insight into self-knowledge (the realization of what Socrates claimed is the most worthwhile life pursuit or what the pursuit of knowledge is really all about). Self-knowledge, in Aristotle’s terms, means knowledge of how to maintain a sense of personal integrity (a Holistically well-integrated person that is in appropriate relation with others and with the environment). Such a person experiences happiness, well-being, good health plus, avoids misfortune.

Eastern and Western perennial philosophy attest to the fact that self-knowledge does not occur if conception is limited to cognitive constructs because normal mind alone cannot provide a full sense of self. Self-knowledge accompanies the recognition that in addition to perceiving the distinction between particulars (the difference between the self and other things), there are the Universals or the way in which life force manifest itself as particular things and connects particular things with the laws of nature (a recognition of the yin-yang interplay between manifest form and the Universals which are manifesting). Thus, the first prescription for achieving self-knowledge is to

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<sup>24</sup> Searle, John, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2012, 85-87.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem., 3.

employ the principle of complementarity as a means for analyzing the connection between *the nature of things* and the nature of the self.

Richard Rorty—noted for his contribution to attempts at reconciling the historical split in the Western intellectual tradition—stated that the problem of knowing could be eliminated by means of a mediating factor between the observer and the observation. Rorty states that the problem of knowing is tied to the “problem of consciousness.” He also acknowledges that the problem of knowing, as it is connected with the problem of self, is a concern that can be traced back to Greek philosophical issues where one of the central concerns was the problem of personhood. In Rorty's own words, “The Kantian picture of concepts and intuitions getting together to produce knowledge is needed to give sense to the idea of theory of knowledge.”<sup>26</sup>

From its Greek origins, Rorty argues, the issue is related to the body-mind problem, the ability to sustain relations to the inexistent, intentionality, and the subject-object problem.<sup>27</sup>

The solution Rorty proposes is a strategy based on employing the principle of complementarity. He points out that explanatory theory related to self-knowledge (clarity on the nature of the individual and the relationship of the self to existence) has always run into seeming contradictions that the theory of complementarity has always contributed to resolving.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, as Philosopher of Mind John Searle pointed out, the principle of complementarity provides empirical evidence that there is a complementary connection between primordial forces that shaped the biological nature of existence and the individual's biological nature. In other words there is an essential interconnection between the self and the phenomenal world. With added insight from new perspectives on neurobiology the metaphysical issue of consciousness (mind being something that although ethereal clearly interacts with and effects what is tangible) could also be more adequately analyzed in empirical terms.

The principle of complementarity has enormous heuristic value that provides the means for establishing a link between the mental functions of the brain and the forces of nature that gave rise to the factors that evolved into consciousness.<sup>29</sup> Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist Gerald Edelman implies that complementarity explains the fundamental connection between nature's biological principles, humanity's biological nature and the neural value preferences naturally triggered as human cognitive skills developed. What the principle of complementarity contributes to in this sense is a means for shedding more light on the relationship between matter and that aspect of existence that heretofore was considered indiscernible. It bridges the gap and at the same time reveals the complementary

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<sup>26</sup> Rorty, Richard, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1979, 168.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem., 34-36.

<sup>28</sup> Rorty, Richard, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1979, 41-42.

<sup>29</sup> Semetsky Inna, *Exploring the Complementary Nature of Learning and Experience. Complexity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*. Volume 9, Number 2, 2012, 56.

connection between the two aspects of reality.<sup>30</sup> Thus, In this respect mind and matter no longer seem juxtaposed but in complementary relation.

Research in complementarity, conducted by physicists, biologists, psychologists and sociologists makes it clear that the concept explains the link between the biological aspects of human behavior, how individuals self-organize, the structuring of culture and the human relationship to the environment.<sup>31</sup> Studies in perceptual psychology and neurobiology reveal that humanity's inherent perceptual preference for experiencing interactions is complementarity.<sup>32</sup>

John Searle agrees that organisms—interlaced with elements of nature in a particular way—are predisposed by nature to continuously seek integration (within their particular environmental context) in an attempt to maintain being well-integrated.<sup>33</sup> “As human cognitive skills developed reliable knowledge was shaped by the human neural network “firing” in patterns aligned with the neural value preference. The value preference favored relating to things in nature in ways that shape environmental interactions into outcomes that are beneficial for individuals and cultures.”<sup>34</sup>

The popularity of the principle of complementarity is in part due to the agreement it generates between science, philosophy and religion. The sciences, metaphysics, and religion all agree that complex organisms must maintain some type of integrity. Integrity is enhanced when a biological organism adheres to its natural urge to become more fully integrated and in the human situation helps the individual to experience a fuller sense of self. In this sense being better integrated within its econiche enables the organism to experience more beneficial interchange. The natural biological inclination can be thought of as an inherent value preference that establishes the inclination for social cooperation and culture. This natural value preference has been expressed by the world's wisdom traditions as the conviction that the human cognitive capacity—that provides an ability to discern what is best for human well-being and for the human experience in nature—is a natural part of the ontological nature of existence.

The most cherished wisdom tradition of the East and the West agree that viewing and experiencing existence from the perspective of humanity's inherent value preference is personally beneficial, mentally beneficial (heightens cognitive abilities), and is socially beneficial. Today, in accordance with the admonition of the great wisdom traditions, social psychologists stress that such a perceptual perspective is more likely to result in the experience of a more enhanced sense of being. In other words today there is widespread agreement amongst

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<sup>30</sup> Wheatley, Jerry, *The Nature of Consciousness: The Structure of Reality*. Phoenix, Arizona, Research Scientific Press, 2001, 249.

<sup>31</sup> Berntson, Gary. & Cacioppo, John, A Contemporary Perspective on Multilevel Analyses and Social Neuroscience. *Interdisciplinary Research: Case Studies from Health and Social Science*. (Kessel, Frank. Rosenfield, Patricia. & Anderso, Norman. Ed.). Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, 36-37.

<sup>32</sup> Gibson, James J., *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum, 1986, 127.

<sup>33</sup> Searle, John, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2012, 86.

<sup>34</sup> Miller, Leon, Humanity's Inherent Value Preference for Integral Being. *Journal for Interdisciplinary Research on Religion and Science*. No. 9, 129, 2011.



neurobiologists that the fundamental biological principles of creation (the laws of nature or the Universals) have been encoded into the organic elements of nature with the propensity that this can be decoded by humans into an understanding of the teleological significance of existence. From the perspective of the world's wisdom traditions the teleological significance of existence is realizing how to enjoy this fuller sense of well-being.<sup>35</sup>

Gerald Edelman implies that the principle of complementarity explains the fundamental connection between the biological principles of nature, humanity's biological nature and how human consciousness evolved. The principle of complementarity provides the conceptual propensity for bridging the gap between what for researchers have otherwise persisted in being contrasting features of reality. According to Paul K. Feyerabend complementarity can be interpreted, on the one hand, as the intuitive capacity that complements what is needed for theoretical comprehension and, on the other hand, as a heuristic principle guiding empirical research.<sup>36</sup> Certainly a person realizes that his or her existence is dependent on the perpetual dynamic transformation of his or her biological make-up by means of reintegration with the fabric of being then a person also realizes that this is in fact what one clearly continuously observes as the difference between phenomena and the self (constant interchange).

However, although it is clearly apparent that what a person thinks of as the self is in a continuous state of transformation most people have not developed the perceptual capacity to realize that what is thought of as a separate ego is a constant interaction between the self and the phenomenal world. One would assert that when looking out at existence he or she merely observes life or reality and its processes and in some respect this is true. Take for example the perception of a tree in winter. One observes the tree's form that is indeed barren. Now imagine that same tree perceived when full of blossoms in late spring. One is not only observing the form but also the life generating force which is manifesting itself through the tree's form (perceiving the manifestation of the life-generating force makes a big difference).

For the Japanese a certain aesthetic perspective—*Yūgen* 幽玄 an aesthetic perceptual capacity that allows penetrating through the appearance to the essence of Being—allows one to see past the superficial to the very nature of things. “*Yūgen is a means whereby one obtains a glimpse of things eternal in the world of constant changes: that is we look into the secrets of Reality.*”<sup>37</sup> In the Japanese worldview to really perceive the essence of a thing (its Kami 神) one has to perceive beyond the superficial (as we all know appearances are deceiving) to enable aesthetically detecting *Yūgen*. *For the Japanese this allows the ability to perceive or experience existence in its wholeness rather than in a fragmentary or superficial way.*<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibidem., 129.

<sup>36</sup> Feyerabend, Paul, *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method: Philosophical Papers*. Volume 1. London, Cambridge University Press, 1981, 221.

<sup>37</sup> Suzuki, Daisetz, *Zen and Japanese Culture*. New York, Princeton University Press, 220.

<sup>38</sup> Miller, Leon, *Complementarity: Bridging the Gap between the Known and the Unknown*. The Ontology of Consciousness: Integrating Mathematics, Physics and Spirituality Conference. New Delhi, 2012, 17-18.

The problem hindering the full realization of self-knowledge (even for the well-informed) is the inability to sense the complementary interconnection between the particular and the Universal (a seeming contradiction that has to do with the difference between continuity and discreteness). Self-knowledge, in this sense, is the result of the perceptual ability to accurately appraise the semiotic interaction between the Universal force that is manifest as appearance and the particular manifestation of this life generating principle or life force that one takes to be the self. Yet, in spite of the clarity of the principle of complementarity as an explanation of the perpetual (yin-yang) interchange between all aspects of nature, the validity can still be hard even for experts in the science of mind to accept because of aspects that seem to reflect an unresolved paradox.<sup>39</sup>

### **Enhancing all Aspects of Human Interactions'**

The principle of complementarity has been successful in impressing scholars in the sciences, the philosophy of science, the social science plus, scholarship in the Eastern and Western wisdom traditions because it explains the process by which the primordial life generating force (that shaped the biological nature of existence or the origin of things) evolved into humanity's biological nature. In other words, the principle of complementarity seems consistent with the cultural worldview and the sciences of both the East and the West. In this respect the principle of complementarity explains how the elements of nature exist in constant interchange (not in isolation from each other). That makes each part ecologically connected with each other part.

Thus, according to this principle what appears to be not self becomes the basis of how the self is formulated and cognitively realized (the self exists as a continuity of biological elements, forces, and principles). According to Gerald Edelman the principle of complementarity explains how humanity's neural value predisposition (that was ordained by nature's biological forces) evolved into a clear preference for beneficial interactions (interactions occurring between individuals, within cultures, between cultures, and interactions between nature and humanity). Edelman implies that complementarity explains the connection between nature's creative forces, nature's biological principles, humanity's biological nature, and value preferences triggered as human cognitive skills evolved.<sup>40</sup>

The wisdom traditions of the East and West assert that information encoded into the fabric of existence (believed by semioticians to be fundamental to the nature of existence) illustrates a feature of nature that acts like a type of blueprint that links elements together into a complex unity. Thus, information inherent in the nature of things urges the fulfillment of nature's intention. In the human case the urges are experienced as the individual's biological predisposition or value preference(s). Self-knowledge, in this sense, results from an accurate appraisal of the semiotic interaction between the information that is fundamental to the

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<sup>39</sup> Peirce, Charles, Sanders, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. London, Oxford University Press, 1958, 224-225.

<sup>40</sup> Edelman, Gerald, *Bright Air Brilliant Fire: on the Matter of the Mind*. New York, Basic Books, 1992, 118-119.

biological make-up of the individual and the information encoded into aspects of existence.

The encoded information—that is fundamental to the way nature’s biological forces shaped complexity into what we understand to be the self—contained the potential for the self to decode this information (as a means of deciphering nature’s ontology and teleology).<sup>41</sup>

Philosopher of mind John Searle states that this “special feature” of the nature-human relationship highlights the significance of human interactions by giving them intention, value and meaning. In his recent book *Rationality in Action* he explains that rational decision making is a matter of selecting means that enable fulfilling human ends. The ends are a matter of values. We come to the decision-making situation with established value preferences and rationality is a matter of figuring out the means to our ends.<sup>42</sup>

Humanity’s value preference accounts for what Searle calls the cooperative and coordinated character of collective intentionality. Searle adds that this value preference is rooted in the biological structure of the human organism thus stems from the ontological nature of “how the world in fact is.” In other words collective intentionality and cooperative behavior are displays of natural functions.<sup>43</sup> “For the individual there is a value in survival and reproduction, and for a culture there is a value in continuity. But natural function takes place only within a set of prior assignments of value (including purposes, teleology, and other functions).”<sup>44</sup> In this sense reliable knowledge provides insight into how to extend a culture’s range of more cooperative or more beneficial interactions.<sup>45</sup>

The distinguished pioneer of American Pragmatism John Dewey believed that a cultural worldview represents an accumulation of knowledge of how to manage interactions in ways that promote the flourishing of the culture. Human culture was spurred on by the realization that extending the range of beneficial interactions is not only basic to maintaining individual integrity it is essential for the integrity of all structured units.<sup>46</sup> This means that the worldview of a flourishing culture must be based on expanding its scope of internal and external beneficial interactions. To promote a thriving culture neural value preferences must be shaped into conceptual understandings of how to extend the range of cooperative interactions.<sup>47</sup>

What Kant set out to achieve with his Cosmopolitan Ethics—his effort to fulfill the Enlightenment aims by balancing individuality (in terms of freedom of conscious) and mutuality—can be realized by coupling the individual’s effort to maximize benefits with the realization that utility results from increasing

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem., 19-20.

<sup>42</sup> Searl, John, *Rationality in Action*. Cambridge, Mass. A Bradford Book, MIT Press, 2001, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Miller, Leon, Humanity’s Inherent Value Preference for Integral Being. *Journal for Interdisciplinary Research on Religion and Science*. No. 9, 2011, 129.

<sup>44</sup> Searle, John, *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York, The Free Press, 6 & 15, 1995.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem., 292.

<sup>46</sup> Miller, Leon, Humanity’s Inherent Value Preference for Integral Being. *Journal for Interdisciplinary Research on Religion and Science*. No. 9, 141, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem., 129.

beneficial interactions.<sup>48</sup> Because of the fact of interdependence one's rational preference would be to adhere to the inherent human value inclination for experiencing enhanced interactions. The principle of complementarity contributes to the ability to perceive and conceptualize the complementary connection between one's discreteness (one's own self-interest) and the force of continuity that is superimposed on the interest of the individual. Thus, connectedness prompts realization of the value for making life's unavoidable encounters a means by which the interaction between the ontological nature of Being and one's unique self is perceived not as self-other dichotomy but as complementarity (the basis of self-knowledge).<sup>49</sup> The experience awakens a perceptual capacity described by William Blake as the ability to see the secrets of the sea in a grain of sand, heaven in a wild flower, and sense eternity within the here and now.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Smyth, Richard, What Logic Can Learn from Ethics. *Peirce and Value Theory*. (Herman, Parret. Edt.), Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 53 & 54, 1994.

<sup>49</sup> Miller, Leon, *Complementarity: Bridging the Gap between the Known and the Unknown*. The Ontology of Consciousness: Integrating Mathematics, Physics and Spirituality Conference. New Delhi, 22, 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Blake, William, *Auguries of Innocence*. *English Poetry II: From Collins-Fitzgerald*. The Harvard Classics 1909-1914 (Eliot, Charles. Edit.). New York, P.F. Collier & Son, 356, 2001.

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# A CRITIQUE OF THE RATIONAL AGENT MODEL IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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**Abstract:** *The origin of what has been called the “generalized economism”, that is the general tendency to use the economic explicative model in all social sciences is the work of Chicago School of Economics, and especially of the leading figure of this movement, Gary Becker. In response to this tendency, a group of european social scientists, lead by French sociologist Alain Caillé, founded “The Anti-utilitarian Movement in the Social Sciences”, as a counter-reaction to what its members considered to be the overwhelming influence and even the imperialism of the utilitarian paradigm in social sciences. According to Caillé, one must understand that the vision of Man as a perfect rational agent, which underlies this economic model, is the result of a broader and more ancient anthropology and philosophy: utilitarianism. Therefore, criticizing the imperialism of economic science in social sciences implies to criticize, more deeply, the utilitarian anthropology, i. e. the instrumental vision of Man underlying them.*

**Keywords:** *economics, anthropology, generalized economism, utilitarianism, homo oeconomicus.*

In 1981, during a symposium on the problem of gift held in France, at l’Arbresle, a group of social scientists, including an anthropologist, Gérard Berthoud, three young economists, two Turks, Cengiz Aktar and Ahmet Insel, and a Greek, Rigas Arvanitis, lead by a French sociologist, Alain Caillé, founded what eventually came to be known as “The Anti-utilitarian Movement in the Social Sciences” (*Le Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales – MAUSS*), who publishes a review, *La Revue du MAUSS* (initially named *Bulletin du MAUSS*).<sup>1</sup> The MAUSS movement, inspired by the work of French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1872-1850), was meant to be a counter-reaction to what its members considered to be the overwhelming influence and even the imperialism of the utilitarian paradigm in social sciences.

From the beginning, the founders of the movement identified the utilitarian way of thinking with the “generalized economism” of the years 1960-1970 (*l’économisme généralisé des années 1960-1970*), i.e. the general tendency to use the economic explicative model in all social sciences: “At first for us, utilitarianism was another way of referring to economism, and the work of

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<sup>1</sup> A. Caillé, “Ouverture maussienne”, *Revue du MAUSS*, 2010/2, no. 36, p. 25-33.

MAUSS was then, for ten years, primarily a critical work on the intellectual and political mutation that had occurred in the West in the years 1970-1980.”<sup>2</sup> According to Caillé, the economism of economists, anthropologists, biologists, psychoanalysts and sociologists of the time was the result of a much more general movement of ideas. Until the years 1960-1970, in the last two centuries, economists have considered that what might be called the economic model, based on the figure of *homo oeconomicus*, understood as a rational agent, was helpful and efficient in explaining what is happening in the realm of economy, of the market for goods and services. But from the years 1960-1970, the economists had begun to generalize their model and think that, after all, the model of *homo oeconomicus* does not explain just what is happening in the market for goods and services, it does not explain only the social relations mediated by the purchase, sale and money but also what is happening in the entire society and social life of people. Therefore we can (and we have to), formulate an economic theory of love, an economic theory of crime, an economic theory of education and so on. One can make an economic theory of religious belief. Is it profitable or not to believe in God? Is it profitable or not to love, to have children, to get married, to enlist in the armed forces?

The members of MAUSS believe that the utilitarian economism got its momentum from the work of Chicago School of Economics, and especially of the leading figure of this movement, the Nobel Prize laureate (1992), Gary Becker, one of the most original economists of the late twentieth century. His unique approach involves taking the economic assumption of rationality and applying it to a large number of social problems normally not studied by economists. This approach has led to many new areas of specialization within economics – the economics of crime and punishment, the economics of addiction, the economics of the family, human capital theory, and the economics of discrimination.

Becker has made two key contributions to economics.<sup>3</sup> First, he has done extensive research on the way that labor markets work. He has helped develop the notion of human capital and he has helped economists to better understand discrimination in labor markets.<sup>4</sup> Second, and more interesting in this context, he has taken the assumptions economists make about human rationality and applied them to all forms of behavior, including non-economic matters or subjects that do not involve market transactions between individuals. Starting with the assumptions that human beings act rationally and attempt to maximize utility, Becker has analyzed decisions regarding fertility, marriage and divorce, crime and punishment, and addiction.<sup>5</sup> As he himself states, “an important step in

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<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. S. Pressmann, *Fifty Major Economists*, London, Routledge, 1999, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> G. Becker, *Human Capital*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1964; *The Economics of Discrimination*, Chicago, Illinois, University of Chicago Press, 1957.

<sup>5</sup> G. Becker, *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*, Chicago, Illinois, University of Chicago Press, 1976; “A Theory of Marriage: Part I,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 81, 4 (July/August 1973), pp. 813–46; “A Theory of Marriage: Part II,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 82, 2 (March/April 1974), Part 2, S11–S26; “An Economic Analysis of Marital Instability,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 85, 6 (December 1977), pp. 1, 153–89; “A Theory of Rational Addiction,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 96, 4 (August 1988), pp. 675–700 (with Kevin M. Murphy); “Rational



extending the traditional theory of individual rational choice to analyze social issues beyond those usually considered by economists is to incorporate into the theory a much richer class of attitudes, preferences, and calculations. While this approach to behavior builds on an expanded theory of individual choice, it is not mainly concerned with individuals. It uses theory at the micro level as a powerful tool to derive implications at the group or macro level [...] My research uses the economic approach to analyze social issues that range beyond those usually considered by economists.”<sup>6</sup>

Becker’s theory, unlike Marxian analysis, does not assume that individuals are motivated solely by selfishness or material gain. It is a method of analysis, not an assumption about particular motivations: “Along with others, I have tried to pry economists away from narrow assumptions about self-interest. Behavior is driven by a much richer set of values and preferences.”<sup>7</sup> The analysis assumes that individuals maximize welfare as they conceive it, whether they be selfish, altruistic, loyal, spiteful, or masochistic. Their behavior is forward-looking, and it is also assumed to be consistent over time. In particular, they try as best they can to anticipate the uncertain consequences of their actions. Forward-looking behavior, however, may still be rooted in the past, for the past can exert a long shadow on attitudes and values. Actions are constrained by income, time, imperfect memory and calculating capacities, and other limited resources, and also by the opportunities available in the economy and elsewhere. These opportunities are largely determined by the private and collective actions of other individuals and organizations. Different constraints are decisive for different situations, but the most fundamental constraint is limited time. Economic and medical progress have greatly increased length of life, but not the physical flow of time itself, which always restricts everyone to 24 hours per day. So while goods and services have expanded enormously in rich countries, the total time available to consume has not. Thus wants remain unsatisfied in rich countries as well as in poor ones. For while the growing abundance of goods may reduce the value of additional goods, time becomes more valuable as goods become more abundant. The welfare of people cannot be improved in an utopia in which everyone’s needs are fully satisfied, but the constant flow of time makes such an utopia impossible.<sup>8</sup>

For example, Becker uses his method for analyzing marriage decisions and family relationships in a manner analogous to the traditional theory of the business firm. Individuals spend time searching for the spouse who will provide them with the maximum amount of utility just as firms search for the best possible employee. Longer searches lead to better information about whether any possible spouse would be the most desirable one. Consequently, this theory predicts that those marrying young would be more likely to get divorced, a

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Addiction and the Effect of Price on Consumption,” *American Economic Review*, 81, 2 (May 1991), pp. 237–41 (with Michael Grossman and Kevin M. Murphy).

<sup>6</sup> G. Becker, “Nobel Lecture: The Economic Way of Looking at Behavior”, *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (Jun., 1993), pp. 385-409.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 385.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 386.

prediction that receives considerable support from data on marital stability. Also, the theory predicts that disappointments regarding expectations, and changes in expectations, will lead to divorce.

And like a firm wanting to maximize profits, a family can maximize utility through specialization; thus the husband typically specializes in market production and the wife typically specializes in household production. One consequence of such specialization is that women will receive lower market wages. According to Becker, this is due not to discrimination, but results from decisions made within the household about which jobs will be performed by different family members.

Family decisions about having children can also be analyzed using the logic of economic analysis. In contrast to Malthus, who held that people could not control their reproductive urges, Becker looks at the decision to have children as analogous to consumer decisions about purchasing goods like cars and vacations. Raising children involves many costs. Parents must pay for food, shelter, clothing, toys, and education. Most important of all, the parent must spend time raising the child, which reduces the time available to earn income and consume goods. Parents must be compensated for these losses with greater utility or pleasure from their children, otherwise they will not choose to have children. This compensation can come from the joy of having and raising children, the desire for offspring, or the desire to have someone care for you in your old age. But whatever the cause of this additional utility, according to Becker children must compete with cars and vacations (which also give pleasure) for each dollar of family income.

Given this perspective, it is possible to formulate many testable hypotheses about birth rates. Greater costs of child rearing should reduce fertility; greater family incomes should allow the family to purchase more of everything, including children. Higher incomes for women will increase the costs of rearing children, because the time spent at home with children results in a greater income loss, and will therefore reduce fertility. Finally, government income guarantees to the elderly should reduce fertility rates, since one benefit of children is that they will be around to support you in your old age.<sup>9</sup>

According to Caillé, this way of thinking about virtually any aspect of social life is the expression of the overwhelming triumph of the economism. And the most surprising fact is not that economists came to believe that their Rational Action (or Choice) Theory was likely to explain not only what is going on the market and through monetary exchanges, but any kind of social behavior: learning, wedding, religious belief, love or crime etc. What is more intriguing, is the fact that the other social sciences, starting with sociology, have at this time largely agreed with this contention, that almost all the social sciences gave reason for the unprecedented hegemony of economic thought. In fact, Caillé believes, this enlargement of the traditional scope of economic science has been the intellectual and ideological prelude and the starting point to neo-liberalism which is nowadays triumphing as well in academic economic science as in the real world

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<sup>9</sup> S. Pressman, *op.cit.*, pp. 186-187.

and asks himself what, if anything, can be opposed on a theoretical level to this overwhelming victory of the economic model?<sup>10</sup>

According to Caillé, one must understand first that the vision of Man as a *homo oeconomicus*, which underlies this economic model, is the crystallization and the condensation of a broader and more ancient anthropology and philosophy: utilitarianism. If this is true, criticizing the imperialism of economic science on thought and of the hegemony of the market on society implies to criticize, more deeply, the utilitarian anthropology, i. e. the instrumental vision of Man underlying them. Second, we must remember that the main theoretical underlying base of MAUSS movement is to be found in the discovery made in 1923–24 by the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (the nephew and intellectual heir of Emile Durkheim) of the fact that primitive, archaic and traditional societies – and in some sense modern societies too – do not rely upon contract and commercial exchange but on what he terms the gift, or, more precisely, the triple obligation to give, take and return. The obligation to display one's generosity.

This discovery, Caillé thinks, can and must be used as a foundational basis for social sciences (including economics) as well as for moral and political philosophy. It permits to show how and why the nowadays dominating human type, *homo oeconomicus*, the economic man, the man who is only interested in maximizing his own satisfaction, utility or preferences, is not the natural and universal one – whatever economists may think – but one among many others which have appeared and existed throughout history. And this is particularly important to state in order to understand that giving less room to economic necessities, to the market, and more to society, implies to give less importance to *homo oeconomicus* and more to other types of Man, for instance to *homo politicus*, to *homo ethicus* or to *homo religiosus*.<sup>11</sup>

What is then utilitarianism, as formulated for the first time systematically in Jeremy Bentham's work *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) and given its most synthetic formulation in John Stuart Mill's book *Utilitarianism* (1861)? For most economists and sociologists, utilitarianism is this doctrine which asserts: First, that humans, as social actors are, or should be held to be, mere individuals seeking nothing else but their own happiness or self-interest. Second, that this is good and legitimate for there is no other possible rational goal. Third, that this rational goal is to be pursued rationally, i. e. through maximizing their pleasures (or their utility, or their preferences) and minimizing their pains (or their disutility). Understood in this way, utilitarianism is what one of his best connoisseurs, Élie Halévy<sup>12</sup>, called "a dogmatic theory of egoism" (*une dogmatique de l'égoïsme*) and more than the anticipation of what is called today the "economic model in the social sciences" or, more generally, rational-actor theory. It simply is the general theory of the *homo oeconomicus*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> A. Caillé, *Anti-utilitarianism, economics and the gift-paradigm*, <http://www.revuedumauss.com.fr/media/ACstake.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>12</sup> É. Halévy, *La formation du radicalisme philosophique*, 3 vol. PUF, Paris, 1905.

<sup>13</sup> A. Caillé, *op.cit.*

Alain Caillé believes that the utilitarian theory of man is sometimes contradictory, “full of enigmas and mysteries”. His view can be resumed in five points, as follows:

1. Utilitarianism can be defined by the paradoxical and probably impossible combination of two assertions, one positive and the other normative. The positive one (about what is) holds actors to be self interested and rationally calculating individuals. The normative one (about what ought to be) says that just (or right or good) is what permits to obtain the greatest possible happiness for the largest number.

2.) Theories which advocate that the conciliation of the greatest possible happiness with individual self-interest is obtained through contract and free market can be held to be utilitarian *largo sensu*. Those, like Bentham’s theory of legislation or Plato’s theory of the philosopher king, who believe that it is possible only through the action of a rational legislator who manipulates desires through rewards and punishments – realizing what É. Halévy called an artificial harmonization of interests –, can be said to be utilitarian *stricto sensu*.

3.) If the word “utilitarianism” is recent, the two basic principles of utilitarianism (about the “is” and about the “ought to”), are as old as European philosophy (not to speak of the Chinese legist school) whose history, since Socrates, can be read as an ever renewed struggle between utilitarian and anti-utilitarian formulations.<sup>14</sup>

4.) Utilitarianism is a theory of practical rationality, viewed as instrumental rationality, enlarged to the whole of moral and political philosophy. Economic theory can be seen as the crystallization of the positive dimension of utilitarianism.

5.) The critique of utilitarianism and of rational-actor theory can only succeed if it takes seriously the discovery by Marcel Mauss of the central place of gift in social relations.<sup>15</sup>

Now, what exactly means this discovery? It can be resumed using a quote from his famous book *The Gift (Essai sur le don, 1924)*, where Mauss states that “Man has not always been an economic animal.” True, man has not always been an economic animal, but only a little time needs to pass, and he will become just that. The economic man, Mauss added, is not behind us, but is before us. And Caillé stresses that “he was right, he wrote this in 1924, and economic man was well ahead. It is now present, it is rather, this is the real novelty, ubiquitous, but is not naturally present always. This is the fundamental point.”<sup>16</sup>

The main result of the first direction of research was the new and reinterpreted paradigm of gift, as it is presented in Jacques Godbout’s work *The Spirit of Gift*<sup>17</sup>, who’s basic idea is that of the so-called *homo donator* (The Man Who Makes Gifts): the man who gives, the man who is obliged by the gift, who is

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Caillé, Ch. Lazzeri, M. Senellart (Eds), *Histoire raisonnée de la philosophie morale et politique. Le bonheur et l’utile*, La Découverte, Paris, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> A. Caillé, *Anti-utilitarianism, economics and the gift-paradigm*, <http://www.revuedumauss.com.fr/media/ACstake.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> A. Caillé, “Ouverture maussienne”, *Revue du MAUSS*, 2010/2, no. 36, p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> J. Godbout, en collaboration avec A. Caillé, *L’esprit du don*, Paris, La Découverte, 1992.

driven by his obligation to give, one who has as his motivation the will to give, and not only the will to gain. If the economic man is only the paradigm of our contemporary society, *homo donator* has always existed, he is not only behind us, but is always present.

According to Caillé, this means that modern society is twofold. There is, on the one hand, the truly Western, modern, impersonal society, with a sociality of the second order, where what counts the most is the functional efficiency in the market, in government, in science. But we also live in another society, with a first-order sociality, the society of the family, neighborhood, of the camaraderie, friendship, associations. This first-order sociality rests on the triple obligation to give, take and return, discovered by Marcel Mauss.

This does not mean that men are always charitable and that they are driven solely by altruistic and philanthropic feelings. We must always remember that the institution of gift is an agonistic one, that gift is also a form of conflict, a form of war. The gift does make sense only in a symmetrical relation: We do exist as social beings not only when entering the cycle of the triple obligation to give, take and return but we must also enter in the symmetric cycle of taking, refusing and keeping. And it is the alternation of two cycles which makes the richness of all human activities. The system of gift is therefore the cornerstone of any society, and its main function is to create the relation of mutual trust between its members, because reciprocal trust is the basis of any human social interaction. More generally, Caillé believes that it is possible to hypothesize that the obligation to give remains the fundamental rule of “primary sociality”, i.e. of the face-to-face and interpersonal relationships developed in family, neighborhood, love or friendship. In short, in all those types of relations in which the personality of persons is more important than the functions they accomplish. And even in the sphere of “secondary sociality” – impersonal on principle; the sociality of Market, State or Science, ruled by impersonal laws, in which the efficiency of persons is more important than their personality – the obligation to give, receive and reciprocate still matters. It is subordinated to market and hierarchy but its role is often nonetheless decisive. The connection between Mauss’s discovery of the gift and the new economic sociology or political economy is clearly visible: the key to the understanding of social action must not be looked for in an overarching holistic rule nor in individual rationality, but in the networks or, more precisely, in the trust which the participants to the network share. All this is true, but it must be added that networks are created by gifts and that it is through the renewal of those gifts that networks are nourished. Network relationships are gift relationships (the first large network ever studied was the *kula* ring described by B. Malinowski).

According to Caillé, the main lessons we may learn from those considerations are four:

1. The sociological lesson is that social bond is constructed neither starting from individual rational interest or from an overarching and eternal law. It can be correctly construed neither on an individualistic or a holistic paradigm. It is built through an interactionist logic of alliance and association which is the very logic of the political. Maussian gift is a political gift.

2. The political lesson is that gift was long thought and enacted through religion, as a religious ideal. Today, the democratic ideal represents its most advanced form. The main problem all modern societies have to face is how to keep this ideal alive, somewhere between religious traditions and modern political ideologies.

3. The epistemological lesson is that economics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy etc. must not be thought, taught, learned and practiced as totally separate and alien disciplines, but as moments of a general social science the main question of which is: which part of social and human activities is and must be devoted to satisfying needs, to functional, instrumental and utilitarian activities, and which to producing meaning, making sense of life, to symbolic, ritual, political and anti-utilitarian activities?

4. The economic lesson is that markets and economies cannot work and function if they are not embedded in a political, institutional and juridical frame which allows the cooperation, or at least the coordination between all members of the society. For that reason, institutions and political logic have priority over economy. This conclusion is shared by Neo-institutionalism (R. Coase, O. Williamson, D. North, E. Brousseau in France), the moral economy of Amartya Sen, the Regulation (Robert Boyer etc.), the Conventions (Olivier Favereau etc.) or the anti-utilitarian Schools. All together they design what may be called a new political economy, quite different from the dominating standard paradigm in economics which thinks the economic science as a mechanical and mathematical science.

The specificity of the anti-utilitarian school is to link together the question of the political and religious foundation of societies with the question of the gift, of recognition and of the building of individual and collective identities. Its main hypothesis is that men are not only self-interested animals, eager only to get and own more and more things and riches, but that first of all they desire to be recognized (the craving for money and richness being interpreted as the most current translation of the need of recognition). The anti-utilitarian hypothesis is that Human beings' first desire is to be recognized and valued as givers.<sup>18</sup>

Starting from this, a certain amount of economic and political conclusions can be derived. For example, Caillé reminds us that important contemporary economists used to distinguish three main types of economy, three systems. Thus, there are three approaches: the market economy, the planned economy, and that based on reciprocity, gifts and helping others. The characteristic of this third system, based on reciprocity, unlike the market and the state is that it develops on the basis of relations from person to person. The basis of social relations is the personal relationship. The market and state systems are impersonal, while the third system connects people.<sup>19</sup> The market and the state, expressions of modernity *par excellence*, both operate according to the logic of an abstract law. They bring together the social entities in relation, but in an

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<sup>18</sup> A. Caillé, *Anti-utilitarianism, economics and the gift-paradigm*,  
<http://www.revuedumauss.com.fr/media/ACstake.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> A. Caillé, *L'économie solidaire. Poser les exigences de demain*,  
<http://jeanzin.fr/ecorevo/politic/revenus/caille.htm>

impersonal way. Economic agents relate to one another in the market in total anonymity: we do not know *a priori* the producers or the sellers of the goods we buy. And just the same in the sphere of public service: we conceive civil servants as people who have to perform a function, not as real persons.

Caillé believes that the first two economic systems, market economy and planned economy are nowadays in a profound crisis, because both the apparatus of the market and that of the state are not functioning as predicted and expected, and that puts us in a strange situation: we all see that, to ensure the collective existence there are a lot of things to do, a lot of tasks to accomplish. We cannot do them because we have become accustomed they to be made either by the invisible hand of the market economy, or by the state apparatus.<sup>20</sup> The solution, according to the French sociologist, could be the third economic system, proved over time to be viable. It has worked for centuries or even millennia. It is the system of all primitive and most traditional societies. But even if this system of the gift economy is viable, it is clear that is not sufficient to reorganize our society. It is characteristic for a small society, yet our society is a huge one. It cannot be built solely on the logic of the gift economy and indeed society in general cannot function on the basis of only one of the three approaches mentioned above. It could also be shown, Caillé believes, that all great political catastrophes of the twentieth century have been caused by a radical option for one of the three systems, whose logic was believed to be able to comprise the other two. We know of course, the example of the Soviet economy and its claim to replace the market and the gift economy with the planned economy, controlled by the state apparatus. We could show, symmetrically, the disaster of the ultra-liberal economy, claiming to get rid off the state economy on the one hand and the gift economy on the other. Of course, nor the third way can have more success, as it expects both the disappearance of market and of public economy. So, Caillé suggests, the solution is not to believe that we can take refuge or find remedy in a generalization of the economy based on reciprocity (*l'économie réciprocaire*) in our globalised society, but to establish a complementarity between these three approaches by giving the third one (which is *par excellence*, neglected in modern societies) a role of equal importance as that of the other two economic systems.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> A. Caillé, *La crise ou quand l'économie dissimule la question du sens de l'existence*, <http://jeanzin.fr/ecorevo/politic/revenus/caille.htm>

<sup>21</sup> A. Caillé, *L'économie solidaire. Poser les exigences de demain*, <http://jeanzin.fr/ecorevo/politic/revenus/caille.htm>

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# TRADITIONALISM AND MODERNISM IN MODERN ARAB THOUGHT

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**Abstract:** *Without being limited to its Islamic dimension, modern Arab thought may be viewed as a philosophical and epistemological set of movements and trends that describes, analyzes and reviews intellectual, political, religious and current sociopolitical realities. There are four main movements in current Arab thought that contribute to its specificity: Islamic, nationalist, liberal and Marxist, by means of which, symptoms, diagnosis and solutions of Arab intellectuals to challenges generated by both Western modernity, in general, and also by the crisis of the sacred in the modern world have been presented, between tradition and modernity, and that are mostly Muslim.*

**Keyword:** *salafi, liberal Islam, Islamic movement, nationalist movement, Marxist movement.*

The current debate on modernity and post-modernity has not been the exclusive privilege of Western intellectual elites, globalization reviving the interest for this topic in the Arab Muslim thought. It is a common challenge of the two big modern cultures – Western and Arabic – that generated the revival of the collective imagination fed by stereotypes, frustrations and major fears. The debate on the adaptability of Arabic thought to modernity has been far from being just historical or sociological; it is also defined by its philosophical and theological dimensions.

If we refer to western modernity within a simplistic sociological and descriptive vision, we can state that the industrial and democratic revolutions shaped deeply the map of the new civilization inaugurated at the end of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the dynamics of Western modernity could not be understood without referring to the other two key notions, this time philosophical – subjectivity and rationality – that began to define the profile of a modern man who is a perfectly conscious entity of his autonomy and who looks at phenomena rationally. For more than three decades, Western cultural setting has changed so much that the use of a floating term was necessary, not without extensive objections and disputes: *post-modernity*<sup>1</sup>. Post-modernity challenges, on one hand, the claim of modernity to define itself by a reason that is too self-confident, engaged in an extensive process of “disenchantment of the world” and,

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<sup>1</sup> J. F. Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne*, Paris, Minuit, 1979 și J. Habermans, *Le discours philosophique de la modernité*, Paris, Gallimard, 1988.

unfortunately, of the man himself. Associated with secularization, this “disenchantment of the world” produced neither the expected prototype of man, completely unreligious, nor completely abolished the sense of the sacred in the modern world. Therefore, the exacerbation of critical thinking has not necessarily led to the alienation of religious feeling, but shaped a modernity of another type called by the sociologists psychological modernity or ultra-modernity. In view of J.-P. Willaime, “Ultramodernity is no less religious, it has a different religiosity. It seems that we became aware of the limitations of modern rationality and that we are looking for an emerging rationality that considered the emotional, aesthetic and ethical elements of human knowledge”<sup>2</sup>.

Within the Arabic Muslim culture, if the issue of modernity had been approached initially in a totally different perspective, starting from a biased obsession about the colonial, materialist and hedonist West, in totally different contexts, ultra-modernity as defined earlier, seems to be a reality. The project of the so-called “Islamic modernism”, a response to the penetration into Arabic society of the western capitalist model, required few „epistemological” steps. First, it was necessary to revive the rationalist discourse in the Islamic thought by updating the science of *kalam* and by adopting few features of western science and philosophy. Secondly, to find the appropriate solutions to challenges of the western modernism, new religious and academic institutions had been founded that focused on the study of Islamic and foreign languages. This response movement mostly emphasized the challenges that Western modernity has constantly imposed on the Islamic Arabic thought: „(...) a conscious and intellectual defense must be made of the Islamic tradition. Moreover, a thorough intellectual criticism must be made of the modern world and its shortcomings. Muslim cannot hope to follow the same path as the West without reaching the same impasse or an even a worse one, because of the rapidity of the tempo of change today. The Muslim intelligentsia must face all these changes mentioned here, and many others, with confidence in themselves. They must cease to live in the state of a psychological and cultural sense of inferiority”<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, several Muslim experts have been contesting for more than three decades that the traditional Islamic paradigm or *episteme*, to which more recent attempts of „knowledge Islamisation” have been added, can solve difficulties faced by modern Arab society. In view of Ziauddin Sardar, an alternative Islamic epistemological paradigm is needed to the classical one for „achieving synthesis on an appropriate footing with knowledge by Western civilization”<sup>4</sup>.

Nowadays, though, more and more voices of the Arab thought denounce the intellectual and religious disarray of Muslim societies and Islamic communities abroad. Quite often, Arab scholars have acknowledged the inability of Muslim intellectual elites to develop a critical theory of Islamic knowledge enabling them

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<sup>2</sup> J.-P. Willaime, “Le christianisme, une religion de l’avenir de la religion” in: R. Rénard (dir.), *Les grandes inventions du christianisme*, Paris, Bayard, 1999, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*, London and New York, Longman, 1975, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come*, London, Mansell, 1985, p. 104.

to confront the real problems that the new type of society faces in line with the current historical moment. This failure has been perceived whether as an inability to revive and reinterpret a rationality specific to early Islamic thought or as a refusal to accept main western cultural topics of modernity, even if the modernity of technological type as such has been desired by the Arabic world. In other words, even those who had tried hard to apply old patterns and Islamic ways of thinking, linking them with cultural, economic, political and social paths of development of the West, failed in explaining to followers of Islam how to be both Muslims and modern. Several scholars have tried to identify real reasons of this failure. The first assumption, repeated often, is the refusal to apply the scientific and cultural achievements of the western world during the past 200 years to the study of the cultural history of Islam. Here is the solution suggested by Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi': "Critical theory, in its various expressions and representations, from George Hegel to Karl Marx and down to Hannah Arendt, Max Horkheimer and Jürgen Habermas, forms a central force in Western critical tradition. Muslim intellectuals cannot keep on ignoring this important factor. Critical theory must play a leading role if theorization is to gain any validity. Modern critical theory, which must be wedded to the vast revolutionary Islamic tradition, has mainly been a product of critical reflection on the profound economic, cultural, and social transformations brought about by capitalism (...)"<sup>5</sup>. The author has reviewed the Arabic intellectual history since 1967, interpreted using the critical method borrowed from sociology and philosophy, he supports several claims confirming the existence of a project to modernize arabic society and thought.

The first claim defines modern Arabic thought as an overall mosaic, now incoherent, made of social, political, religious and ideological doctrines that are less than two hundred years old. Second, he identifies two reasons giving specificity to this type of thinking: a) historical influences of the Arab world, which started with the advent of Islam and have gone through major changes over time and b) Western influences which have become a part of the recent history of Arab societies (especially the capitalism, after the nineteenth century. The capitalism, which has not found an adequate expression in the Islamic world, has produced contradictory effects: although it has been the main engine of progress, it has certainly been the main reason for exploitation. This recurrent topic, together with colonialism and the hegemony of Europe (in the age of post-colonialism) has been viewed as the key to understanding the significance of all political, economic and religious movements in modern Arabic world.

The third claim is that of domination of the western world civilization on the modern world that is both creative and destructive. It has been responsible for all interrogations of Arab-Muslim intellectuals of the nineteenth century up to now. Lack of answers and adequate solutions has been attributed to the state of disarray in the Arab world that in less than a century had to adapt not only to the cultural pattern of the colonizers, and also to the challenges of global capitalism. This has led in Arab culture, defined by language, religion and history, to the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967. Arab Intellectual History*, Archway Road, London, Pluto Press, 2004, p. XIII.

appearance of competing cultural blocks supported by social groups distinguished by ideology and aims having in common the manipulation of religious feeling. According to Abu-Rabi', the negative diagnosis associated with modern Arabic thought is due to rudimentary and incomplete interpretations. In his view, the crisis of culture in the modern Arab world has not been triggered by the loss of religious values or cultural invasion of the West but by the Western structural economic model, the influence of which and even dependence the Arabs did not manage to escape. In addition, the three active and competing ideologies – popular, official and intellectual – have never reached a consensus on the main topics of the modern Arab world. This is the reason why in Abu-Rabi's view, "Arab thought is a complex <<epistemological and philosophical construct>> that comprehends all those intellectual tendencies or movements that describe, analyze, critique, and deconstruct the socio-economic, religious, political, and intellectual spheres in contemporary Arab society. In this sense, Arab thought is much more comprehensive than Muslim thought in the Arab world (...). In other words, Muslim thought in the Arab world (...) represents only one major trend among many competing trends in contemporary Arab thought. In addition to the Islamic current, Arab thought reflects a number of secular approaches to the issues that face the Arab world. In other words, contemporary Arab thought is the product of a complex intellectual formation that is, simply stated, both traditional and modern"<sup>6</sup>.

It is possible to identify the intellectual movements of the modern Arabic world by identifying the preferred topics that express symptoms, diagnosis and the solutions of Arab muslim intellectuals to challenges linked to modernity, contact with the West in general and also the crisis of the sacred in the modern world. From this perspective, the authors have identified different the origin, nature and different content of modern Arab world. Some invoke the existence of its plural origin (the spiritual heritage of classical Islam, modern cultural heritage of the West and the actual realities of the Arab world today), while others found the duplicity of its nature (traditionally Islamic and eclectically modern)<sup>7</sup>. As modern Arab thought encompasses, along with the non-Islamic or secular approaches, also the entire set of dominant movements in current arab thought (nationalist, Islamist, pro-Western, state-based ideology), it is almost impossible to have a homogenous Arab intellectual history. Firstly, its development requires to identify multiple intellectual histories that reflect cultural, economic and political changes that took place in the Arab world starting with the 19th century. This project has been undertaken by specialists belonging to a double culture, Arab-Muslim and Western, familiar with both the diversity of thought approaches of each intellectual history and with topics and issues that separate and unite the two cultures.

In most of the Arab-Islamic and Western studies, four fundamental movements that define its specificity are mentioned: Islamic, nationalist, liberal

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<sup>6</sup> Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967. Arab Intellectual History*, Archway Road, London, Pluto Press, 2004, pp. 63-64.

<sup>7</sup> Abdallah Laroui, *The Crisis of the Arab Intelligentsia: Traditionalism or Historicism?*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976, pp. 153-154.

and Marxist movements. Abu-Rabi' also mentions the fifth movement, regionalist which is characterized by the affiliation to a particular region of the Arab world that emerged after 1967. This school of thought is identifiable in general in the Gulf states that take a standpoint contrary to the spirit of the Arab unity.<sup>8</sup> The most important in term of communication among cultures are the Islamic and liberal movements.

The Islamic movement of the Arab thought is mostly represented by *Salafism*, a movement that offers a view of the world originated in the bright past of Islam, the criterion for evaluating the modern world being the model of Prophet Muhammad and his followers. It is a religious movement, supported by both lawyers, Kalam-ists, mystics, philosophers, and traditionalists, that rejects rational approach to religion, any innovations in theology and deviation from the way of life characterized by acceptance, obedience and imitation of the human prototype of Muhammad. We can identify based on this perspective a classical Salafism represented by Ahmad bin Hanbal as authors (the third Islamic century) and Ahmad bin Taymyyia (the fourth Islamic century). Classical Salafism was followed by the pre-colonial Salafism of the 18th and 19th centuries, usually associated with wahabism and with the extensive ideology of change of social and political order in the Arab world. The colonization of the Arab countries led to the creation of the so-called colonial Salafism represented by thinkers, such as al-Jaza'iri, Al-Mahdi, al-Sanusi, al-Attar, al-Saffar, al-Din Afghani, M. Abduh și Rashid Rida<sup>9</sup>. The last type, the most complex, is that of postcolonial Salafism, present today in most Arab countries that developed as a response not only to the modernity suggested by the West, but also to the decline of the muslim world.<sup>10</sup> Viewing revelation as the only criterion of truth, Salafists distinguish themselves by their emphasis on the dominance of the sacred in society, giving way to a set of visceral reactions to cultural, economic and political influences of the West, the confused and incoherent criticism of such notions as capitalism, Christianity and modernity (equal in their view). Even if they talk about progress, modern Salafists never abandon the idea that the modern Islamic tradition is central, the only one able to recover the sacred in modern Arab society, as popular Salafism (among popular Arab culture, especially oral), as an official, institutionalized Salafism (the privilege of the elites in power), as a reformed Salafism (supported by Abduh and bin Badis) or as an offensive *Ikhwan* Salafism that fight for the setting up of an Islamic state of the Caliphate type, similar to those of the beginnings of Islam. This school of thought fuels today bloody events in Iraq and Syria, caused by the Islamic State group. The obsession with the sacralization of society by the implementing *Shari'a* is coupled with fierce criticism of Christianity and Western consumerism. Separation of religion and state in the Western world is seen as a key component of its modernity, being stigmatized for the proliferation of secularization.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967*. Arab Intellectual History, Archway Road, London, Pluto Press, 2004, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> G.E. Von Grunebaum and R. Brunschvig, *Classicisme et déclin culturel dans l'histoire de l'Islam*, Paris, Besson - Chantemerle, 1957.

The topic of secularization is actually the reason for another confrontation of ideas within the Arab world. Arab nationalists consider, contrary to salafists, that the conflicts faced by the Arab world today should reduce the importance given to the sacred, remaining though declared enemies of Western imperialism.

For this reason, nationalists advocating for complete replacement of the salafist concept of “Islamic community” (*Ummah*) with that of the “Arab nation”, Islam being given only the status of the cultural heritage of the Arab people. An extremely complex phenomenon, the Salafism is, in Abu Rabi’s view “a broad coalition of religious and social forces, some of which have risen to prominence due to the unceasing need of the contemporary industrial societies for oil. However, one major underlying cause of the prominence of the *Salafiyyah* in its different offshoots is the strong religious component of popular Arab culture. Religion is always appealed to in times of crisis”<sup>11</sup>. The Arab representatives of the liberal movement expressed their views against this trend.

The “Enlightened Islam” (*mustanir*) or liberal Islam originated in the reformist thought of scholars, such as al-Afghani, Mohamed Abdu, Kasim Amin, M. Hussein Heikal, Taha Hussein, Al-Aqqad, Mansour Fahmy, Salim al-Bustani and Khalid Muhammad Khalid *et al.* and appeared as a reaction to British imperialism. Although it believes, as Salafism, in faith in the principles of Islam, but interpreted in terms of affirmation of individual freedom and democracy, the liberal movement condemns the abandoning of the rational approach to faith and any religious constraints.

Focusing on individual ethics, the discourse of the Enlightened Islam is centered on the dissolution of negative consciousness, inflexible, of Muslim traditionalists, defending the autonomy of reason and free will. According to Hassan Hanafi, the Enlightened Islam can also be called “rational Islam”, “cultural Islam” and “pluralist Islam”: “rational” as it not based on the old rhetoric and dialectics of Islam, but on dialogue and demonstration; “cultural” because Islam should be primarily a cultural and not political or military power and, finally, “pluralist” to the extent that it does not allow a monopoly on truth and supports a variety of versions, interpretations and visions<sup>12</sup>. This standpoint often brought the wrath of religious Arab intellectuals.

Similar to Salafist discourse, the liberal discourse of modern Arab thought developed together with the reformist movement of the nineteenth century, especially by adopting and applying the Western notion of progress (scientific and material) to Arab society. Like Western liberalism, the Arab liberal movement followed the detachment of metaphysics from rationalism, the construction of a new social and political order, as well as the development of an economic philosophy that would show the future path for the reconstruction of a democratic state.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967. Arab Intellectual History*, Archway Road, London, Pluto Press, 2004, p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Hassan Hanafi, *New Directions in Islamic Thought*, Qatar, Center for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, 2010, pp. 3-4.

In his classical paper on Arab thought in the liberal Age, Hourani analyzed the Arab liberalism in detail.<sup>13</sup> It is enough to mention here that between the wars, liberalism attracted arab leaders and scholars as those mentioned earlier<sup>14</sup>, and also modern scholars, such as Ali al-Din Hilal, Sai'd al-Najjar și Hazem al-Bablawi and Sayyid Yassin. The penetration of liberalism into the Arab world according to some scholars was a necessary process in the context of economic and cultural stagnation. Also, Arab liberalism has always been a weak version of the European liberalism, because it lacked the social, cultural and political context that made the European liberalism possible. Even if a real Arab bourgeoisie could not appear due to a feudal system still active in this type of society, there have been identified values in the Western liberalism, sometimes similar to those of the early Islamic tradition, which can meet the need for freedom of civil and religious thought in the contemporary Arab world.

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<sup>13</sup> Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age. 1798-1939*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

<sup>14</sup> Ibrahim Ibrahim, "Taha Husayn: The Critical Spirit", in: John Spagnolo (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective*, London, Ithaca Press, 1992.

# THE ONTOLOGICAL REALITY OF SUFFERING AND SALVATION THROUGH LOVE

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*“People have not understood that suffering is the only means of fighting against mediocrity. We cannot change too much by means of culture or spirit; but it is unimaginable how much we can change through pain. The only weapon against mediocrity is suffering”.*

**Emil Cioran (*The Trouble of Existing*, Dionysos Publishing House, 1992, p.10)**

*“Love is a source of existence. We exist through love. We search love in order to elude the collapse into nothing by the lucidities of our knowledge. We want love to not be forged and falsified by truth and knowledge. For we exist only through illusions, hopelessness and our mistakes because they alone express the individual. The general of knowledge and the abstract of truth (even if truth does not exist, there is still the urge towards the truth) are threats to our love and our desire for love”.*

**Emil Cioran, (*Ibidem*, p.39).**

**Abstract:** The starting point of our research concerning this problem emerges from the ontological reality of suffering, from the understanding that this is a **limit of the human being**, but also a trial by means of which he can discover himself and accept the human nature in its imperfection. **The greatness of suffering** lies in the fact that man becomes translucent through it, making proof of his consciousness. Thus, man can overcome such a situation by his **inner attitude**, the only one that lies in the power of man and that he can build through reason and love. The **moral profit** of suffering awareness is tremendous, being exploited in increasing love in its pure form. Only through a superior understanding of suffering can man live the experience of salvation.

**Keywords:** suffering, love, consciousness, evil, theodicy, freedom, salvation, God.

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When we analyze the ontological reality of suffering we do not start from the Buddhist thesis that equates existence and suffering, but we consider the integrated approach of suffering correlated with **the dialectic rise** of man in acquiring Truth, with the steps in the developing of human behavior. Whereas during **the physical suffering** the human being gets in touch with its **biological self**, during the moral one he becomes aware of everyday nothingness and of the exterior evil, reaching the level of the **social ego** or superego level as Freud<sup>1</sup> used to call it, during **the metaphysical suffering** man realizes his limit and lives with the thought of death. Arriving here, on the stage of the spiritual self, man reaches self-consciousness. In other words, there are **several forms of suffering corresponding to the different degrees of consciousness**. Man manages to overcome the evil (the physical, moral or metaphysical one) to the extent in which he becomes capable of overcoming his limited point of view. When he comes across the evil, he must be able to ascend to divine law, for which the evil is only an indispensable element.

We do not live in "the best of all possible worlds" as Leibniz<sup>2</sup> said. Moreover, the famous Leibnizian formula brought into derision by Voltaire does not have any ethical connotations, the German philosopher making here an extremely valuable ontological judgment which differentiates between divine perfection and human imperfection. Hence, from here derives Leibniz's answer to the problem of evil: evil comes from imperfection, from the limitations and obscurities which determine the existence of any created being. **There is undoubtedly a connection between the existence of evil and suffering. The evil generates suffering, and its understanding can turn the evil into good.** Evil is the counterpart of good. Evil would be deprived of meaning in the absence of good. Somehow, even though the evil is undesirable, it is necessary. Without it, there would be neither excellence nor value. The search for value, for excellence in the world would be impossible. The evil is a cause of good, an idea shared by Leibniz in *Theodicy*; Good comes from God, the evil from the status of creature.

Any serious conception of life involves the vision and admission of evil and, implicitly, of suffering. Not seeing them, ignoring them, make man irresponsible and superficial, somehow bars the depth of life for him. Denying the evil, cancelling suffering means losing the freedom of the spirit, throwing away the burden of freedom. Today's world is under the sign of an impetuous growth of evil, accompanied by its denial. Moreover, man remains disarmed in front of it, when he does not see it. The personality strengthens when distinguishing between good and evil, when it is capable to delineate the latter. When these limits disappear, when man is in a state of confusion and indifference, the personality corrupts itself and breaks to pieces because the consciousness strength is linked to the discovery of the evil. In this respect, Emil Cioran showed that "in the moral suffering man gets an extra consciousness". The consciousness plan develops gradually according to pain levels, it exacerbates endlessly, loosening man from his links with life and what is proper to it"<sup>3</sup>. The Romanian

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<sup>1</sup> S. Freud, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Trei Publishing House, 2010

<sup>2</sup> G.W. Leibniz, *Essays on Theodicy*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1997

<sup>3</sup> E. Cioran, *Pain Revelations*, Echinox Publishing House, Cluj, 1990, p.90-91

thinker's conception of suffering is bivalent: there is an aesthetic suffering and a chronic one. The first is superficial and unrevealing to life itself, lacking intensity and therefore deprived of the immanent meanings or their search in the very essence of life: "All those who consider the small dissatisfactions of life as suffering, who exaggerate some contradictions and spiritual unrests related to the instability and incertitude of age, claiming to be tortured without the haunting prospect of death, all of them suffer aesthetically, because in their case we do not speak about a constant shaking of the totality of their being, we speak about some transient and accidental torments that a bookish fantasy exaggerates without a deep background" <sup>4</sup>. The aesthetics suffering is not a single individual's earthquake, as a whole, it is not an uprooting and continuous "concern about death" it is without substance and purely formal.

The second suffering, the metaphysical or chronic one, is authentic, revealing pain, and lies in the very essence of life, is deep and increases to despair (paroxysm of pain), being in Freud's thanatos cone. Man denies himself in pain, getting a plus of consciousness.

In chronic pain, man feels acute states of consciousness as a result of the plenary denial of vital principles, *Cioran's equation of suffering is minus life equal to plus of consciousness*. Man lives interiorly and innerly, completely outside the objective reality, although not totally detached from it so as to step into unreality, he thinks and, especially, feels pain at very high levels of consciousness, perceives new meanings, phenomena, and situations with main role and attribute are revealed to him making him feel strong and rich.

It goes without saying, even if it is hard to accept, that the possibility of pain is inherent to the very existence of a world where souls can meet. When the souls become villain, they will surely use this possibility to hurt each other; and this represents four fifths of the human suffering. Man, not God, is the one who invented the wheel of torture, the whip, the prison, slavery, the rifle, the bayonet and the bombs; poverty and hard work are the result of human cupidity and nonsense, not of the harshness of nature. However, there are still many sufferings left whose cause cannot be specified. Even if all sufferings would be man's work, we would like to know why God gave the worst men the exorbitant permission to torture their peers.

Why does God allow the scary evil, why does victory suffer? Where is the work of divine providence? The existence of evil raises the question of theodicy, of making proof of God's existence<sup>5</sup>. The world created by God is full of evil, but at its foundation lies the greatest good, the freedom of spirit, showing that man carries the divine image in himself. **Freedom is the only solution to the problem of theodicy. The problem of evil is the problem of freedom.** Unless we understand freedom, we cannot understand the irrational fact of the existence of evil in the divine world.

Freedom is expressed in a brilliant way by Dostoevski by means of his hero of the *Underground*. Man is an irrational being and, more than anything else, he

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 91

<sup>5</sup> N. Berdiaev, *Spirit and Freedom*, Paideia, 1996, p.198

is keen to live according to his own will. He consents to suffer in the name of this free will. He is ready to overthrow the whole rational organization of life, all harmony, if it deprives him of the freedom of choice, if it has to be imposed on him. If we admit only the freedom given by truth, given by God and reject the freedom of choice and the receipt of truth, then we are fatally dragged towards tyranny and the freedom of spirit is replaced by its determination.

The negative consequences of evil in man show determined predestination to a superior life. Even before the coming of Christ, a high spiritual life, an intense creative force were possible in the pagan world. The indisputable and empirical evidence is the Greek culture. The higher spiritual nature of man lived in Plato. The thirst for God and divine life man felt manifested in him. The human nature preserves its independence, it is part of the divine work in the world. But the final triumph over evil cannot be gained through man's natural powers which remain separated from God. *Somehow, the pre-Christian world turned towards the salvation shown by Christianity, as a work of love, of salvation through the sacrifice of infinite divine love.*

Christianity is the religion of Salvation and, consequently, it implies the existence of evil, of sufferings. If suffering is the consequence of evil, it is also the path we need to set us free. For the Christian consciousness, suffering is not necessarily an evil; there is a divine suffering, even of God-Himself, that of the Son. The whole creation sighs and cries, waiting to be released. The religion of love is not responsible for the fact that hatred reigns in our natural world. To reject Christianity is impossible to quote the existence of incalculable sufferings and evils of life. Christianity is the religion of freedom and, therefore, cannot allow the removal of evil and suffering through violence and coercion. It gives suffering a sense, releases it from evil. But the release itself involves the participation of human freedom<sup>6</sup>. The reference to the Christian religion is imminent in the context of our analysis, because, above all, Christianity teaches us to be ruthless to the evil which is inside us. But by destroying it, we must be indulgent toward our fellow man. **Evil can be overcome only in an inner and spiritual way.** Common victory is linked to the mystery of salvation; it can take place only in Christ and through Christ. **He is the benchmark of maximum suffering borne from love. Thus, through his example we can understand how love conquers death.** The mystery of infinite love and new freedom could be found only through Christ. Therefore, His appearance marks a new eon in the world's destiny. Not only the human nature, but also the entire universe, the whole cosmic life was transfigured by the coming of Christ. **One cannot dare to analyze suffering, as ontological reality and its transcendence, without having in front of the eyes the pinnacle of suffering embodied by Jesus, the symbol of universal love.**

I consider that the **Experience lived by Jesus is a proof of a double implication between love and suffering: absolute love suffering generates absolute suffering and the latter can be overcome only by love. Salvation is clearly the only possible theodicy, the justification**

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<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p.211.

**of God and his creation. There are several arguments that illustrate the ontological understanding of suffering combined with the ontological understanding of salvation.**

But in a world devoid of rationality and love as the one we live in, where there are no genuine moral guidelines, which is dominated by selfishness, greed and cowardice, isn't there any room for Jesus? How do we position ourselves in relation to Truth, Goodness, Justice, Consciousness? It is impressive how Ah. Schopenhauer, starting from the existence of evil in the world, concludes in his philosophy: "that the existence of the world should much less make us joyful than sad, that its nonexistence would be preferable to existence, as in fact it is something that should not be"<sup>7</sup> and Cioran, from the core of his delusions, enunciates the "trouble of existing"<sup>8</sup>, the sorrow and burden of having an existence, speaking about our access to "universal suffering". The existence of consciousness and its corollary, knowledge, represents for Cioran, in perfect tacit agreement with Schopenhauer - a way of enhancing the individuation and thus a way of intensifying the suffering. The German philosopher had noticed the connection between the evolution of the living (the degree of individuation) and the intensity of suffering, as well as pain exacerbation through consciousness and knowledge: "Because as will takes an increasingly perfect phenomenal form, to the same extent suffering becomes more evident [...] the clearer knowledge becomes, the higher steps the consciousness climbs, the greater is the suffering; it reaches the highest degree in man and, the better understanding he has, the more intelligent he is, the more suffering increases for him; and the genius suffers the most"<sup>9</sup>. We understand, therefore, that the German philosopher appreciates a genius according to his ability to suffer: "tell me how much you know, to tell you how much you suffer". Suffering is thus approached as a way of knowing, but it is not an end in itself, it is a path that leads to salvation. Without praising suffering we cannot fail to ascertain that suffering in its entirety has stimulated the creation of humanity, as the greatest creations, from the Gothic cathedral up to Ode to Joy, arose from suffering. Without having the voluptuousness of suffering, we understand, based on a philosophical and theological approach of it, that salvation experience does not appear on a background of exaltation, but of existential crisis. Maybe that is why Emil Cioran argues that suffering is like a compensation for the illusory nature of the world's existence.<sup>10</sup> "Lord, I collapsed in my heart!" exclaims Cioran at the end of the *Book of Delusions*; this cry, expressing the hopelessness of the one who is aware that any search of transcendence is doomed to failure, is also the cry of the one who finds himself sentenced to a "cosmic loneliness", suffering being his only companion. Following in the footsteps of Dostoevsky, who was indicating suffering as caused by consciousness, the author of *Tears and Saints*<sup>11</sup> divides people into two categories: those who understand and those who do not understand this truth. The one

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<sup>7</sup> Ah. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> vol., Humanitas, 2012, p.384

<sup>8</sup> E. Cioran, the *Book of Delusions*, Humanitas, 1991, p.29

<sup>9</sup> Ah. Schopenhauer, cited works, I, p.333.

<sup>10</sup> E. Cioran, cited works, p.22

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, *Tears and Saints*, Humanitas, 2008

whose suffering reaches paroxysm no longer needs human society. “Suffering has infinite reserves that never leaves the man too little alone, so that he may need the others,” says Cioran in his *Book of Delusions*<sup>12</sup>. There is in Cioran’s work a pride of suffering caused by lucidity that will never leave him and which leads him to draw a clear dividing line between “those who sleep and those who are awake, two different types of beings who will be different forever, who have nothing in common but for their physical appearance” as he will find out so trenchantly in the twilight of his life, in *Confessions and Anathemas*.<sup>13</sup> “Alone, face to face with nights and words” – here is the condition of the lucid man, condemned to perpetual loneliness and wakefulness. “Conscience of consciousness” as it is called in the *Fall in Time*<sup>14</sup>, lucidity is the landmark of those who have lost their sleep, who stay awake; and to be awake means to be alone par excellence. Sleep is a communion of those who know they are not alone; being awake is the act by which you assume your solitude, your break up with the others. Or, in Cioran’s words, “unconsciousness is a homeland; consciousness an exile” (*The Trouble with Being Born*).<sup>15</sup> And *exile means rupture, tear, pain*. I have raised these arguments as we appreciate the Romanian thinker’s philosophical approach as kindred to the philosophy of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Pascal, being among the most thrilling pages in the history of the European culture. The wise man’s life is traditionally associated with the struggle to reduce suffering under any form: despair, hatred, contempt, anxiety etc. But there is a philosopher whose thought can be regarded, in many of its aspects, as an apology for suffering, a plea for dignity and, even more, it can be turned into a source of extraordinary achievements. For Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), the abolition of suffering, the avoidance of difficulties of any kind, is the symptom of supreme wandering of a narrow mind. Conversely, assuming pain, disease, distress is the vein from which the most prolific acts of creation spring. “Joy is sterile or, at best, is not able to give birth to anything else but abortions” seems to declare the author of the *Gay Science*, “whereas pain is the mother of all human achievements”<sup>16</sup>. An evidence in this respect are the wild years when the German philosopher fully experienced suffering, without being overwhelmed by it, even devouring it with a greedy voluptuousness of pain, in a work of unmatched value. Thus he showed that, while some indulge in pain, being devoured by it, others tear it up, mix it and turn it, through a secret inner alchemy, known only by themselves, into gold, into the sublime. An accomplished life, a destiny cannot be fulfilled without taking on bold challenges, difficulties, bitterness and harshness: the loss of a beloved one, the betrayal of a friend, the separation from a familiar place etc. “What does not kill you makes you stronger” - echoes over the centuries the urge which, although we quite often have the courage to utter, we seldom fully assume when life test us. The accomplishment of any human project requires as a possible prerequisite its forging, its distillation into the abyss of the worst dropouts, failures and

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, *The Book of Delusions*, Humanitas, 1991

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, *Confessions and Anathema*, Humanitas, 2012

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, *The Fall in Time*, Humanitas, 1994

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, *The Trouble with Being Born*, Humanitas, 2008

<sup>16</sup> Fr. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Humanitas, 1994

unfulfillments. Joy itself feeds on the meat of the past pains, troubles and adversity. Between what we are and what we want to be, between the status quo and our great achievements often intervenes anxiety, humiliation, concessions, ingredients which either “freeze” us in the stage of virtuality or propels us to self-actualization and success. Under limited circumstances, reading Nietzsche pages can be an important lesson: you cannot really feel joy until you have bravely gone through the purifying fire of suffering. One should not infer from the above mentioned things that we want to make an apology of suffering. It is clear that any rational man wants good, but our message is this: suffering is an ontological reality, whether we recognize it or not, it is an everyday experience lived at different degrees of intensity, as each one of us suffers as much as he can feel and especially as much as he can understand. Suffering, if it is acceptable, less desirable, it is only because it grows and bears fruit in the great love, the true and victorious one. The absolute suffering dissolves itself in absolute love through forgiveness. “Suffering is the experience of concesivity. Learning to suffer means learning to forgive. Why do we forgive? Because pain gradually makes us you grow away from things. In desperation, detached from everything, one forgives everything”<sup>17</sup>. “As it is in the structure of the long lasting suffering experience to gradually phase out morale”. This forgiveness beyond morality and religion, another typical paradox, is forgiveness through detaching from things, not though deepening them, a forgiveness by means of disintegration and isolation from the objective and an essential penetration into the subjective up to the deepest forms of suffering, that is up to despair, in which man continues living only interiorly cleaved, separated from everything and anything, not filtering anything from the outer world, in other words subjectively tight. This is the existential solution for preserving spiritual purity. Overcoming suffering with the chance of non-altering the soul is the ineluctable evidence of the strength of character and of deep understanding. Not accidentally, Spinoza says: “do not laugh, do not cry, do not praise, do not blame, try to understand”<sup>18</sup>. For the wise, rational man, comprehension is the way towards the path of freedom and happiness.

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<sup>17</sup> Fr. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Humanitas, 1994.

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## HEGEL ON FORMAL LOGIC

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**Abstract:** *The paper refers to the meaning of formal logic within Hegel's philosophical systems starting from the twofold meaning of the forms of classical logic: notion or concept, judgment and syllogism. The main point is that a formal approach of these forms is an unavoidable step of the construction of the speculative idea. In order to clarify the significance of these forms Hegel undertakes a speculative interpretation of these forms of logic, mixing their classical meaning with their speculative one.*

**Keywords:** *speculative logic, classical logic, concept, judgment, syllogism.*

Throughout his *Science of Logic*, but also in the *Logic of the Encyclopedia*, Hegel associates the idea of the formal with subjectivity and abstraction. Formal logic, the theory of notion, judgment, and syllogism is a subjective logic or, following Kant, an approach onto the forms of thinking as opposed to the object, or of logic as separated from ontology. Thought thinking upon itself, leaving aside all objects – the definition of formal logic offered by Kant – is the very theory of these forms. From a Hegelian viewpoint, there are two distinct moments: the concept in its metaphysical interpretation, where being and essence are moments of the concept; the categories, in this case, belong to thinking, but subjectivity is withdrawn, thus the concept “is not aware” of the fact that these determinations are of its own and credits them as belonging to the object; the second one is related to the concept in its logical interpretation; in this case, the concept considers all determinations as its own, in a subjective manner, first of all as forms of thought as separated from the object of thinking and then as objective – the concept “being aware” of the fact that the object is linked to the subjectivity; finally, the unity of the two moments, within the idea, where the objective and subjective determination coincide. At this level the concept reaches its most suitable form, which is also the form of its object.

The concept is, in fact, the object in its most adequate meaning, at the peak of its authenticity. The concept is the substance of the object, the nature of the object as such. Thus, the forms of the concept are, at the same time, forms of the object or modes in which the object manifests its nature. The identification of the object and the concept is, effectively, produced at the level of the determinations of the idea, thus throughout the third part of subjective logic. These determinations of the object are taken as becoming to the object alone,

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throughout the section regarding objectivity. Within the first section, dealing with subjectivity, thought reclaims them for itself and takes them as forms of its own, as independent from the object, but still pertaining to the object, since they are forms by means of which thought grasps its object. Therefore, formal logic deals with the forms of subjective thinking as forms that belong to this type of thinking, but are, at the same time, forms by means of which subjective thinking grasps its object, or, to be more precise, forms that render the object with its structure. Now, since the concept is the object in its authentic nature, this means that the forms of subjective thinking, that are discovered by the turning of thought onto itself, are, in fact, forms that belong to the object, since they express its very nature. Therefore, in Hegel's formal logic, the forms express the nature of the object, but belong to thought; their separate approach – meaning formal logic – is an approach that takes them as structures of subjective thinking that have an objective value, meaning that they express the nature of the object (because the nature of the object can be expressed only by thinking and, as a consequence, by the use of its forms). This type of forms can be displayed only by a research upon thought as such, and not by means of dissecting the object, as Hegel did throughout the objective logic, precisely because in this case all determinations belonged to the object as indifferent to the subject, thus one could never say that the concept is the very nature of the object. Thus, formal logic is also a type of research that aims to displaying the fundamental forms under which thought grasps its object. Naturally, as it is subjective, this logic implies also an objective application, and this really happens within Hegel's subjective logic, throughout the chapter regarding the idea. Within the section on objectivity, thought grasps its object starting from its structures, but these structures are taken as belonging to thinking only, while the object is considered as having its own structures (mechanism, chemism, teleology). At the level of this relation between objectivity and subjectivity one finds the philosophical formalism (not of a Kantian type), that states differences between the forms of thinking and those of reality; this is passed over by Hegel's idea, where the forms of subjective thinking and objective reality coincide. At this level, thought grasp its object without fear of not being able to do so.

This short account of the importance of formal logic in Hegel's view raises the problem of the relation among these moments of the concept. Thus, the subjective concept is, in fact, the Cartesian, empiricist, Kantian and Fichtean concept. It is, in fact, about *cogito, ergo sum*<sup>1</sup>, thus about the primal form of the concept taken, within the history of philosophy, as a reality appearing outside objects<sup>2</sup>. Now, the subjective concept is, in fact, the concept as being. This means that the forms of classical logic are forms of being or of thought (following

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<sup>1</sup> This is about the reinstatement of Parmenides' principle of identity between being and thought, now from a conceptual perspective; Parmenides' perspective as such left aside the subjective determination, thus the Greek thinker was at the level of objective thinking, within the theory of being. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, translated and edited by George di Giovanni, Cambridge University press, 2010, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Errol E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, University Press of America, 1983, p. 222.

Parmenides' tradition). This makes formal logic – as Hegel understands it – a theory of being from the perspective of the concept, or a theory of subjective being, i. e. of subjectivity as being.

If all these are accepted, then the Hegelian concept of formal logic receives new meanings. Firstly, this is a logic of understanding<sup>3</sup>. Hegel did not reach the precise distinction between understanding as a faculty of functions and operations and reason as a faculty of forms of reflection<sup>4</sup>. Hegel reunites the understanding and reason within a faculty he names understanding and credits it with the ability to function formally and subjectively. Now, the forms of this Hegelian understanding are the concept as such, the judgment, and syllogism. They are forms of the concept in a general meaning. Thus, for instance, within the idea one reunites the unity of the concept as such, the division of judgment and the mediation of syllogism. Now, the understanding, as Hegel conceives it, is functioning subjectively, meaning that it takes its forms as substance of things. Thus, for the understanding, the concept, the judgment, and syllogism are objective, but not because they really are, but because they are taken as such by the understanding. In fact, the forms of objectivity are the mechanism, the chemism, and teleology, but the understanding does not recognize them as such. Such a procedure of the understanding – placing its forms as substance – is also kept by the language. Thus, the English word is “understanding” and the German one is “*Verstand*”. In both cases, they mean “what lies under”. In other words, the fact that the forms of understanding are taken as a substance of things means that subjectivity is taken as objective. Therefore, the ultimate nature of objects is rendered to them by the very forms of understanding, the understanding becoming a strictly formal faculty of thought. Formal logic, as a theory of being, is a display of the forms of understanding as an authentic nature of objects.

Now, this formal logic of understanding can be integrated within Hegel's logic as a science of forms. Thus, what is classically called formal logic becomes formal approach on concept, judgment, and syllogism (here one must take into account the identification of understanding and reason, which leads Hegel to reuniting them under the name of understanding) and speculative logic becomes formal logic (science of the forms of thought). Since concepts are this way redefined, the science of logic is the science of pure logical idea, which is free from the nature's and spirit's determinations; the logical idea and all its determinations is, also, an internal structure of the whole philosophical system<sup>5</sup>. Classical logic – or, to be honest, Hegel's interpretation of it – is just subjective logic, therefore it is not the entire formal logic, but a part of it, i. e. that which displays the forms of subjectivity. Again, these forms can also be in an abstract manner dealt with, as separated from the logical process, this leading to the classical logic as such. Of course, subjectivity and its forms, concept, judgment,

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<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> See Alexandru Surdu, *Aristotelian Theory of Prejudicative Forms*, translated into English by Ștefan-Dominic Georgescu, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 2006, p. 223-228.

<sup>5</sup> André Lecrivain, *Introduction à la lecture de la Science de la logique de Hegel*, Aubier, Paris, 1983, p. 36-37.

and syllogism, are the immediate form of the concept, which is characteristic for the understanding. But here the understanding is not a separated faculty of thought, but a moment of speculative thinking. Therefore, Hegelian interpretation is entirely different from other perspectives. Thus, usually, the theory of classical forms is the logic of reason, of the forms of reflection<sup>6</sup>. The logic of understanding is that of operations, relations, and functions, while speculative logic is that of the idea. All can be symbolically and formally approached upon, as they are sciences of form, but without reducing them to a mere calculus (as one has done, sometimes, with the syllogism). Hegel states understanding as comprising the understanding and reason in ordinary meaning and, for both, merely the formal approach of their concepts, since they are missing all content and one establishes some rules for them to be able to receive content from experience. Reason, on the other hand, is speculative reason, and its logic is the logic of the idea; the understanding is just a moment of reason that states the determinations and renders things with their thought-form; the forms of classical logic and those of the logic of understanding are not taken as such, but burdened with their speculative meaning (and modified at the extent at which one gets different logical forms – and Hegel is rarely aware of this). As a consequence, there are at least three possible meanings for formal logic: the logic of the forms of subjectivity as a moment of the concept (practically, the first chapter of subjective logic); logic formally approached, as a science of void forms (including the reduction of syllogism to a mere calculus); speculative logic as a whole, as a science of the forms of thought. Many times one can only circumstantially understand what Hegel means by “formal”, and sometimes it could be any of the three. Anyway, one can clearly see that the meaning of “formal logic” is not univocally used by Hegel.

The main form stated by understanding an authentic nature of things is the concept<sup>7</sup>. This is the primal form of subjective thinking. In classical formal logic, the concept was merely a common feature of more individuals, which Hegel rejects<sup>8</sup>. Thus, the concept is an original unity and immediate unity with itself<sup>9</sup>. This entitled Errol E. Harris<sup>10</sup> to say that the concept is, in fact, Fichte’s and Schelling’s transcendental ego, but logically considered<sup>11</sup>. This means, in fact, that the concept is the logical form of subjectivity, or the subjectivity reduced to its logical aspect. This is justified for Hegel, since the moment of complete determination of the concept is the individual, or the qualitative unity (this). Now, this qualitative unity is a form of subjectivity, closer to Kant’s or Fichte’s (the ego is a logical absolute). If so, the subjective concept is not merely the classical notion, but it has a role of organizing and unifying. This means, again, that it is subjectivity that renders the object with the form of the concept, since

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<sup>6</sup> The distinction we refer to was elaborated by Alexandru Surdu, in some of his papers.

<sup>7</sup> Understanding is, according to Hegel, a “faculty of concepts in general”. *Science of Logic*, ed. cit., p. 529. See also André Lecrivain, *op.cit.*, 1983, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, ed.cit., p. 620.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 599.

<sup>10</sup> *Op.cit.*, p. 224.

<sup>11</sup> See also André Lecrivain, *op.cit.*, 1983, p. 25.

the concept is a unity and the object is conceived by means of this unity. Briefly, the concept unifies and renders objects systematic, being more than a common feature or a class of isolated objects<sup>12</sup>. Besides, as *energeia*, the concept also has some constructive potencies<sup>13</sup>, of course, according to its internal principle of unification. In fact, generally speaking, by form Hegel means a constructive principle that has a dynamic nature<sup>14</sup>. Besides, the subjective concept is the one that indicates the formal. As Hegel states, "*Der Begriff ist zuerst der formelle, der Begriff im Anfang oder der als unmittelbar ist.*"<sup>15</sup>. The meaning is that the concept is determined, at first, as being the formal (or what is only formal). The French translation is: "le concept est d'abord le [concept] *formel*, le concept au commencement ou qui est comme [concept] *immédiat*"<sup>16</sup>. One notices that the French translation is more prudent, using brackets for the term "concept". It is all about the fact that thinking, as understanding, is, at first, formally related to things, taking them as essentially concepts. Hegel often recognizes this for the understanding: elevating things at the form of the concept. Obviously, this is, at first, formal, meaning that the understanding sets the concept as a form of thing, a subjective form, by means of which understanding conceives all things. Thus firstly, understanding conceives things by means of concept, but this concept is only the form of the understanding, and not the form of objectivity. Meaning that, by means of concept, the understanding formally determines all things at first or, in other words, conceptual approach is a formal approach. This is why he does not refer to the formal concept – since there is no other concept besides the formal one, given this meaning of it (leaving aside the general signification of the concept and the concept as an idea). Of course, the guilt for these misunderstandings belongs to Hegel, who often uses the term "concept" with different meanings. But, in the case of subjectivity, it is all about the precise meaning of this term, and it is identical with the meaning of the term "the formal" (taken as a noun). Now, the understanding deals with this. It differs from the power of judgment and formal reason. The first one is the faculty of judgments (as Kant states it) and the second one is that of syllogisms. Formally conceived, understanding is the faculty of determined concepts (concepts like "man" or "friend"), and thus the faculty of the concepts taken as singularities. Still, the faculty of judgment and formal reason are, in a way, similar to understanding, as Hegel puts it<sup>17</sup>. Then, he means the faculties of formal classical logic: the understanding (*Verstand*) settles down the determined concept of a thing; the faculty of judgment (*Urteilkraft*) establishes its features; the reason (*Vernunft*) looks for the middle term and, of course, the grounding of a determined judgment. Formal classical logic, in this context, is meant to approach onto these forms and to establish the regions they apply to, while speculative logic exposes

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<sup>12</sup> Errol E. Harris, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>13</sup> André Lecrivain, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> John Grier Hibben, *Hegel's Logic: An Essay in Interpretation*, Batoche Books Limited, Ontario, Canada, 2000, p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden. 6. Wissenschaft der Logik. II*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1969, p. 272.

<sup>16</sup> *Apud* André Lecrivain, *op.cit.*, p. 37

<sup>17</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, ed. cit., p. 597.

their genesis as forms of the idea. Therefore, the understanding comprises the understanding as such, the faculty of judgment and formal reason. Its forms (which, usually, are the forms of reason) are the concept, the judgment and syllogism, taken as separated, just like the faculties that produce them, meaning the understanding as such, the faculty of judgment and formal reason. The understanding in general (comprising also the other two) is responsible for the setting up of the concept as authentic form of subjectivity or of the setting up of subjectivity as concept. In fact, here one finds the most precise definition of the formal given by Hegel: the subjective concept or subjectivity *stricto sensu* (unrelated to objectivity) is the formal<sup>18</sup>. In this context, the concept as such, the judgment, and syllogism are the formal determinations of subjectivity (or of the concept in general) or, to be more precise, determinations of the abstract concept.

Now, unlike formal classical logic, Hegel no longer refers to judgment, but to the concept as judgment<sup>19</sup>. Meaning that the judicative form is deduced from the form of the concept, and it is not merely a joining of a subject and a predicate. The same goes for syllogism, which is the form mediated in itself of the concept. It is clear, then, that Hegel thinks that formal logic does not refer to the forms of logic as such, but to their genesis within the logical process, as determinations of the idea. Hegel is aware of the fact that one can give a formal approach onto concept, judgment, and syllogism; but he is interested in displaying these determinations as belonging to the idea, thus as they are developing (he could have written a treatise on classical logic, but this was not the goal of his logic). Thus, it is all about the way in which subjectivity – or the thinking subject in general – comes to express itself under the form of the concept, that of the judgment, and that of the syllogism. There is, of course, a connection with formal classical logic: the treatment of these forms as independent from the manner in which they are generated within the process of the idea is possible (this is classical logic), the role of speculative logic being to integrate these forms within this process. This is neither a reduction of formal classical logic to speculative logic, nor a hierarchy between them, but merely a completion or a reevaluation of formal classical logic. Especially because speculative logic deals with the manner in which these determinations of classical logic evolve from one to another, while classical logic deals with a former establishment of these forms and of rules of well-forming and use. This is what Hegel calls natural history of the forms of spirit, meaning a research upon the forms thought passes through, and not a deduction by necessity. Thus, to say that Hegel has a speculative understanding of the forms of traditional logic seems to be in order<sup>20</sup>.

There are, also, some other meanings of the formal in Hegel's logic. Formal means what is immediate and abstract. These concepts have a slightly clear meaning in Hegel's logic. Thus, by determining the formal concept (the meaning is that presented above) as immediate and abstract he means the concept as mere form, missing all content. One may see here a return to the Kantian formalism

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<sup>18</sup> André Lecrivain, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, ed. cit., p. 596.

<sup>20</sup> André Lecrivain, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

that Hegel repudiated<sup>21</sup>. This is not the case, since by formal concept Hegel means a concept whose content has not yet been exposed. This is not an external context, like in the case of formal concepts of understanding (or, to be more precise, like in the case of formal approach onto concept that understanding undertakes), but is the totality of the forms of the concept, meaning concept, judgment, and syllogism<sup>22</sup>. This is also a little unclear. Thus, the nature of the concept is, from a dialectical viewpoint, the mediation. Thus, the logical form of the concept is mediation as such. In other words, the meaning of the “concept” is “a logical form reflected in itself, as judgment, and mediated in itself, as syllogism”. Thus, the content of the concept as such is the totality of its forms. The form that best expresses this content is the syllogism. The concept as such represents this abstract content, which is implicit, without mediation; the judgment expresses this content under the form of reflection, while the syllogism expresses it under the form of mediation or development. In other words, Hegel means by abstract that which has not yet passed through the process of developing all its determinations. This also goes for determinate concepts. There is an “emergency” of a concept to determine itself as judgment and then as syllogism. The concept of man determines itself as the judgment “the man has a body” and then as “the man is a living being / living beings have bodies // the man has a body” (this being just an example, regardless of the nature of the predicate, the syllogistic figure, etc.). The same way, immediate means that which has this form of identity with itself, and not the mediated form (that of the syllogism, in this case).

In the end, one needs a special remark about concept, judgment and syllogism. When dealing with them, Hegel refers to their speculative meaning. Thus, they must be taken as formal, as determinations or forms of subjectivity, but also as speculative, as concept, division and synthesis. Now, if one undertakes a genetic exposition of logic, these three forms must be taken as formal, as moments of subjectivity; this is because, within the construction of the idea, the formal moment of understanding cannot be avoided. If, instead, one means to elaborate a structural exposition that refers to the manner in which the idea and its structures are present within the logic, these three forms are, in fact, particular cases of the forms of speculative logic – concept, division, and synthesis. This means that the concept as such is the subjectivity taken as a concept (as speculative thinking does); the judgment is the subjectivity as division; while the syllogism is the subjectivity as synthesis.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 41.

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# DIRECTIONS OF SELF-CRITICISM. AN ANALYSIS OF MARXISM AFTER 25 YEARS FROM THE COLLAPSE OF THE COMMUNIST REGIMES

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**Abstract:** *At the celebration of a quarter of a century from the bankruptcy of the Communist regimes, we propose an honest re-evaluation of the Marxist philosophy. The vicious involvement of Marxism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century's philosophical dialogue was due to some extra-doctrinaire causes as well as to some internal causes that we called "deformations" and "self-mutilations": degeneration of the Marxist philosophy into a version of pre-Marxist materialism, following its institutionalization as state philosophy in the Soviet Union; the didacticist deformation, stemmed from the illuminist demand of its mass propagation; its transformation from a critical and progressive philosophy into an apologetic and conservatory political doctrine; its denaturation through the combination with different non-Marxist currents and theories; the absence of a normativity explicitly deduced from the articulation of the theory, which allowed the legitimization of the most abject crimes against man. These "deformations" and "self-mutilations" are challenged in this paper through the re-interpretation of the Marxist philosophy's answer to the so-called "fundamental issue of philosophy", as well as through the re-interpretation of the definition of human essence included in Thesis 6 on Feuerbach.*

**Keywords:** *humanism, anti-humanism, materialism, idealism, alienation, de-alienation, human nature, human essence.*

## 1. „Marx should not be treated as a dead dog”

This quotation is the editorial title of Ion Ianoși's intervention in the debate "Karl Marx – Friedrich Nietzsche. The faultless cuprits" held 10 years ago, in December 2004, by the European Idea Club and hosted by Aura Christi<sup>1</sup>. According to Ion Ianoși, the phrase "dead dog" appears in the *Old Testament* – Kings I and II, Samuel I and II (in some translations only); it has been applied to Spinoza (according to Lessing) and to Hegel by „one of his disciples and successors”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Contemporary. European Idea*, no. 4/2005.

<sup>2</sup> From all we know, the phrase has not been applied to Hegel by one of his "disciples and successors", but rather it was used by Marx, who accused some of his contemporaries of treating Hegel "as a dead dog" in the sense that his work was not actual anymore and could be thrown in the dust hole of history.



In his intervention, Ion Ianoși pinpointed that, unlike Romania, where the works on Marx are passed over in silence, in Germany the complete edition of Marx and Engels writings (*Marx and Engels – Gesamtausgabe*) is periodically reedited in over 100 volumes, in France the Pléiade series is sent to press and, more recently, two volumes of the most prestigious Gallimard series<sup>3</sup> is being printed. In Italy, Marx has always been republished both before and after 1989 and in UK and the USA he continued to be a subject of study in almost all specialised universities.

Another debater, Adrian-Paul Iliescu, highlighted that the contemporary individualism took over from Marx the acknowledgment of the fact that the state is always overwhelmed by groups of power: “It goes without saying that today’s liberals no longer talk about social classes as Marx did and no longer argue that the state is a class instrument. But the liberal thinking cannot take shape without recognizing that the state is always cornered by groups of power (...)”<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately, an honest analysis of the Marxian writings is not possible in a society dominated by a liberal mentality that refuses to claim itself from Nietzsche and Marx: “In this light, if we were to discuss in full honesty about Nietzsche and Marx we could talk about them as some co-founders of the contemporary liberal mentalities. However, as I was saying, we are not completely honest and we let ourselves be the victims of the clichés imposed by the liberal political correctness. And, as such, neither Marx, nor Nietzsche had a liberal mentality that would embrace the tolerance and confidence in a certain type of social dialogue. And from this standpoint, we push them toward oblivion”<sup>5</sup>.

In the same context, Adrian Mihalache argued in favour of Marx’s actuality as economist: “Marx is remarkably current for two reasons. (...) the serious part of Marx, i.e. the entire theory of the Capital, of the end of capitalism; we should all pay more attention to such things today”<sup>6</sup>.

At present, as we celebrate a quarter of a century from the fall of the Berlin Wall, event that marked the bankruptcy of the Communist regimes, we consider that it is our duty, the ones who “made the acquaintances” of the Marxian philosophy<sup>7</sup>, to propose a honest and objective re-evaluation thereof.

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<sup>3</sup> We can add here that in the year following the year of the debate, Jacques Attali, economist and writer who has never been a Marxist, published the volume *Karl Marx ou l'esprit du monde* (Fayard, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> „Karl Marx – Friedrich Nietzsche. Faultless Culprits”, in *The Contemporary. European Idea*, no. 4/2005.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>7</sup> The term “Marxian” that I shall use throughout this study refers exclusively to the work of Karl Marx, as they are being employed in his text – and not in the texts of Engels or his epigones. The deformation of Marx’s ideas began during his life and he saw himself compelled to respond, sometimes maliciously, as in his dialogue with the Russian social-democrats who presented as Marxism an ideologized caricature of the Marxian philosophy and to whom Marx wrote: „*Tout ce que je sais, c'est que je ne suis pas marxiste*”.

## **2. Deformations of the Marxian philosophy upon impact with practice**

The participation of Marxian philosophy to the „Great Dialogue” of humanisms mandatorily implies an ample and multilateral *self-criticism*. The involvement of Marxism in the philosophical dialogue of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially in the apparent dialogue of the humanisms was due both to some extra-doctrinaire causes and to some internal causes, proper to its actual evolution. Once the ideological legitimization of the Neo-Stalinist regime began to integrate the thesis (demagogical as it may have been) of the separation from dogmatism, in our country a real “literature of philosophical dialogue” and, in a broader understanding, of ideological dialogue flourished. Great part thereof remained the captive of dogmatism, as a result of a cunning characteristic of the dogmatism- anti-dogmatism dialectics sensed by Jean-Jacques Goblot and, due to which, sometimes, “Dogmatism consists in reducing to the dimensions of a simple phrase everything that separates Marxism from dogmatism” (Goblot, 1973, p. 73); however, a series of works signalled the great drawbacks of the false dialogue practiced by the various instances of the officialised Marxism. For this purpose, see Al. Boboc, “Marx and Marxism in the Contemporary Thinking” (Boboc, 1982, pp. 308-314), “The concept of Philosophy and the Dialogue in Philosophy Today (Boboc, 1983, pp. 13-56); Radu Florian, “The Virtues of Philosophical Dialogue” (Florian, 1997, pp. 129-143); Ludwig Grünberg, “The Creating Commitment of the Dialectic and Historical Materialism in the Contemporary Philosophical Debates” (Grünberg, 1981, pp. 41-49); Ion Tudosescu, “Evolution and Dialogue in the Contemporary Philosophy” (Tudosescu, 1980).

We shall not focus on the extra-doctrinaire ones, although they are important enough to deserve a separate analysis. Antonio Gramsci had noticed the degradation of the Marxist philosophy in a version of materialism (of the pre-Marxist materialism) as soon as it has been institutionalised as state philosophy in the Soviet Union, linking this process to the demands triggered by the changes in the beliefs of the intellectuality which, in its great part, shared the illusions and the biases of positivism. This “positivation” of Marxism, corroborated with the ignorance of the Marxian texts related to alienation, represented the prelude of Marxism’s shift from a critical theory and a consistent humanism to a mere technocratic tool used to manipulate the social processes (whose unfolding and finality were far less representative of an integration in the social reality of the Marxian humanism values).

The fact that the theoretical Marxism turned into a state philosophy also entailed the amputation of the critical (and self-critical) dimension, being tailored to the requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy; in its turn, it bereaved it from its humanist breath and modelled it in the likeness of the bureaucratic ethos, which essentially implies the perception of men as manipulative objects, the reduction of the human issues to the technical issues (*see* Wright, 1975, pp. 158-181).

The institutionalization (*i.e.* technocratization and bureaucratization) of the Marxist philosophy went hand in hand with its adherence to the cultural religious referentials (in the Soviet Union, Romania and Bulgaria they were of

Christian-Orthodox and, as such, in many aspects different from the cultural referential in which Marxism was conceived). The transformation of Marxism into a religious ideology chose, however, the worst possible path: instead of striving to assimilate and enhance those “human aspirations which are to be found, in a mystified form, amongst Christians” (Garaudy, 1969, p. 116), namely “the millenary aspirations of mankind toward a better world” (*ibidem*, p. 115), it captured and intensified the most alienating manifestations of the religious spirit (from the doctrinaire dogmatism to the psychological fanaticism and intolerance, from irrational conduits to rituals that belittle man and the idea of man); in other words, it extracted from the religious culture only “its dehumanizing vein” (R. Florian).

Another deformity of the Marxist philosophy signalled by Radu Florian and treated by us as a direct consequence of its institutionalization as state philosophy seems likewise of utmost importance; it refers to what could be called “*didacticist deformation*” of Marxism, stemmed from the Illuminist demands of its mass propagation and whose immediate consequence was the “acute trends of *metaphysicisation*” acted out in the treatment of some of its important chapters” (Florian, 1974, p. 167).

All these deformations (“technocratic”, “bureaucratic” and “didacticist”) have been, therefore, triggered by the officialization of the Marxist philosophy, by its alignment to the demands of the political fight<sup>8</sup> and, consequently, by the interests and aspirations of an elite that took distance from the traditional humanist values<sup>9</sup>. Its ideas failed to “charm the masses”, as Marx anticipated, because the three deformations turned this objective into a bureaucratic attempt to introduce the philosophy, in a top-down approach, in cultural spaces that, from a historical perspective, were unprepared from the assimilation of some of the main values (constellations of values) with which Marxism had enriched the universal history of humanism (such as, for instance, the theory of de-alienation or the ideal of the practical-transforming action for the social system humanization).

In conclusion, it can be argued that the Marxist philosophy suffered, in the “one hundred years of loneliness” that passed from the death of its founder, a double revision: a) some of its elements have been absorbed by non-Marxist currents of thought; b) it has been reduced to the traditional materialism or transformed into a religious-mystical political ideology. The causes and reasons of the second revision have been superficially addressed in the previous pages. The implications of this mutilation are more important for us today. Among the

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<sup>8</sup> Even prior to its institutionalization, prior to its being aligned to the group interests of the leading elites of the Soviet state and, subsequently, in the satellite-states, the Marxist philosophy has been used by the Bolsheviks to come to power. This is the moment when Lenin transforms Marxism from a critical theory, whose dominating function was to analyse and diagnose, into an ad hoc theory (Karl Popper), whose main role was to account *post festum* for the political actions as well as for the modifications made in the theoretical corpus of the Communist ideology.

<sup>9</sup> This can be explained both by the fact that the “new elites” entered into an inevitable conflict with the ‘traditional elites’, carriers of some *local* humanist values as well as by the social extraction thereof, which justifies the fact that they were not even the carriers of some *universal* humanist values, as it happened in Asia.

most important ones, so evaluated considering the historical experience, seem to be:

1. The transformation of Marxism from a tool through which reality is criticised, diagnosed and transformed into one that justifies the political action (from a critical and progressive philosophy into a political, apologetic and conservatory doctrine);

2. The denaturation of Marxism by its eclectic combination with different non-Marxist currents and theories, which reduces it to the pre-Marxist theoretical positions; this image of Marxism represented, as a rule, its official version<sup>10</sup>, the theoretical position that guided the actions or claimed to guide the actions in the countries called “socialist” as well as the position that coordinated the “dialogue”, on behalf of the original Marxism, with the contemporary non-Marxist philosophy.

The two implications are intertwined in a circular movement, they feed each other. They compromised (especially in front of the intellectuals) the Marxist philosophy and the project of the practical-transforming action that it substantiated. Last but not least, due to the fact that it was used to legitimate a contradictory and dehumanising social practice, the official version of Marxism caused a massive discreditation of the progressive (humanist) values in front of the masses.

We shall not further address these processes given, among other reasons, that Marxism does no longer represent today an official philosophy in any European country. However, I felt the urge to evoke them since they raise a fundamental question: *How is it possible that some exogenous factors (for instance, the officialization) can alter in such a way a philosophy, how can they annul its specificity, its originality?* And from it another inevitable question pops up: *It is possible that the Marxist philosophy lacked that necessary articulation that might have conferred its structure enough strength to fight against the exterior, circumstantial factors?*

This last question seems legitimate, although many authors have already warned us against the risk entailed by the late explanation (or, *elaboration*) of the internal articulation of Marxist philosophy, authors who helplessly witnessed the intrusion of the arbitrary, of subjectivism and eclecticism in what was still called “Marxism”. In Romania, Radu Florian highlighted, as early as 1974, “the internal need that the Marxist philosophy should be built and developed as a system, which is nothing more than the internal organisation of its crystallisation, its ideas, whose arrangement was meant to unveil their logic as well as the logic of its extremely complex object, the correlation between them. (...) The failure of the Marxist philosophy to produce such a system equals its incapacity to become an instrument of knowledge” (Florian, 1974, p. 22). In that epoch, it was quite

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<sup>10</sup> The fact that neither the works of Antonio Gramsci nor the ones of Georg Lukacs, to give just two notorious examples, have been „socialized” in the former countries of the „real Socialism” represents an eloquent indicator for the direction of theory in the process of officialization. The episode of the „School of Budapest” can be interpreted as a moment of „openness” of the Hungarian Communist regime as well as „retrieval” manoeuvre, similar to Henry Coanda’s case instrumented by the Bucharest regime.

obvious that Marxism fulfilled a preponderantly ideological function and failed almost completely to fulfil the cognitive one. Secondly, this statement emphasizes a great absence, that of a coherent non-contradictory internal structure that might have shielded it from the deformities caused by the inherent tensions between theory and practice. It is obvious that the main causes of the numerous deformities originate from the very theoretical *corpus* of Marxist philosophy, namely from the endogenous deformities that we may call “self-mutilations”. Through their vastness and depth, the endogenous deformities of Marxism are unprecedented in the history of philosophy but, on the other hand, which system of thought had ever faced so acutely, along its history, the demands of the social practice? In which other philosophy had the theoretical revision had such important practical implications for the human condition?

### 3. Self-mutilations of Marxism

We shall not tackle here all the “self-mutilations” that we have in view, all debatable interpretations that the Marxian texts received from within Marxism (starting with those of Engels himself and ending with those of Ceaușescu, for instance), but rather address one that played a decisive role in the discreditation of Marxism as *humanism*, in the production of some antihuman social processes legitimated by “Marxism” and, finally, in the progressive self-exclusion of Marxism from the “dialogue” of contemporary humanisms. Because the capacity of a philosophy to participate in a dialogue is directly dependent on its inner coherence (see Florian, 1974, p. 23 *sqq*). If we were to add to this coherence another two demands generally recognised as *sine qua non* in the creation of a Subject (of thought, of communication or of action), namely *interiority* (reflexivity) and *internationality* (homogeneity of the “intention-accomplishment” scale), we shall easily understand why the officialised “Marxism” lost, in time, not only the statute of participant to the dialogue of humanisms but also that of subject of self-improvement, of component of the practical-transforming action’s subject.

#### 3.1. How was Marx “materialist”?

But let us stick to *coherence* for now. How could this demand be considered satisfied, considering all the logical-theoretical obvious contradictions between the so deemed fundamental, unchallengeable theses? Such as the contradiction between the content of the so-called “fundamental issues of philosophy”, based on the trivial interpretation of an Engels’s text and of Marx’s *Thesis 1* and *Thesis 3* on Feuerbach. If the latter expressed the borrowing by Marx of the issue raised for the first time by Hegel in the most abstract terms of philosophy, but settled in a speculative fashion (thus resulting “a man walking with his head down”, as Gramsci will note), namely the *issue of the rational intelligibility of the unity between matter and consciousness, nature and society, world and man*, the so-called “fundamental issue” was drawing Marxism back to the dualism that had mastered for thousands of years the philosophical thinking – which also led to its being perceived, in the context of the 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, as naïve realism, metaphysical materialism. In Gramsci’s view, „Marx elaborated a new *monism* whose foundation is the human praxis” (Gramsci, 1969, p. 138).

Or: the obvious contradiction between the theory of alienation/de-alienation and the “standard” interpretation of *Thesis 6 on Feurbach*. And here it is the “self-mutilation” referred to above, whose most direct implications led to the (self) exclusion of Marxism from the dialogue of humanisms.

It is a matter of course that for Marx the concept of *alienation* is endowed with *negative* shades; it represents what man *should not be*, its inaccessibility to its *essence*, an estrangement towards it, a loss of it, etc. The concept of “de-alienation” cannot be perceived at the same time as a negative one, since it would be a second degree negativity (the *opposite* of what man *should not be*) and in practice it would be irrelevant, unable to norm an efficient political action for the humanization of man and its world; furthermore, the absence of a normativity explicitly deduced from the articulation of theory tolerates the legitimization of the most abject crimes against man through some theses extracted from the theoretical corpus of *Marxism*. And this is exactly what happened in the eight decades of “socialist construction”!

However, the anti-humanist implications of the absence of a *human* normative concept are linked not only to the “dominant politics” but also to the “dominated” one since an absence in an epoch’s dominant philosophy becomes an absence in its culture, impacting on the *Spirit of the Time*. Referring to the disintegration of the moral consciousness focused on man’s supremacy as cardinal value through the “denial of man’s universal attributes”, Radu Florian writes: “The authentic and consistently humanist moral consciousness is one founded on the principle that men, regardless of what differentiates them as a result of history, have the same attributes. It must come against any discriminatory theory that basically refuses the concept of man since it implies the recognition of some universal notes of the human being. The acceptance, by the common consciousness, of the anti-Semite and xenophobic racism, fanaticism and totalitarian violence was the backbone of amorality, of the disappearance of any inner resistance against the fascist and Stalinist crimes.” (Florian, 1997, p. 6).

Equally obvious, in our view, is that “alienation” is a concept erected on the (negative) reference to a “human nature” that must fulfil, in the conceptual referential of Marxism, the function of “normality” based on which any deviation (any estrangement) can be detected and – eventually – evaluated. *Recte*, “de-alienation” is a positive concept, built by the (positive) reference to the same “human nature”. Has there ever been a Marxist idea of “human nature” shaping (even tacitly) the course of his theoretical actions and the concept on the meaning of history?

Should we say such an idea did not exist at all, we may as well resign ourselves forever to the exclusion of Marxism from the club of humanisms and straightforwardly admit its incapacity to understand and assimilate great part of the last conquests of the natural sciences (especially genetics) and of the social sciences (especially astrology). A philosophy whose problematic horizon fails to encompass the idea of “human nature” is not entitled to take part in the philosophical interpretation of the data made available in the last decades by

anthropology, genetics, ethology, macromolecular chemistry and even ... parapsychology. This redoubt shall remain in the possession of rival humanisms which will be compelled to defend it against the assaults of some philosophical currents strongly intimate with anti-humanist trends ("the new philosophy", neo-evolutionism, neo-conservationism, etc.)<sup>11</sup>.

If the answer to the above question is affirmative, we shall have to admit that we disclaim the traditional interpretation of *Thesis 6 on Feuerbach*, which states: "...but the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations" (Marx, 1962, p. 576). We shall not refer here to all interpretations of this thesis or to the real merits thereof in overpassing the speculative humanism, of essentialism, of Enlightenment, of dualism, etc. The question is: Does Thesis 6 exclude the need of theoretical conception on *Human Nature* or does it suggest us to give up a certain way of formulating it?

### **3.2. What does Marx say in Thesis 6?**

Our faith is that the standard interpretation ("Marxist") of Marx's thesis, interpretation that threw the baby out with the bathwater (and the problem along with its formulation) does not go in line with the spirit of the Marxist writings. Moreover, this traditional interpretation is burdened by the responsibility of a large part of the "mutilations" and "self-mutilations" of Marxism in its capacity of humanism. We shall further try to prove that this interpretation is erroneous and that it acted *from inside* Marxism, leading to its transformation in the "axe handle" of totalitarian regimes.

What does Marx say in *Thesis 6*? He says that "in its reality, it (the human essence) is the *ensemble of the social relations*". If we interpret the phrase "in its reality" as "indeed", "contrary to popular beliefs", "in fact", "beyond appearances" etc., then we shall conclude that Marx reduces human essence to the *ensemble of the social relations*, which does not come against the Man-Society unity proclaimed in *Thesis 3 on Feuerbach*, against the criticism formulated by Marx and Engels as regards "the thought, represented man" (Marx & Engels, 1956, p. 23) and that he founds a practical humanising program of the "human essence" (of the real man): the humanizing of the '*ensemble of the social relations*' (which must start with the economic relations and, first and foremost, with the annihilation of the exploitation relations). From this perspective, the concept of "human nature" becomes superfluous, invalid, evoking of a speculative humanism unable to exceed the congenital contemplativism and, by this, the condition of ideology. At the same time, however, it shall coincide with the humanization of the social system, with the foundation of communism; but "communism is not a *state* that must be created, an *ideal* which reality will have

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<sup>11</sup> The most interesting approach from our literature of this issue belongs to Ludwig Grünberg "Marx's Philosophy and the Assumption of Rousseau's spiritual inheritance", and "The route of Philosophy from Bernard-Henri Levy to Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (Grünberg, 1981, pp. 29-33, and pp. 238-245). Also see Tony Andreani, "Marxism and Anthropology" (Andreani, 1970) and Irving Fetscher, "Karl Marx on human nature" (Fetscher, 1973).

to adjust itself” but rather the “real *movement* which abolished the present state of things” (*ibidem*, p. 32).

In other words, the routes of humanization and the configuration of the future ensemble of social relations remain at the mercy of the political imagination of the “first comer” (*id est*, of the first generation of leaders in the first proletarian states). In reality, they remained at the mercy of the group interests of the leading elites from the former “socialist” states that narrowed the “revolution” down to the economic relations within which they did not abolish the exploitation of man by man but merely of the exploitation of “a class by another”.

Still, “in reality” cannot be translated in this way because, in the original context (Marx & Engels, 1972, pp. 593-597), this concept is not expressed through the German word *Realitat* (= corporeal reality, thing, something autonomous from thinking), but rather by the word *Wirklichkeit*. This is derived from *Wirklich* (*effect, effectuate*). Which is its philosophical meaning in the language that we may presuppose Marx used?

In the well-known *Dictionary of concepts* of Eisler we come across the following possible meanings of the concept: 1) *related to possibility, actuality, the human being living in the present, the action; accomplishment (what is achieved); what is put in motion*; 2) *related to appearance, imagination, presupposition, in opposition to what is just represented, with the reflected* (Eisler, 1910, pp. 1841-1849). Although the Marxist tradition translated the term using the second meaning, turning *Thesis 6* into a definition in itself, closed and final, leaving no space for debates on the “human nature” and which neighbours Sartre’s existentialism, dissolving the *essence* of man in its *existence* (see Ghișe, 1970), which, in its turn, is submitted to the historicist relativism, we are entitled to believe that, when he drew up its fugitive notes on Feuerbach, Marx conceived the term in its first meaning. How can we account for this statement?

Firstly, Marx was not only a post-Hegelian but rather a Hegelian in the strictest meaning of the word. In the *Science of Logics*, Hegel differentiated the terms *Realitat* and *Wirklichkeit* exactly because he needed the first meaning of the second term (the second meaning being covered to a large extent by the first term). As we all know, until Kant very few philosophers used German as language of philosophy (Christian Wolf, Leibnitz) and they used it very rarely. Kant was the first to elaborate a full philosophical work in German. As such, the philosophy read by Kant has been read in Latin which made the distinction *realitas-actualitas*; in German, this distinction is unrevealed by *Reality*, term that hides it even more. This was the reason why Hegel was compelled to introduce *Wirklichkeit*, but it is obvious that his intention was to convey the first of the two meanings suggested by Eisler.

Secondly, if we read other Marxian texts, we will reach the conclusion that this first meaning (mainly “actuality”, “living human being”) is closely related to the “cognitive style” of Karl Marx. For instance, in the excerpt “Communism is for us not a *stable* state which reality will have to adjust itself. We can call Communism the real movement which abolished the present state of things.” (Marx & Engels, 1972, p. 36), for the phrase “real movement” the German phrase „*weirkliche* Bewegung” is used (where „*weirkliche*” is emphasized, exactly the



opposite from the Romanian edition of the *German Ideology* from 1956, translated from German, which includes the phrase “real movement”) (Marx, K & Engels, F., 1956, p. 32). We believe that it was for a reason that the authors of the Romanian edition of 1956 felt the need to change the emphasized word in the Marxian text, betraying it and at the same time betraying the idea. We can presuppose that they understood correctly the fact that the Marxian phrase “real movement” opposes not so much the word ‘ideal’ but rather the word ‘state’; but by translating, groundlessly, *Weirkliche* through the second meaning of Eisler (“in opposition to what is only represented”; “opposed to appearance, imaginary, presupposition”), they considered necessary to emphasize the word “movement” in order to put it in opposition to the word ‘state’ (which is also emphasized in the Marxian text). But this “treason” of the text was not necessary for it to remain coherent and expressive. Because for Marx *Weirkliche* meant “accomplishment” (what is being achieved); “what is put in motion”, therefore something that opposes a (final) state as something that “opposes the mere possibility, actuality, human being existing in the present, the action” (Eisler).

Which is the theoretical implication of this reading of *Thesis 6 on Feuerbach*? A crucial one. For Marx, “the ensemble of social relations” does not exhausts the “human essence”, as suggested in the traditional interpretation where the Marxian concept of “human essence” is allotted the role of replacing that of “human nature” and of putting the entire issue to sleep.

From the reading we propose<sup>12</sup> it results that the *ensemble of social relations* represents only the “experimental level” of the positive (non-speculative) knowledge of human nature, the framework in which it manifests itself “at sight”, in which it becomes cognoscible; the *ensemble of social relations* is nothing but the “photographic paper” on which the mysterious human nature finally develops. Through *Thesis 6*, Marx proposes not a definition per se but rather communicates a methodology of coming to know the human nature: if we fail to localise its knowledge at this experimental level (where its processes become noticeable and, why not, measurable), we shall be sentenced to continue to use speculative enunciations, we shall lose time and energy in “purely scholastic debates” on the defining notes of human nature, on the intellect and sensitivity, on the body and soul, soul and spirit, intellect and reason, goodness and evilness, equality and freedom, etc. as well as with questions such as “Do people change circumstances or do circumstances change people?”.

The way in which Marx formulated *Thesis 6 on Feuerbach* indicates the same *formula mentis* that we find in Engel’s statement according to which “the open book of human psychology is industry and trade”. Assimilating – spontaneously or on purpose – this methodological definition of the spiritual universe, the leaders of industry and trade from the overdeveloped capitalist

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<sup>12</sup> Our textual reading would be as follows: “The human essence is not an abstraction inherent to the isolated individual. In its actual manifestation, in its active accomplishment, it is the ensemble of the social relations. In fact, unlike the translation from 1958 (Marx, K & Engels, F., 1958), the Romanian edition from 1956 (Marx, K & Engels, F., 1956) included the phrase “in its reality”, which seems closer to the meaning that we believe Marx would have given to the term “reality”.

societies registered huge progresses not only in the manipulation of human nature, but also in the humanization (albeit fragmentary and contradictory) thereof. In this line, the former president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Walter Scheel, was right when he wrote, in 1978 that “Marx’s ideas lead the life of millions of people and not only in the socialist countries” and it is easy to understand his dismay as he wondered: “*Why do we have to abandon such a perspicacious German and leave him to the Marxists?*” (Boboc, 1982, p. 302)

A fate similar to that of the “perspicacious German” was bestowed to the methodological definition of human essence, communicated in *Thesis 6 on Feuerbach*. Reinterpreted in Occidental spirit or not absolutized in a dogmatic manner, it contributed to an efficient action on human nature, on its being under under control in the consumption society but also on the progress of its humanization, tasks that the pre-Marxist concept of “human nature” could not have theoretically inspired or – less than that even – politically completed.

On the other side, the standard interpretation of *Thesis 6*, embraced by the officialised Marxism, led to the reduction of the human essence to the social relations – to the humanization of the human essence (to the “revolutionary transformation” thereof). *Transformation toward what? In what meaning? And into what? And in what rhythm?* What can be taken into account in order to know if the transformation is not only “revolutionary”, but also “humanizing”? All these questions remained unanswered at the level of the philosophical meditation; the *ad hoc* theory that interfered with the Thesis dissolves the destination of the journey in the journey itself; the road became a purpose in itself or generator of purposes: “*We shall live and see*”, seemed to say Lenin in the *Great Initiative* or in the *State and Revolution*. In default of some philosophical landmarks, ideological landmarks have been used instead (mainly the criterion of the class fight and – derived from it – of the fight against capitalism) and the first who took this step was Lenin. The complete discreditation by Lenin of the humanizing values of parliamentary democracy (which was “capitalist”!), the absolutization of the class fight and, in general, the ideologization of Marxism are closely related to the “Marxist”, i.e. unilateral, interpretation of *Thesis 6*. The leap from the “conquest of democracy by the proletariat” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*) to the “dictatorship of the proletariat” in the Leninist interpretation is linked to the bounce from the human nature to the human essence reduced to the ‘ensemble of social relations’.

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# THE IDENTITY BASED EURO ELECTIONS? THE EURO DISCOURSE OF SCEPTICISM

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**Abstract:** *This article tries to highlight the strenghts and weakness of the European Union in the effort of building an European identity. The recent elections fom May 2014, as the results indicated, lead to the conclusion that the european citizen feels much closer to their national identity. Therefore, we will infer, that there are still different perceptions of the citizens from the Member States upon the meaning and importance of EU citizenship as the core of European identity.*

**Keywords:** *European identity, citizenship, Lisabon Treaty, European elections, democracy, nationality, nationalism.*

## 1. Introduction

The present paper is focus on the European Union core rights that lead to the European identity. In our argumentation we will take into consideration the following two steps: firstly, a conceptual approach on citizenship vs nationality and nationalism; secondly, short comments on the road from national citizenship to European citizenship. European citizenship is not a new invention or a purely symbolist idea. European Union is a reality but a single European space has not yet emerges.

As many studies indicated and the recent elections for the European Parliament, the people from the EU rather thing to an European identity from the civic point of view – meaning they bear in mind the European institutions and the Bruxelles’ bureaucracy– therefore, appears the need to reduce the huge gap between the European institutions and its citizens and to make the participative democracy effective. In the same, time, the old problem, the dichotomist relationship federalism vs interguvernamentalism is going on.

## 2. A conceptual approach on citizenship vs nationality and nationalism

At the beginning, we have to clarify what is nationality and citizenship, given the facts that there are different approaches among the specialists, so some brief conceptual clarifications are necessary. Along the evolution of the European construction there has been developed the issue of an European demos, of an European identity and was put into a relationship the national citizenship (of the

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citizens from the EU members States) and the European citizenship ( a recently concept).

EU citizen is the one who gives life to the European project. European citizenship as a concept of law is not sufficient, it remains an abstract concept but its application must take into account the spirit which animates and even has its origin in our souls. The Treaty of Lisbon, puts the democratic and the European governance system on the double legitimacies, intergovernmental and civic.<sup>1</sup>

Some theorists consider nationalism as “the most successful ideology in human history”, although this does not exclude the parallel dominance of other ideologies addressing internal policy issues<sup>2</sup>. In the classic formulation of Gellner,

*“nationalism is, primarily, a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment or as a movement can best be defined in terms of this principle”*<sup>3</sup>.

Gellner considers that nationalism is “the organization of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogeneous units”<sup>4</sup>. Nationalism seems to advocate strong egalitarian values proclaiming the equality of all citizens or, rather, all the members of the nation. Therefore, a whole set of unreflexive habits can be thought as expressions of ideology.

As some authors asserts that nationalism is central to the political legitimacy of modern societies, and in every continent the nationalism has become the main legitimating belief system and the nation has its roots in the right of the populations to decide their own destiny.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most frequent questions that appear is if some of the European symbols such as the European flag or anthem, actually, could help people to feel more European? Is it possible that such things to create an European “identity”?

The legal provision of EU do not have any competencies in that regards because there are no specific distinction between citizenship and nationality. One can identifies “nationality” with cultural elements and “citizenship” with political ones.<sup>6</sup>

According to some authors, in some constitutional systems, like the French Constitution, “citizenship” is the core element, while in other constitutional systems, like the Dutch constitutional system, only the notion of “nationality” is present. In the Romanian Constitutional system we talk about “citizenship”.

From EU point of view, the text of Article 20 TFUE shows that there is a link between citizenship and nationality. Thus, Art.20 (align 1 and 2) stipulates:

1. *“Citizenship of the Union is hereby established: Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union.*

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Aldecoa LUZÁRRAGA, Mercedes Guinea LLORENTE, *The Europe of Future. The Treaty of Lisbon*, Polirom, Iași, 2011, p.69.

<sup>2</sup> Michael BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, London, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Ernest GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p.35.

<sup>5</sup> *Apud* Evelyn PISIER (coord.), *The History of Political Ideas*, Ed. Amarcord, Timisoara, 2000, p.306.

<sup>6</sup> Cezar BÂRZEA, *The European Citizenship*, Politeia, Bucharest, 2005, pp.192-1993.

*Citizenship of the Union shall be additional to and not replace national citizenship.*

2. *Citizens of the Union shall enjoy the right and be subjected to the duties provided for in the Treaties.*<sup>7</sup>

Legomski arguments that “nationality” is, for instance, often seen as the international law aspect, while “citizenship” refers to its implications in national law.<sup>8</sup>

### **3. Short comments on the road from national citizenship to European citizenship**

TUE introduced European citizenship which is additional to national citizenship and not a replacement. European Citizenship is meant to be materializing aspiration expressed in the Schuman Declaration, “*We do not join states, but people*” and means to perform a “*shared destiny*” (Preamble to the European Community of Steel and Coal Treaty in Schuman, 2003, 18).

By the introduction of European citizenship (Article 8), the signatories of the Treaty establishing a European Union wanted, among other things, to promote and strengthen the European identity, involving, in this way, the citizens in the process of European integration. According to art. B of the Maastricht Treaty requires “*strengthening the protection of rights and interests of nationals of Member States of the Community by establishing the citizenship of the Union*”. The establishment of a European citizenship means creating new rights: the right to vote and eligibility in local and European elections, the right of petition, the right of appeal to the Ombudsman.<sup>9</sup>

Generally, European Parliament elections were an indicator of interest of European citizens for European integration and a tool for measuring democratic effectiveness and performance of communication between the EU and its citizens. Since 1979, the European elections were marked by an emphasis on national stakes and low electoral participation. European elections were appreciated, therefore, since the ‘80s, as “second order elections”<sup>10</sup> because turnout was always lower than in national elections, political parties obtaining election results lower than in the national elections.<sup>11</sup> For instance, in 2014, the turnout was 43,09% and according to the official data from EU website, one can remark, at European level, a decrease in participation rate from 61.99% in 1979 - the first elections<sup>12</sup> - to 43.00% in 2009, so, a significant increase in absenteeism<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Art.20 (align 1 and 2 in the Lisbon Treaty on [www.lisbontreaty.be](http://www.lisbontreaty.be))

<sup>8</sup> *Apud* Stephen H. Legomski, *Comment: Why citizenship?*, in: 35 *Va.J.Int'l L.* 1994, p.279.

<sup>9</sup> Thierry Chopin, *The Reform: are we moving towards a European Union policy*, [www.robert-schuman.org](http://www.robert-schuman.org);

<sup>10</sup> Simon Hix and Bjørn Høyland, *The Political System of the European Union*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 2011, p. 147.

<sup>11</sup> John Pinder, *European Union. A very Brief Introduction*, translated by Cristian Iulian Neagoe, Bic All, Bucharest, 2005, p.164.

<sup>12</sup> In the first free and direct elections for the European Parliament, in 1979, took part the

The 2014 elections led to a less support for strengthen the EU powers and we mean institutions, agencies, budget, etc.

Talking about an elective process, the European political parties have played a decisive role in achieving democratic debates within the European Union and European elections have enabled citizens to participate in EU politics. The European political parties provide to the voter a range of *ideas and symbols* thus strengthening their adherence to democratic values and creating a sense of involving them in decision making. They also aggregate their interests and passions and channel citizens' expectations by offering specific programs.<sup>14</sup> Political parties, at European level, contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the will of Union's citizens.<sup>15</sup> But, as Mudde affirms if we talk about politics, we have to emphasize that politics is all about perceptions<sup>16</sup>.

#### 4. Brief concluding remarks

The present analysis infers that European Union made a huge step ahead, but the efforts to create a European identity, with deeply involved citizens, have to increase. The main consequence of the elections was the re-nationalization of politics due to the political debates and speeches from the public sphere delivered by the populist and nationalist leaders. Another obvious effect was the rise of Euro scepticism and the anti EU forces like happened in France, United Kingdom and Denmark. Also we have to remark the rise of unemployment and social exclusion.

Unfortunately, the 2014 European elections showed us, also, that the participative democracy is still in "hold on". The road to a really consolidated democracy, is still going on, even at the last election the rate of vote was low, the almost the same with 2009. Therefore, the European institutions must develop a greater transparency and reduce the remoteness facing the citizens.

The present Europe is characterized by doubts on the possibility of reconstructing a solid overall European political, the economic and financial capacity of a Europe undergoing a deep crisis. The peoples went on balloting felt more as nationals of their country from Europe and less as European citizens.

So, remains the question whether residents of the 28 countries feel, today, citizens of a single nation or, of a single European demos and of a European nations.

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citizens from the 9 Member States and in 2014, participated the citizens of 28 countries, as Croatia became member of EU in 2013.

<sup>13</sup> *Special Euro-barometer 299. The 2009 European Elections*, EU, pp.17-18, consulted at: [ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_299\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_299_en.pdf) (04.02.2014)

<sup>14</sup> Jean-Michel De Waele, Petia Gueorguieva, Sorina Soare, *Analysis of political parties in Central Europe*, in *Political Parties and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Jean-Michel DE WAELE (ed.) (Humanitas, Bucharest, 2003, p.8.

<sup>15</sup> The consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union - Jurnalul Oficial al UE C 115/13 din 9.5.2008; art.8 (4). For more details see also Bernard Denni, Patrick Lecompte (2004). *The Sociology of Politics*, vol. 2, translated by Marta Nora Țârnea, Eikon, Cluj-Napoca.

<sup>16</sup> Cas Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist", in *Government and Opposition*, Vol.32, No.3, 2004, p. 542.

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# CHINA'S GROWTH – THE DRIVING FORCE IN FOSTERING SUB-SAHARAN FOOD SECURITY – AN APPRAISAL

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**Abstract:** *Food security is one of the most impressive arguments that international cooperation is facing today. Considered a common purpose for all nations, food security arises as a major problem intimately connected to development, especially when nations start to negotiate within international trade or environmental framework. Despite the efforts of the international community in eradicating poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa nations and consequently eliminating food insecurity, these least-developed nations are still the home for the largest number of undernourished people in the world. This paper discusses the relationship between China's economic future development and potential structural changes in the economy of African LDCs. Emphasizing the influence of environmental constraints for Chinese development, the paper analyzes in a descriptive manner whether cooperation between China and LDCs has the perspective to become a positive-sum game or is to remain the same zero-sum game experienced so far by the economies of this region in their interaction with developed nations.*

**Keywords:** *Food security, least-developed nations, China, environment, trade.*

## Introduction

Definitively, there is a time when developed nations, together with developing nations should sit around the table and discuss, on an equal basis, the world's priorities: poverty and food security, environmental and climate change issues. Is there any possible connection between all these issues? And if so, how should nations cooperate in order to avoid further conflicts and the dismantlement of the international institutional system created in over fifty years? What are the solutions to be adopted in order to avoid further increase in poverty and suffering from food insecurity?

In a world where the global agricultural output and international trade have increased significantly since 1990, there are still 852 million people suffering from hunger in developing nations. The highest concentration of undernourished people live in the Sub-Saharan African Least Developed countries (hereinafter LDCs), a group that is at the heart of this paper. Despite their economic growth from 2002 to 2008 coupled with international financial support - mainly channelled through official development assistance (ODA), debt relief, trade

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preferences - that the international community allocated in their favour since the beginning of the new millennium, there are 222.7 million people undernourished. What is the role of agriculture in the economic development of these nations? The answer to this question is spelt out in the next paragraphs where we shall identify the main dimensions of the food security conceptual framework and analyse the role of the agricultural sector, the only one that can provide locally the necessary food to these nations. The discussion considers that agriculture is also influenced by climate change and the economy. The increasing of the world economy together with world population has put serious pressure on the productivity of all natural resources (land, water) used by agriculture. Furthermore modern agriculture has a serious impact on environment, being the main contributor to the pollution.

Moreover, environmental issues are one of the most urgent challenges faced by our world today. Climate change could have devastating consequences not only for the environment, but also for all economies. Despite the signing of major environmental agreements, carbon emissions continue to increase, affecting even nations with large territories such as China where significant concerns are emerging about the desertification process and the serious pressures that places on its future food security.

This issue cannot be tackled exclusively as a national problem, but without doubt should be tackled as a trans-national one. It needs multilateral agreements and cooperation between all governments. Nowadays, the population of developing nations represents 5.94 billion out of the total population of 6.97 billion (in 2011), while the estimated data reflects, for 2050, a population of 8 billion living in developing nations out of a total of 9 billion.<sup>1</sup> The problem of sustainable economic growth is a serious one, accepting that we cannot ask those nations to stop their process of economic development, as this represents the only way for eradicating poverty and ensuring food security in these regions.

Since China joined the WTO in 2001, its trade has increased significantly: the volume of exports has increased by four times while imports have more than tripled; in the same period, economic and social development has been possible by using important raw resources and creating a lot of greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, after just a few years, it ranks second to The United States of America, as the largest producer of carbon emissions. Unfortunately, this seems to be the price that nations and international community have to pay for their development. The second part of the paper describes how environmental constraints might affect the future economic and social development of China.

Assessing the role of the agricultural sector for the development of the LDCs, the last paragraph focuses on the main strategies that can be put into practice thanks to the cooperation between China and the LDCs, in order to facilitate the expected structural changes that can allow African nations to start their sustainable development and their integration within international trade.

Food security – the main purpose of agricultural sector

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<sup>1</sup> UNCTAD, *UNCTAD. Handbook of Statistics 2012*, United Nations New York and Geneva, 2012, p.57.

The first official definition of food security has seen the light in 1974 in a moment characterized by the faith that states have the ability to redistribute resources internally as long as at international level, the world food supplies were enough “to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuation in production and prices” (United Nations 1975 cited in FAO 2003). The present definition given by The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2001 is not only more complex but also reflects how, conceptually, food security changed over the time, following the main arguments raised in the international political economy. According to this definition (that still stands), food security is “a situation that exists when all people, at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

A brief glance at this definition makes clear the following aspects: food security is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and analysis should start from the individual capacity in food consumption. It means that food security can be achieved as long as there are accomplished some specific indicators related to its four dimensions: food availability, economic and physical access, food utilization and stability (vulnerability and shocks) over time<sup>2</sup>.

The responsibility for the achievements of the main dimension of food security lies with the agricultural sector and its capacity to adapt the food production and to supply the necessary quantities of food in respect to the effective demand. Unfortunately, we need to admit one limit to this dimension: the demand expressed on the market does not always reflect the effective one. Who is responsible for understanding the real volume of the food that is satisfying needs?

Of course, the state has to build policies aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity mainly through the public investments in the use of fertilizers, seeds or technology that can allow increasing food availability, especially when poor smallholders are targeted.

Despite these considerations, food availability remains the first condition to ensure that people have adequate access to food. As we have previously mentioned, starting with 1990, global agricultural output has increased faster than the population in developing nations. However, there are still a large number of people suffering from undernourishment. The explanation is found mainly in the second dimension, related to a limited physical access (availability and quality of infrastructure – ports, roads, food storage facilities) and/or high domestic food prices that do not allow economic access to food.

Unfortunately, this dimension requires public policies for the development of infrastructure, measures for eradicating poverty and improvements in people’s purchasing power. Usually higher level of poverty are linked with higher prevalence of undernourishment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013*. The multiple dimensions of food security, FAO Rome, 2013 p.24.

<sup>3</sup> FAO, IFAD and WFP, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013*. The multiple dimensions of food security, FAO Rome, 2013, p.42.

Moreover, the public authorities have the obligation to create the social protection legal framework and implement food distribution systems in favour of the population. Any measure that can consequently increase the income of poor families to buy food, might have an even more positive impact and spur rural development, by creating markets and employment opportunities and therefore making possible equitable economic growth. In that sense, it is important to notice that in LDCs, when governments are not able to allocate necessary income for food, the remittances of migrants have had significant impacts on poverty and food security. In the last decade, the value of remittances have become three times larger than official development assistance provided by the donors to LDCs. In other words, the migration phenomenon, mainly a consequence of poverty, has become a driver for eradicating poverty within LDCs economies.

The third dimension related to food utilization has two sides: one is captured by anthropometric indicators affected by undernutrition, while the other reflects food quality, and health aspects. Due to this dimension, the concept starts to integrate the nutrition value that has to be embodied in the food.

The last, but not the least dimension is the stability that needs to be ensured through a reduction of the vulnerability to risk exposure and by limitation of risks or shocks that can directly affect food security.

Recently, the world has started to be conscious that climate change is playing an import role in increasing international food prices levels. Meanwhile, the management of natural resources becomes a pre-condition in reducing variability in agricultural outputs and increasing resilience to shocks and long –term climate change. It is also well known that nations that have experienced conflicts during the past decades are more likely to have seen setbacks in reducing hunger. The role of internal political stability, peace and lack of domestic or regional violence is fundamental for food security.

Turning to the discussion on the role of agriculture in food security, it is obvious that in case of LDCs, this is the main sector that is expected to bring an increase in revenues of poor people. According to the linkages “Johnston-Mellor”, the agricultural sector is responsible for supplying raw materials for industry, food for working classes, a market for the industrial output and the export revenues that can allow payments for the acquisition of imported capital goods<sup>4</sup>.

Moreover an increase of the agricultural productivity brings enhancement of agricultural growth. According to the studies conducted by the World Bank<sup>5</sup>, agricultural growth is the only economic growth allowing an equitable distribution of the increased incomes between the poor populations. Denominated as “pro-poor growth”, this economic strategy is even more beneficial where there is also a relatively equal distribution of the land between smallholders.

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<sup>4</sup> B. Johnstone and J.Mellor, *The Role of Agriculture in Economic Development*, in American Economic Review, Vol.51, 4, 1961, pp.566-593.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for development*, The World Bank, Washington, DC, 2007, pp.26-42.

The need to anticipate the structural changes in agriculture requires efficient public policies in terms of distribution of access to the natural resources, building the necessary infrastructure and the creation of human capital.

### **China between food security and environmental constraints**

Understanding the rapid economic growth of this nation since the beginning of the economic reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1979 has captured the interest of the academic world. As an entire literature has been dedicated to this argument, our paper should not focus on this topic, primarily because factors that promoted economic growth in the past might change in the future or even worse might become serious constraints in the near future.

Our paper is trying to emphasize the problems that can arise within China's food security due to climate change and pollution. After an undeniable rapid economic growth, with an 8 per cent annual increase in gross domestic product (hereinafter GDP), China is the best example in the world on the means of eradicating poverty. The first growth pattern was the so-called 'structural changes' pattern. This pattern is concentrated on the necessity of shifting labor from low-productivity agriculture to higher productivity industry and services. Applying the necessary strategies, China has succeeded to levy from poverty more than 300 million people<sup>6</sup>. Of course, the distribution of access to land was very important and combined with the "green revolution" (defined as an increase in the use of fertilisers, improved seeds and irrigation technology) brought the achievement of food security. Extreme poverty (the proportion of people living on less than 1.25 dollars a day) dropped from 60 per cent in the beginning of 1990 (of the 1.125 billion people) to 16 per cent in 2005, while in 2011 there were less than 12 per cent of people classified as undernourished from the total population of 1.348 billion. It is definitely, the joining of the WTO in 2001 - after a period of massive investments promoted mainly by the American transnational companies - that represented the milestone for its sustainable development.

Nowadays, China is the world's biggest merchandise trader (2,209 billion dollars), and the second largest importer after the United States of America (1,950 billion dollars), with a trade surplus of 259 billion dollars, representing 2.8 per cent of its GDP. If we consider also the EU as a single voice within the WTO, of course China becomes the second exporter and the third importer in overall international trade. As for commercial services, we have to observe that despite its third position both in exports (205 billion dollars) and imports (329 billion dollars), the value is really limited, explaining its level of development. The main destinations of the Chinese exports are: the USA (400 billion dollars); the European Union (EU-28) amounting for 372 billion dollars; and Japan (181 billion dollars). Due to a continue growth, China has also become a major player for imports, mainly fuels and mining (315, respectively 229 billion dollars).

Unfortunately not only commercial service trade is in deficit but also agricultural trade; it ranks in second position as an importer - following the extra

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<sup>6</sup> N.Stern, *Un piano per salvare il pianeta*, [A blueprint for a safer planet How to manage climate change and create a new era of progress and prosperity], Serie Bianca Feltrinelli, Milano 2009, pp.36.

EU-28 – with a value of about 165 billion dollars (of which food amounted to 99 billion dollars) and the fourth as exporter with a value amounting to 70 billion dollars of which 60 billion dollars were for food. The imports for agricultural products are a compound of primary commodities of which production requires large land physical units such as soybeans and maize, while the exports are represented by commodities requiring labor-intensive production, such as processed fruits and vegetables.

Although in 2000, China's agricultural imports were 19.5 billion dollars representing a share in the economy's total merchandise imports of 6.8 per cent, nowadays due to significant import increases the value has reached 8.5 per cent, a level that starts to be alarming if we consider that it still has more than 100 million undernourished people.<sup>7</sup>

The preoccupation of the Chinese government for eradicating poverty in the rural areas determined authorities to adopt some supportive measures for cotton production. In this way, arable land was taken away from the production of soy beans in favor of the main raw material necessary for the clothing industry that provided not only higher revenues for the rural population but also higher competitiveness for textile and cloth exports. China is the main exporter of textiles (30 per cent of the world exports value), 106.6 billion dollars (nearly six times higher than its value in 2000) and clothing, 177 billion out of a total of 460 billion dollars in 2013.

With the largest share of soybeans and maize imports, two commodities that are necessary for the agroindustrial sector, China needs to adapt its arable land in order to ensure on the one hand food security and on the other to satisfy the needs that arise from changes in the pattern of consumption (more animal proteins, vegetables).

Despite China having excellent natural factors endowment (land and labor), the economic growth desperately needed requires an increasingly level of resources. With already high levels of productivity and after a period of an overuse of fertilizers, a further increase of agricultural productivity becomes too expensive in terms of social costs - environmental potential degradations of cropland and renewable water resources.

An expansion of the internal arable land surface for the production of raw materials is also almost impossible as long as the available land for expansion does not exceed 2.2 million hectares, which is less than 2 per cent of the actual agricultural land in use, and China has to face also the land stress of urbanization and infrastructural developments. Meanwhile, we cannot ignore the fact that in the last decade, China is the only country in the world that has seen the creation of 100 cities with over 1 million people. Moreover, during the last few years China has started to be seriously affected by the climate changes.

Phenomena like droughts are affecting agricultural production yearly on 15 million hectares, while the Gobi desert is expanding, adding almost 50,000 square kilometers every five years.

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<sup>7</sup> WTO, *International Trade Statistics*, WTO Geneva, 2014, pp. 52-67.

It is increasingly obvious that China's food security is dependent on the international trade for agricultural products, which value does not exceed 9.5 per cent from the world trade value, amounting in 2013 to only 1,745 billion dollars (of this the value of food was 1,457 billion dollars). Unfortunately, the conflict between the main trading partners within the WTO regarding the liberalization of agricultural trade is the cornerstone in defining China's agricultural policy. Nowadays, the main international producers of those commodities that place China as their main potential importer, are: USA, Brazil and Argentina – nations that have shown recently a great interest in the production of biofuels that requires exactly as raw products the so-called flex crops.

As long as China needs to continue its economic growth with no fears for its food availability – the main dimension that might affect its food security in the long run - it is doubtless that it has to find new producers that are ready to voluntarily guarantee the exports of the flex crops at reasonable prices to it.

The only nations in the world that have not only large land surfaces - fitted for the expansion of the flex crops production - but also economies in early stages of development, meaning that agricultural sector absorbs the majority of active labor force, are the Sub-Saharan nations. In the last years, China has become the main market for the agricultural exports of LDCs, overpassing the EU- 28, which used to be their traditional export market. Coincidence or not, China is also the main importer of their fuels and mining products and has started to make large investments in Africa's infrastructure.

Food security – the main threat for the future of Sub-Saharan LDCs

Although this region has a total population of 827 million people, which represents about 12 per cent of the world population, their share in world trade is around 1 per cent while their GDP is nearly 1.22 per cent of world GDP. To this painful macroeconomic reality, there is to add the huge number of undernourished people relatively to the total population (223 million people). The situation is even more alarming if we take into account that on one side this is the only region in the world where between 1990 and 2011, an increase in the share of undernourished people of the total population from 17 to 26 per cent is observed, while on the other, during the same period the population has almost doubled. Who is responsible for the deterioration of food security seen in the region starting in the 1990s?

With a dominant rural population (64 per cent) and agriculture as the main sector in terms of employment (above 64 per cent), but with a limited contribution to the total GDP that is quite limited (around 26 per cent), these nations are net food importers. The explanation for food insecurity and a strong dependency on imports resides mainly, in their low level of agricultural productivity relative to the global average. Increasing productivity is essential and this is possible as long as the sector starts to attract public and private investments.

In 2013, the agricultural exports of the African LDCs were nearly 12 per cent from the total export value of 148.2 billion dollars. Meanwhile, the fuels and mineral exports were almost 81 per cent of the total export value. The value of

imports rose to 137 billion dollars in 2013 of which 18 per cent was for food and agricultural commodities.

The main imported commodities are: cereals (maize, rice, wheat); meat and dairy products; sugar; vegetal oils. As for exported commodities, we have to observe that traditional exports (cocoa, coffee, tea, spices and tobacco) represented more than 35 per cent of their total exports but there is an important enhancement of non-traditional exports, such as: fruits, vegetables, flowers.

Although in terms of value, world exports of agricultural products have nearly tripled over the period 2000 and 2012 – due to price increases - in volume terms it was an increase by around 60 per cent. There are good reasons to believe that in the coming years agricultural exports are set to increase in volume terms, mainly due to: (i) an increased demand for food, expressed not only by developing nations (mainly China) that besides their demographic aspects are facing changes in their pattern of consumption but also by nations that are facing serious constraints in production due to their lack of resources (Gulf Cooperation Council nations, South Korea); (ii) an increased demand for agricultural commodities that are used as raw materials for the biofuels industry, both by developed and developing countries.

In 2013, following stagnation of prices for food and agricultural raw products, the overall global level of agricultural products exported increased by 6 per cent. Unfortunately, the LDCs level of agricultural exports remains very limited although their agricultural products account for almost half of merchandise export revenues.<sup>8</sup>

The main markets for agricultural products - originating from LDCs - were the Asian countries for 11 billion dollars and EU for 4.8 billion dollars, while North America region hosted only 0.8 billion dollars.<sup>9</sup>

Obviously, due to Asian regional growth, mainly driven by China, the pattern of trade has changed in the recent years. The development of South-South trade has touched also the agricultural sector. Starting in 2012, Asia has become the main export market for LDCs agricultural commodities (39 percent), followed by Africa (23 percent) and Europe (22 percent), while the developing countries group receive 69 percent (WTO, 2014). Taking into consideration on one hand the LDCs factors endowment –mainly the availability of land - and on the other, the declared promises of developed nations to join their efforts in favour of eradicating poverty within these nations, it seems pretty clear that their limited share in agricultural global markets is related to internal weaknesses (lack of infrastructure, corruption, inefficiencies) rather than international threats. The pattern of trade can follow in the beginning the statement of the Heckscher-Ohlin theorem, according to which nations should specialize and export commodities who's production requires the intensive use of the relatively abundant factor of production. With a clear comparative advantage in the production of land-intensive agricultural products, the LDCs can obtain benefits that might be used to enhance the linkages 'Johnstone-Mellor'.

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<sup>8</sup> WTO, World Trade Report, *Trade and Development: recent trends and the role of WTO*. WTO Geneva, 2014, p.138).

<sup>9</sup> WTO, *International Trade Statistics*, WTO Geneva, 2014, pp. 52-67.



Recent econometric studies demonstrated that in case of low-income and resource-rich countries, agriculture is 3.2 times more effective than the other sectors in reducing poverty among the poor people, especially when there are no fundamental social inequalities.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, in the last decades, the LDCs have been more focused on the development of industries than agriculture. In recent years, these nations have seen their economies growing at higher rates than the rest of the world, mainly due to enhancing prices for raw materials (fuels and minerals). The expected stable or even higher demand for agricultural products can be seen as a serious incentive for the governments to foster their efforts for the development of the sector. The existence of a dependent trading partner like China might be their chance to obtain the financial support for the development of infrastructure and the widespread deployment of technology, allowing increased productivity that in the end can bring the expected structural changes within economy. In addition, of course, there must be considerable debate over the impacts of decisions in regard to African governments' ability to choose the best strategies that might improve in the short-run the sector's productivity (the easiest way is enhancing the use of chemical inputs and mechanization) and in the long-run ensuring not only food security but the conditions of a 'Green Growth' within the region. The success of agricultural policy depends not only on the role that China should play as an engine for their growth, but also on the attitude of the developed nations, that are expected to offer their support in terms of special and differential treatment in favor of these nations. Moreover, in order to avoid that necessary investments might be a threat to domestic food security, the international organizations should provide a legal framework for the promotion of responsible agricultural investments.

## Conclusions

This paper has addressed the role of China in the achievements of LDCs food security. Generally food security depends on food production that requires the use of resources such as fertile land. These resources are continuously affected by environmental changes, political decisions and economic development. Although global agricultural output increased over the last decades, the distribution of benefits was inequitable while degradation of natural resources and climate change became more evident all around the world.

In the light of climate change, population growth mainly in developing nations, changes in the pattern of food consumption, the LDCs will have to address their vulnerability through strategies that connect the agricultural sector to international trade while at the same time changing their economic structure. The region can become the main pillar of future food supply for China as long as the nations succeed to adopt policies that are in favor of the use their natural factors endowment as a milestone for starting their Green Growth. However, this needs to be accompanied by the joint efforts and support of the international community, avoiding extreme economic dependency of Chinese markets.

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<sup>10</sup> L. Christiaensen, L. Demery and J. Kuhl, *The (Evolving) Role of Agriculture in Poverty Reduction – An Empirical Perspective*, in *Journal of Development Economics*, 96, 2011, pp. 239-254.

The future Chinese supply of food faces many challenges despite their present relative abundance in factors of production required by the agricultural sector. As future land expansion may be restricted because of physical limits and different demands (urbanization, industrial development) and the productivity of cropland may decline because of soil degradation or environmental and human health regulations related to limited intensification, China does not afford that its 'Going Out Policy' might be interpreted as being predatory. However, the fears related to the presence of China in Sub-Saharan LDCs in terms of political and economic dependency are to some extent exaggerated. It is true that China has many interests in this region but at least they do not provide food aid as developed nations used to do even though it was causing adverse impacts to the agricultural sector.

Of course, China needs to understand that Africa is not just a rich natural resource region that can be only exploited, but also has a huge potential to support Chinese future development thanks to a large potential market of more than one billion consumers. Actually, we may think that at least in terms of demand, the African LDCs might become the next China with the advantage of a better geopolitical position. Therefore, Sub-Saharan LDCs have the possibility to easily transform from the "present baby" to the "elder parent" that might in the end provide full support for its family.

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# EVOLUTIONARY ECONOMICS AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR EXPLAINING HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS

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**Abstract:** *The debate about “nature” versus “nurture” in explaining human behaviours and human organizations has gained importance in the last decades, as many authors have come to agree that the classical theory of “homo oeconomicus” - seeing the individual as a rational agent, guided by the goal of obtaining the best result with the most cost-effective means - cannot entirely and efficiently explain both human behavior and human organizations. An alternative to the classical explanation of humans as “products of culture” might be the evolutionary theory, which state that the Darwinian mechanisms of variation, selection, and replication (or inheritance) apply to social entities and processes, given the fact that businesses, organizations or even states also compete for scarce resources, such as organisms do. In this equation, organizations adapt and change; some fail, others prosper; they learn and pass on information.*

**Keywords:** *evolutionary theory, evolutionary economics, Darwinism, homo oeconomicus.*

The debate about “nature” versus “nurture” in explaining human behaviours and human organizations is quite famous. In the last decades, many authors have come to agree that the classical theory of “homo oeconomicus” - seeing the individual as a rational agent, guided by the goal of obtaining the best result with the most cost-effective means - cannot entirely and efficiently explain both human behavior and human organizations.<sup>1</sup>

An alternative to the classical explanation of humans as “products of culture” and, implicitly, of human behaviours as the exclusive result of the cultural environment, might be the “overarching theoretical framework”<sup>2</sup> of the evolutionary theory applied to economics.

Although the evolutionary approaches to economics gained a relatively large recognition over the past three decades, the concept of “evolutionary economics” was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century by Thorstein Veblen in his

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<sup>1</sup> Peter J. Richerson, Dwight Collins, Russell M. Genet, “Why managers need an evolutionary theory of organizations”, in *Strategic Organization* Vol. 4(2)/2006, pp. 201-211.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey M. Hodgson, Thorbjørn Knudsen, *Darwin's Conjecture. The Search for General Principles of Social and Economic Evolution*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2010, p. 3.

famous article *Why is economics not an evolutionary science?* (1898).<sup>3</sup> The application of the evolutionary principles into the study of economy was trying to offer a complementary analytical framework to the neoclassical principles of economic analysis, and economists in all schools of thought have started to think about the economic system as the product of an evolutionary process.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the importance gained by the evolutionary approach to economics, the consensus of the authors about what is evolutionary economics seems hard to be achieved, the most substantial differences in scientific approaches occurring at the following levels of reasoning: *the ontological level* - what are the basic assumptions about the structure of reality; *the heuristic level* - what would be the proper framing of the problems in order to induce hypotheses; and *the methodological level* - what are the best methods that can be used in order to formulate and verify theories<sup>5</sup>.

At the *ontological level*, one possible position is ontological monism, meaning to assume that “both change in the economy and change in nature belong to connected spheres of reality and are therefore potentially interdependent processes”<sup>6</sup>, although this hypothesis does not imply that evolution in the economy and evolution in nature are similar or even identical<sup>7</sup>. According to this “ontological continuity hypothesis”, the mechanisms of species’ evolution under natural selection pressure have shaped the ground for the man-made, cultural forms of evolution, including the evolution of the human economy; however, the mechanisms of man-made evolution differ substantially from those of natural selection. This assumption – that the economy and economic change are connected with a naturalistic substratum – is often neglected or even rejected in favor of a “dualistic ontology”, which assumes that economic and biological evolutionary processes belong to different, disconnected, spheres of reality<sup>8</sup>.

At the *heuristic level*, it seems that the difference between “evolutionary” and “canonical” economics consists in the use of particular analytical tools and models borrowed from evolutionary biology. From this point of view, some authors have tried to extend the Darwinian theory universally beyond the domain of evolutionary biology<sup>9</sup>, using three principles of evolution as a heuristic for

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<sup>3</sup> Thorstein B. Veblen, “Why Is Economics Not an Evolutionary Science?”, in *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 12, No. 3/1898, pp. 373–397, available online at: <http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/veblen/econevol.txt>.

<sup>4</sup> Kurt Dopfer, Jason Potts, *The General Theory of Economic Evolution*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Witt, “What is specific about evolutionary economics?”, in *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, Vol. 18, No. 5/October 2008, pp. 547–575.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Ulrich Witt, “On the proper interpretation of ‘evolution’ in economics and its implications for production theory”, in *Journal of Economic Methodology*, Vol 11, Issue 2/2004, Special Issue: *Symposium: Ontological issues in evolutionary economics*, pp. 125–146.

<sup>8</sup> Ulrich Witt, “What is specific about evolutionary economics?”, p. 550.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most assiduous and most known author in this regard is the British theoretician Richard Dawkins. More details in: Richard Dawkins, “Universal Darwinism”, in D.S. Bendall (ed.), *Evolution from Molecules to Men*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 403–425.

evolutionary theorizing: variation, selection, and inheritance or retention<sup>10</sup>. These three principles have been derived by abstract reduction of some key elements of the Darwinian theory of natural selection, and have been applied to conceptualizing the evolution of technology, science, language, human society, the economy etc.<sup>11</sup> The other heuristic strategy for conceptualizing evolution was inspired not by analogies, but by a generic concept of evolution. For example, the evolution is characteristic not only for the gene pool of a species, but also for a language spoken in a human community, the technology and institutions of an economy, or the set of ideas produced by the human mind. While such entities can change over time as a result of exogenous forces, they are also capable of transforming themselves endogenously over time, although in different ways (for example, in the biological domain, the main processes are genetic recombination and mutation, which differ from the cultural processes by which new grammatical rules or new idioms emerge in the evolution of a language, which both differ from the invention of new production techniques or the emergence of new institutions in an economy)<sup>12</sup>. In all these cases, “the generic feature that transcends the disciplinary domains is the endogenous emergence of novelty”, which has to be linked to the novelty’s dissemination (i.e. the natural selection in the biological sphere, or successive adoption processes resulting from a non-selective imitation behavior as is often the case in the dissemination of human thought, practices, and artifacts).<sup>13</sup>

At the *methodological level*, the controversy relates to the question of how to explain the role of history in economic theorizing, given the assumption that “the evolution of the economy at any particular point in time results in conditions and events that are historically unique”.<sup>14</sup> This question is considered much less controversial, as there seems to be a tendency across all ontological and heuristic positions to accept that different explanatory challenges require different methodological responses.<sup>15</sup> As such, in most cases the choice of the method is determined by the particularities of the problems investigated and often the methods are complementary rather than alternatives.

It results that the controversy on evolutionary economics is no longer revolving at the methodological level, but at the ontological and heuristic levels.

In spite of all these differences, experts assert that the so-called “modern” evolutionary economics can be traced back to the beginning of the 1980s, in the books of Kenneth Boulding (*Evolutionary Economics*, 1981) and Richard Nelson and Sidney Winter (*An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change*, 1982). These authors draw evolutionary analogies from biology, arguing that “selection

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<sup>10</sup> Donald T. Campbell, “Variation and selective retention in socio-cultural evolution”, in H.R. Barringer, G.I. Blankstein, R.W. Mack (eds.), *Social change in developing areas: a re-interpretation of evolutionary theory*, Schenkman, Cambridge, MA, 1965, pp. 19-49.

<sup>11</sup> Ulrich Witt, “What is specific about evolutionary economics?”, p. 551.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 552.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 553.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

mechanisms bring to the fore techniques, organizational routines and products that are best adapted to their respective environmental contexts”<sup>16</sup>.

As regarding the „Universal Darwinism” approach, Joseph Alois Schumpeter, in his *Theory of Economic Development* (1912), asserted that the economic transformation process is inherently generated from inside, from within itself<sup>17</sup>, identifying the entrepreneurial innovations as the source of change, thus minimizing the role of invention as novelty creation. If successful, the changes disseminate through imitation throughout the economy and thus transform its structure.

Richard R. Nelson and Sidney G. Winter, in their publication *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change* (1982), used the Darwinian concepts as a central element of their conceptualization of the transformation process in firms and industries, considering the organizational routine as a unit of selection in economic contexts.<sup>18</sup> According to this view, firm organizations, in their internal interactions, are compelled to use rules and develop organizational routines (such as production, calculation, price setting, the allocation of R&D funds, etc.). These organizational routines are considered to function as the unit of selection, analogous to the genotypes in biology, while the specific decisions resulting from the routines applied – which will affect the firms’ performance – are taken as the analogue to biological phenotypes. As a result, different routines and different decisions lead to differences in the firms’ growth: the routines which contribute to growth are not changed, while routines that result in a deteriorating performance are unlikely to multiply. At the same time, an industry’s response to changing market conditions is seen as “innovative activity”, which would increase the average performance of the industry and regenerate the diversity of firm behaviors. In this context, selection eliminates some of the firms, which are “unadapted”, while the surviving ones tend to grow.

Similarly, Donald T. Campbell, in his paper *Variation and Selective Retention in Socio-cultural Evolution* (1965),<sup>19</sup> argued that the core Darwinian principles of “variation and selective retention” apply to social as well as biotic evolution, although the appropriate model for social evolution is not biotic evolution but a more general process of evolution “for which organic evolution is but one instance”.<sup>20</sup>

These approaches of “Universal Darwinism” has received the most numerous critiques, although it is admitted that up to now “not enough concrete research

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<sup>16</sup> John Foster, J. Stanley Metcalfe, “Modern evolutionary economic perspectives: an overview”, in John Foster, J. Stanley Metcalfe (eds.), *Frontiers of Evolutionary Economics. Competition, Self-Organization and Innovation Policy*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, Northampton, MA, USA, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Theory of Economic Development: an inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Richard R. Nelson, Sidney G. Winter, *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1982, p. 234 ff.

<sup>19</sup> Donald T. Campbell, *op.cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Ulrich Witt, “What is specific about evolutionary economics?”, *loc. cit.*

has been done in economics on the basis of Universal Darwinism” and, as such, “an assessment of the pros and cons is therefore not yet possible.”<sup>21</sup>

Unlike “Universal Darwinism”, the “naturalistic approaches” do not consider that evolution in nature and evolution in the economy can identically be reduced to the abstract Darwinian principles of variation, selection, and retention. Instead, the heuristic strategy here focuses on the emergence and dissemination of novelty as generic concepts of evolution. This position has several supporters, who “come from different strands of thought”, and, as a result, “are, however, often not recognized as following a common approach”.<sup>22</sup>

In a “naturalistic approach”, Thorstein Veblen, in his paper *Why Is Economics Not an Evolutionary Science?*, argued that the social environment consists of institutional elements that are themselves, like organisms, subject to evolutionary processes of selection. He interpreted Darwinism more broadly, in terms of individuals being selected in an environment that is changed in its interaction with those creative individuals: “The economic life history of the individual is a cumulative process of adaptation of means to ends that cumulatively change as the process goes on, both the agent and his environment being at any point the outcome of the last process.”<sup>23</sup> In this equation, human inventiveness and imitation are important drivers of the development of institutions and technology.

N. Georgescu-Roegen, also a promoter of the “naturalistic approach”, in his book *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* (1971),<sup>24</sup> repeatedly advanced the role of novelty in driving evolution and the role of entropy in constraining evolution, both concepts being finally applied to reformulating economic production theory.

Another proponent of the “naturalistic approach”, Friedrich Hayek, in his article *Nature vs. nurture once again* (1971),<sup>25</sup> distinguished between three different layers where human society evolves. The first layer is that of biological evolution, where primitive forms of social behavior, values, and attitudes became genetically fixed as a result of selection processes. At the second layer of evolution, that of human reason, evolution is driven by intention; as such, understanding and human creativity result in new knowledge and its diffusion. Nevertheless, between these two layers of evolution, “between instinct and reason”, Hayek identified a third layer of evolution, at which rules of conduct are learnt and further diffused in cultural rather than genetic transmission. While this process is often not even consciously recognized, the emergence of, and the changes in the rules of conduct that shape human interactions and create the orderly forms of civilization are not deliberately planned or controlled. Further on, he distinguished between “the selection of individuals” and “that of

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 559.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> Thorstein B. Veblen, *op.cit.*

<sup>24</sup> N. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1971.

<sup>25</sup> Friedrich A. Hayek, “Nature vs. nurture once again”, republished in Friedrich A. Hayek (ed.), *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978.

institutions and practices” and between “the selection of innate ... [and] culturally transmitted capacities of individuals”, thus differentiating between the selection of biological and social entities and suggesting that “the basic conception of evolution is still the same in both fields.”<sup>26</sup>

In a more recent book – *Understanding the Process of Economic Change* (2005)<sup>27</sup> – Douglass C. North stresses the role of human cognition in the economic change, asserting that the true driving forces for economic evolution are human intentionality, beliefs, insight (cognitive learning), and knowledge. He focuses on what is learned – human learning and knowledge creation seen as the emergence of novelty – and how it is shared among the members of a society – the sharing of experience-based knowledge within and between generations seen as dissemination of novelty.

Fig. 1 - Interpretations of evolutionary economics

		Ontological Stance	
		Monistic	Dualistic
Heuristic Strategy	generalized Darwinian concepts  (variation, selection, retention)	Universal Darwinism (Campbell)  <b>topic:</b> Darwinian principles governing evolutionary processes in all spheres of reality, including economy	Neo-Schumpeterians (Nelson and Winter)  <b>topics:</b> innovation, technology, R&D, firm routines, industrial dynamics, competition, growth, institutional basis of innovations
	generic concept of evolution  (novelty emergence & dissemination)	Naturalistic approaches (Veblen, Georgescu-Roegen, Hayek, North)  <b>topics:</b> long-run development, institutional	Schumpeter  <b>topic:</b> entrepreneurial innovations as the source of change

<sup>26</sup> Friedrich A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty* Vol. 1 *Rules and Order*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1973, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> Douglass C. North, *Understanding the process of economic change*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005.



		evolution, production, consumption, growth & sustainability	
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Source: Adaptation based on article of Ulrich Witt, “What is specific about evolutionary economics?”, in *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, Vol. 18, No. 5/October 2008, p. 555.

The works of the authors mentioned above illustrate quite different interpretations of what is considered to be specific about evolutionary economics. At large, one could assert that the “Universal Darwinism” themes are innovation, technology, R&D, organizational routines, industrial dynamics, competition, growth, and the institutional basis of innovation and technology, while the themes of the “naturalistic approach” are long-term development, cultural and institutional evolution, production, consumption, and economic growth and sustainability.<sup>28</sup> However, this does not mean that the “naturalistic approach” could not be extended to the “Universal Darwinism approach” themes or the other way around.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, recent attempts in evolutionary interpretation of social and economic life, promoting a combination of a heuristic based on an abstract analogy to Darwinian concepts and a naturalistic ontological position, state that Darwinism is a model for explaining specificities and contingencies. The promoters of “Universal Darwinism” consider that the core Darwinian mechanisms of variation, replication (or inheritance) and selection apply to social entities and processes<sup>30</sup>, given the fact that businesses, different organizations and even states also compete for scarce resources, such as organisms do.<sup>31</sup> In this equation, organizations adapt to their environment and change; some fail, others prosper; they learn and pass on information that will add value to the adaptation process.

In this context, the **variation** of complex systems (involving populations of entities of specific types) refers to how variety is generated and maintained within a population. While in biological systems this involves “genetic recombination and mutations”, the evolution of social institutions entails “innovation, imitation, planning, and other mechanisms”.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, **inheritance** for complex systems refers to the capacity of preserving through time and passing on to other entities the adaptive, workable solutions (meaning, among others, tools, ideas and technological know-how) identified in facing the problems of limited resources and struggle for survival. Such complex population systems include both every biological species and also “human organizations such as business firms, as long as these organizations are

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<sup>28</sup> Ulrich Witt, *What is specific about evolutionary economics?*, p. 562.  
<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*  
<sup>30</sup> Geoffrey M. Hodgson, Thorbjørn Knudsen, *op.cit.*, p. vii.  
<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.  
<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 34-35.

cohesive entities with a capacity to retain and replicate problem solutions”.<sup>33</sup> Retaining such problem solutions means “avoiding the risks and labor of learning them anew”, which also involves the capacity “to pass on to others information about such workable solutions”. This is the basis of the Darwinian *principle of inheritance*, a term which refers to “a broad class of replication mechanisms, including *diffusion* and *descent*, by which information concerning adaptations is passed on or copied through time.”<sup>34</sup> In biology, these mechanisms “involve genes and DNA”, while in social evolution, they “include the replication of habits, customs, rules, and routines, all of which may carry solutions to adaptive problems.”<sup>35</sup>

In the same context, **selection** refers to the capacity of certain entities to survive longer than others, to “gradually adapt in response to the criteria defined by an environmental factor.”<sup>36</sup> For example, as a selection process typically produces a “dominant design”, entities or “firms whose products exemplify the dominant design are thriving, while firms that are producing something else are ailing”.<sup>37</sup> This does not mean that any creation of new variations (seen as novelty) is “forbidden”, as long as the new variation survives the “test in the real world” (in case of a firm, this means, for instance, to be able to meet customer preferences while creating new designs).<sup>38</sup>

Although these core Darwinian principles might be considered insufficient for explaining the social or economic evolution, at a higher level of abstraction “social evolution is Darwinian”, and it requires – like biological evolution – these general principles.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, as Geoffrey M. Hodgson and Thorbjørn Knudsen put it, “the insufficiency of a theoretical approach does not itself deny its necessity” and, as a result, “the metatheoretical framework of Darwinism provides a way of inspiring, framing, and organizing [...] explanations as well as providing key concepts and pointing to particular analytic methods” for understanding evolution in complex systems<sup>40</sup>.

Other authors, on the other hand, consider the evolutionary principles as proper for explaining at least some phenomena that traditionally pertain to the core subjects of economics. For instance, in their 2006 paper, *Why managers need an evolutionary theory of organizations*, Peter J. Richerson, Dwight Collins and Russell M. Genet argue that “evolutionary theory is the proper foundation for the human sciences, particularly a theory that includes an account of cultural evolution. This theory shows how the limited but real altruistic tendencies of humans arose by tribal-scale group selection on cultural norms followed by coevolutionary responses on the part of our genes. Our tribal social instincts in turn act as a moral hidden hand that makes human organizations possible”.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 36.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.

<sup>41</sup> Peter J. Richerson, Dwight Collins, Russell M. Genet, *op.cit.*, p. 201.

In order to guide managers and management scientists in their endeavour of developing more efficient leadership principles for obtaining best results and a better use of financial, human and natural capital, Richerson, Collins and Genet have formulated a few general principles of management policy-making:<sup>42</sup>

1. The understanding of an organization's culture is vital. Because leaders are able to control and influence only a small percent of the organisational culture, which is often informal and informally transmitted, they should understand and use it as it is, instead of trying to forcefully change it.

2. A business should be managed as a tribe, by creating and using tribal identities for the benefit of its members, as long as this is consistent with its broader missions and responsibilities.

3. A business or an organisation should be managed with prestige rather than power, because it is usually less costly and more effective, especially given the fact that the use of power generates costly resistance.

4. Cultural diversity in the organisation must be respected, as it tends to bring a beneficial diversity of experiences and skills.

5. Monitoring and punishment of wrongdoers are necessary in any organization, yet these must be balanced and not excessive, in order to avoid the lowering of morale and professionalism level of the majority of its members.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 209.

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# COULD “ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST” MAKE A CASE FOR ETHICAL BUSINESS?

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**Abstract:** *At first glance, game theory could support with logical, ideologically neutral arguments, the rationale of acting ethically in business. Apparently, this is what we learn from the Prisoner’s Dilemma, the Peasant’s Dilemma, Tit for Tat, and other strategic games, suggesting that the winning business strategies combine the competitive aggressiveness and a disposition for cooperation with other players of the economic game. Consequently, it is only rational to adopt an ethical behaviour in business activities, respecting the legitimate rights and interests of different categories of stakeholders. Nevertheless, this view is arguable, since game theory is grounded on the obsolete concept of homo economicus and ultimately suggests that the best strategy in business is the cooperation of the competitors. On the other hand, except utilitarianism, the rest of the major ethical theories deny the moral character of those actions that are motivated by self-interest. This study concludes that game theory cannot offer a solid ground for business ethics.*

**Keywords:** *competition, cooperation, game theory, homo economicus, profit maximization, self-interest.*

First time in Oxford, at New College, most often the first question I had to answer after being introduced to new folks was: “What’s your specialty?” After saying “Business ethics”, the distinguished fellows used to react – in different ways, of course – with a blend of embarrassment and sympathy. I could not avoid hearing again that popular joke: “Business ethics? You must have the shortest textbook in the world.” I had to face similar reactions in other parts of Europe. Even though nowadays business ethics might not be very popular amongst the European academics – the situation is considerably different in the U.S. – initially it came up as an academic discipline, almost ignored by the business environment. Many things have changed in the meantime. Now, especially in the corporate world, business ethics became a very serious business. Too serious, I dare say, thinking of the so-called “management of ethics”, that brought fourth cohorts of “experts” in corporate ethics, people who claim their “expertise” entitles them to enforce upon people the way they see the difference between right and wrong.

One can easily see a sharp difference between two ways of conceiving business ethics. The academic trend is definitely more philosophical, regarding

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the ethical issues in business as topics of one amongst several “applied ethics”. The academics try to find their way towards real business coming from the basic concepts and analytical frames of moral philosophy: Utilitarian, Kantian or Aristotelian ethics, to mention only the most influential. They consider the debatable issues from the viewpoint of general public – in other words, they see business world as *outsiders* or distant stakeholders. In contrast, the “experts” that belong to the business environment pay much less attention to the abstract philosophical analysis, seeing business ethics as a very practical matter, and focusing on clear cut rules to be implemented in effective ways in the daily practices of a successful business. They adopt the perspective of the *insiders* of business environment, considering the sensitive ethical issues not as philosophers, but as managers.

This difference of vision and methodology between these two approaches of business ethics led to a different attitude towards the ideological controversies. Whereas the “professors” are prone to emphasize the ideological conflicts and to take sides for one party or another, the “experts” try to stay apart from ideological debates and to develop an objective, pragmatic perspective. This is not that easy to do, and the real choice must be made between acknowledging openly the ideological conflicts, trying to argue with convincing reasons for one party or another, and ignoring these conflicts, but taking sides unconsciously and fooling yourself about your objectivity. This is the case when we try to analyze from an ethical perspective the relationship between competition and cooperation in business.

It is hard to underestimate the importance of competition in market economy, but its moral evaluation divides people who adhere to opposite ideologies. Some people worship the virtues of competition – the engine of economic growth, providing people with a constantly increased variety of goods and services, of a higher quality, safety, and reliability, at constantly more convenient prices. Not denying these virtues, their opponents emphasize the shortcomings and bad consequences of tough competition: periodical crisis, irrational waste of resources – spent to satisfy the superficial and eccentric wants of a crowd blinded by consumerism – the unfair distribution of income, which very often ignores the social utility of different occupations, tragic bankruptcies, unemployment, and social instability.

This kind of quarrels, driven by ideological motives, and even more complicated by the cultural and ethical relativism, makes very difficult the task of those who strive to build business ethics as a rational, demonstrative discourse. Apparently, the strongest theoretical ground of such an attempt seems to be the theory of games.

### **Prisoner’s Dilemma**

Trying to stay apart from these embarrassing obscurities, certain theorists tried to found the basic ethical principles on rational arguments, which ignore the cultural specificity or irrational ideological commitments, appealing only to logical demonstrations, which could claim to be universally valid, like scientific theories. One of the possible ways to support the ethical behaviour in business

with solid, rational arguments is the so-called game theory. Not at all surprising, since for some people economic competition really means some kind of a game.

In a capitalist system, firms must compete effectively in an open market and make a profit. [...] business has often been described as a game, in which the aim is to make as much profit as possible while staying within the rules of the game, which are set mainly by government. (Boatright, 2009, p. 12)

Most often, the beginning of the demonstration appeals to the famous *Prisoner's Dilemma*, the most widely analyzed strategic game. In short, two felons are picked up by the police for questioning. Although the police suspect they have committed a major offence, there is only enough evidence to convict them on a minor charge. In order to sustain a conviction for the more serious crime, the police will have to convince one of them to testify against the other. Separated during questioning, with no possibility to communicate, the criminals weigh their alternatives (see the figure below), each one of them knowing that the other faces quite the same options. If neither confesses, they will both get light sentences on the minor charge. If both confess and plead guilty, they will be both convicted for the major crime, but they will both get moderate sentences, due to their cooperative attitude towards the investigators. But if one confesses and the other stays silent, the confessing criminal will secure immunity from prosecution and will walk, while the silent criminal will pay the maximum penalty.

		Prisoner A	
		No Confession	Confession
Prisoner B	No Confession	<div>A gets 1 year</div> <div>B gets 1 year</div>	<div>A gets 0 years</div> <div>B gets 10 years</div>
	Confession	<div>A gets 10 years</div> <div>B gets 0 years</div>	<div>A gets 5 years</div> <div>B gets 5 years</div>

In the two-person Prisoner's Dilemma, participants face a series of choices in which they have to choose between cooperating and competing. If both individuals make the cooperative choice, both make a moderate reward. If both make the competitive choice, both suffer a moderate loss. Yet if one cooperates while the other competes, the competitor obtains a large reward, and the co-operator suffers a large loss. If we look at the figure from the viewpoint of, say, Prisoner A, it appears that no matter what Prisoner B chose, A is better off if he competes with B and confesses. If B does not confess to the police, A gets a lighter sentence if he does confess than if he keeps quiet: if he talks, A will walk; if he does not confess, A will get one year. If B does confess, his partner still gets a lighter sentence if he confesses than if he does not – five versus ten years. So, clearly, A should confess. Precisely the same conclusion is valid from the viewpoint of the other prisoner, B. Now, this is the dilemma: If *both* criminals

confess, each one gets five years. If *neither* of them confesses, they both get only one year. It is really a perplexing situation.

There is no rational solution to the Prisoner's Dilemma. From a purely self-interested point of view (one that takes no account of the interests of the other prisoner) it is rational for each prisoner to confess – and if each does what it is rational to do from a self-interested point of view, they will each be worse off than they would have been if they had chosen differently. The dilemma proves that when each of us individually chooses what is in our own best interest, we can each turn out to be worse off than we would each have been if we had both made a choice that is in our collective interest. This is what David McAdams calls dominant strategy: “a move that maximizes that player's own payoff regardless of others' moves. [Each prisoner has a dominant strategy to confess.]” (McAdams, 2014, p. 37)

Of course, this is a hypothetical and atypical case, but there are many everyday illustrations of the general rule that the Prisoner's Dilemma proves. Anyone who has spent some time in rush hour traffic knows that, while it may be in your individual interest to take your car to town (since the buses also get held up by the traffic, are crowded, uncomfortable, and they do not run very often anyway) it would be in the interest of everyone if you could all collectively decide to go by bus, since then the bus company could afford to run a much more frequent service, and without the heavy traffic, you would get to work in half the time, with your clothes in perfect condition, your wallet and cell phone in your pockets. (cf. Brehm et al., 1999, pp. 276 – 277)

### **“Enlightened self-interest”**

However, Prisoner's Dilemma is not the best description of the underlying logic of competition and cooperation in business. Whereas the two criminals have to solve a one-off situation, business partners find themselves in repetitive situations, expecting to play the same game indefinitely. This fact radically changes the logic that should guide the rational decisions of each player.

Grasping the essence of this change in rational analysis, Peter Singer came up with another story, that he called “The Peasant's Dilemma.” Living in a small rural community, two farmers – Max and Lynn – are neighbours. Max's crop is ripe and must be harvested as soon as possible; Lynn's crop still has to wait. Max starts to work, but rainclouds are building on the horizon. Unless Max gets some help, it will rain before he can bring in the harvest. The grain that he has not harvested will spoil. So Max asks Lyn, his neighbour, whose crop is not yet ripe, if she will help him to harvest his crop. In return, he offers to help her when her crop is ready. Max will be better off if Lyn agrees to help him. But will Lyn be better off if she helps? She will, if this means that Max will help her, because she often also has trouble getting her harvest in before it rains. But can she rely on Max's promise to help her? How does she know that, after she has helped him to harvest his crop, he will not stand by and laugh when she asks him for help? Lynn correctly thinks it is unlikely that Max will behave this way. Maybe he is not a man of his word, but he is not stupid; he knows very well that if he cheats his neighbour now, he will never get help in the years to come. Therefore, over the



long run, it is in Max's best interest to keep his promise, to be sure he can count on Lynn's help when, very likely, he will need it in the future. Playing the game several times puts each player in a new situation: they both know the previous moves of the other player, making decisions based on that knowledge. Of course, surprises are never excluded and any decision involves a certain degree of chance, but this can be estimated with more precision. (Singer, 1997, p. 159)

Looking for a better understanding of different strategies to play repeatedly Prisoner's Dilemma, Robert Axelrod set up two tournaments, in which first 14, then 52 computer simulated strategies competed. Each strategy was supposed to play 200 times against all the other strategies, as well as against itself. The moves of the game have been renamed and redefined. Instead of "confess" or "keep silence", the players had to choose between "compete" or "cooperate". The goal of the game was also different: instead of time in prison (the lesser, the better), each player aimed at getting as many points as possible, adding 1 point for mutual cooperation, 3 points for mutual attack, 5 points for the player who chose to compete whereas the rival chose to cooperate, and 0 points for the player who made the opposite choice (the "sucker's pay off").

Both tournaments have been won by the simplest and almost childish strategy, invented by Anatol Rapoport and named by its creator *Tit for Tat*. It was built on only two rules: 1. On the first move, always cooperate; 2. Then repeat the previous move of the other player. If the opponent takes the offer for cooperation, both players keep on cooperating, each of them making a substantial number of points; as soon as the opponent chooses to compete, *Tit for Tat* responds aggressively in its turn, both players making a poor score. Anyway, the player applying Rapoport's strategy never attacks first.

Axelrod's conclusions support with rational arguments the so-called "enlightened self-interest": a long-term winning strategy cannot be based on a permanent aggressive attitude, ready to squeeze out of any situation maximum of benefits, causing extreme damages to the other competitors; it consists of a clever combination between readiness to cooperate for mutual benefit and the ability to retaliate when the competitors decide to play rough. In contrast with enlightened self-interest, narrow minded egoism, that is guided by a constantly aggressive strategy, seeking to obtain as often as possible a *win-lose* situation, may be occasionally and on short-term a winning strategy; yet over the long run, it leads inevitably to failure, since it permanently creates enemies who, sooner or later, will retaliate, breaking down the aggressor. Therefore, narrow minded egoism can and should be rejected not only because it is unethical – some people do not see anything immoral in serving their own interests, by any available means, even against the legitimate needs and rights of the other people. Plain selfishness should be denied because is a stupid and irrational strategy, that on long-term turns out to be always self-destructive. On the contrary, enlightened self-interest seeks to get and keep as long as possible a *win-win* situation, making all the players to obtain something, and this strategy consolidates stable relations of cooperation, more or less profitable for everybody.

The most important lesson of the Prisoner's Dilemma, then, is that when people deal with each other repeatedly so that each can later retaliate against or

reward the other party, cooperation is more advantageous than continuously trying to take advantage of the other party.” (Velasquez, 2006, p. 40)

Applying these strategic principles, derived from the analysis of certain logical games in the business world, most of the authors emphasize the requirement of ethical behaviour in economic relationships. The legitimate interests and rights of different categories of players of the economic game should be respected, since both abstract theory and real life practice prove that over the long run this fair treatment of the others promises to bring forth the best results. “What the Prisoner’s Dilemma argument shows is that even those who have no concern for the welfare of others – even self-interested individualists – still have a good reason to bring ethics into their business dealings.” (Velasquez, 2006, p. 41) In other words, sometimes it is clever not to take the bishop and enjoy a small, temporary advantage, compromising irreversibly your position on the chessboard; a shrewd chess player will sometimes sacrifice his rook or even his queen if this is the best way to win the game.

Plenty of normative consequences can be easily derived from these premises. It is not smart to disregard your consumers, misleading them by dirty tricks to pay a lot of money for a lousy, hazardous, and unreliable product. Sometimes, this policy can pay on short-term, but sooner or later the customers will realize they have been duped and they will stop buying your merchandise, putting your company out of business. On the contrary, any effort and sacrifice should be made to protect the company’s reputation and consumers’ loyalty. The employees should be well treated, fairly paid, offered a safe and friendly work environment, and stimulated to find a full meaning and an intrinsic satisfaction in their activities. Otherwise, the valuable employees will leave, attracted by the competitors who offer them better contracts. The same line of reason applies to the fair treatment of serious suppliers, local communities, natural environment, etc. In short, treating ethically different categories of stakeholders works over the long run for the benefit of a competitive company, and the apparent losses that ethical behaviour in business can bring forth are, in effect, real investments in good reputation and positive public image – factors that become more and more competitive advantages. In Boatright’s cynical expression,

Businesses are economic organizations that operate within a framework of law. They are organized primarily to provide goods and services, as well as jobs, and their success depends on efficient operation. On this view, it may be helpful and even essential to observe certain ethical standards, but doing so is merely a means to the end of profit making. (Boatright, 2009, p. 12)

Apparently, we got a rigorous and objective proof of the basic principle of business ethics: “Good ethics is good business”. There is no need to appeal to emotional, subjective, and persuasive philosophical, moral or religious arguments that might be effective for the “bleeding hearts” and the poets, but not at all for the pragmatic, rational, and cold-hearted business persons. From a strictly rational perspective, one can demonstrate that the winning business strategy requires keeping certain moral standards – not as a token of respect for the intrinsic value of the other people involved in the economic game, but as the dry conclusion of a strictly rational analysis. On second thought, we might find

out that the whole argument is inconclusive, because this demonstration, grounded on the theory of games, has several serious flaws.

### **The end of “Homo economicus”**

One first weak point of the arguments proposed by the game theorists is the stubbornness with which they stick to the obsolete concept of “homo economicus,” that plays a crucial part in the classical economics. According to this vision, the “player” of the economic game is thought of as perfectly rational, entirely selfish, and fully informed about everything he needs to know about the market; consequently, homo economicus normally makes the best decisions, optimally serving his best interests.

As a key element of all the strategic games, selfishness cannot be taken as a universal and permanent trait of humans. Too many empirical facts deny the credibility of this premise; so often, many people act altruistically, not trying to maximize their personal benefits, but striving to act in favor of other people. Maybe generosity is not as frequently present in our world as we would like to see, but it definitely occurs on many occasions, including the business trades, deals, and negotiations. The defense of certain theorists that “homo economicus” is nothing more than a theoretical fiction – just like “ideal gas” in chemistry or “mass point” in classical mechanics – useful for an abstract description of a pattern that idealize some essential traits of concrete phenomena in the real world simply does not stand, as long as it does not suggest reliable predictions of the real behavior of people doing business.

Perhaps the perfectly informed player of the economic game could be a credible idea in Adam Smith’s days, in a still primitive market economy, based on a rudimentary technology, but no one can take it seriously nowadays. Not even the most noted experts in economics could claim they possess all the necessary information for a perfectly rational prediction and decision. The available data are overwhelming and no one has the ability to collect and to process even a small fragment of it. The amount of information goes beyond the average person’s capacity to store it; in addition, processing the available data cannot be fully objective. That is why, as Nate Silver put it, “We can *never* make perfectly objective predictions. They will *always* be tainted by our subjective point of view.” (Silver, 2012, loc 275)

The most resistant trait of the supposed “homo economicus” proved to be his rationality. But this “chess-player” image of the individual involved with the economic game is under siege and starts to crush lately. The most conclusive arguments against the ghost of “homo economicus” came from a relatively new field of research, behavioral economics. Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Prize winner for Economics and one of the founders of this spectacular discipline wrote in his remarkable book “Thinking Fast and Slow”:

My economist colleagues worked in the building next door, but I had not appreciated the profound difference between our intellectual worlds. To a psychologist, it is self-evident that people are neither fully rational nor completely selfish, and that their tastes are anything but stable. Our two disciplines seemed

to be studying different species, which the behavioral economist Richard Thaler later dubbed Econs and Humans. (Kahneman, 2011, loc 4531)

Indeed, the famous opposition defined by Richard Thaler, coauthor of another fundamental book that initiated behavioral economics, *Nudge*, between Econs and Humans emphasizes how inadequate turns out to be the fictitious character that classical economists keep on placing in the center of their theories:

If you look at economics textbooks, you will learn that homo economicus can think like Albert Einstein, store as much memory as IBM's Big Blue, and exercise the willpower of Mahatma Gandhi. But the folks that we know are not like that. Real people have trouble with long division if they don't have a calculator, sometimes forget their spouse's birthday, and have a hangover on New Year's Day. They are not homo economicus; they are homo sapiens. (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, loc. 173)

Real people never act like machines; their intellectual skills are limited in scope and energy, and they interfere with their instincts, emotions, habits, and momentary moods. Consequently, "Individuals make pretty bad decisions – decisions they would not have made if they had paid full attention and possessed complete information, unlimited cognitive abilities, and complete self-control. (Thaler & Sunstein, op. cit. loc 151)

Nassim Taleb, another outstanding contestant of the hyper-rational vision of economic theories, gives us a surprising, half-joking, but credible explanation of this essential and permanent incapacity of humans to be fully rational and for a long time:

What are our minds made for? It looks as if we have the wrong user's manual. Our minds do not seem made to think and introspect; if they were, things would be easier for us today, but then we would not be here today and I would not have been here to talk about it – my counterfactual, introspective, and hard-thinking ancestor would have been eaten by a lion while his non-thinking, but faster-reacting cousin would have run for cover. Consider that thinking is time-consuming and generally a great waste of energy, that our predecessors spent more than a hundred million years as non-thinking mammals and that in the blip in our history during which we have used our brain we have used it on subjects too peripheral to matter. Evidence shows that we do much less thinking than we believe we do – except, of course, when we think about it. (Taleb, 2010, loc 385-387)

In other words, behavioral economics makes a very strong point: As Humans, and not as Econs, we make irrational decisions not accidentally, due to a momentary lack of attention or fatigue, but we are not made to think and act as one hundred percent rational strategists, as game theory uses to suppose. As a result, "we are really far less rational than standard economic theory assumes. Moreover, these irrational behaviors of ours are neither random nor senseless. They are systematic, and since we repeat them again and again, predictable". (Ariely, 2008, loc 169)

It is worthy to emphasize that behavioral economics contradicts the speculative concept of "homo economicus" with empirical facts and ingenious lab and field experiments. Boatright, for instance, shows with an empirical argument

that “strictly rational” behaviour, ignoring any ethical standard except the pursuing of self-interest, is a fictitious, hypothetical invention:

People are also motivated in their market behaviour by considerations of fairness. This is illustrated by the “ultimatum bargaining game”, in which two people are given a certain amount of money (say \$10) on the condition that one person proposes how the money is to be divided (for example, \$5 to each) and the second person accepts or rejects the proposed division. The first person can make only one proposal, and if the proposal is rejected by the second person, the money is taken away and each person receives nothing. Economic theory suggests that the second person would accept any proposal, no matter how small the share, if the alternative is no money at all. Hence, the first person could offer to share as little as \$1 or less. But many people who play the game will refuse a proposal in which they receive a share that is considered too small and hence unfair. (Boatright, 2009, p. 14)

To conclude, perhaps the only logical decision that the two criminals in the Prisoner’s Dilemma could and should make is to confess instead of choosing the best possible results for both – if and only if they are both selfish and strictly rational characters. What if they are different persons? And in the economic game we should expect to deal not primarily with thieves and crooks, but mainly with decent persons, who do not get involved with one-off situations, but expect to establish and consolidate long-term relations, mutually profitable.

Is ethical behavior in business the only logical conclusion of game theory?

David McAdams recently published a whole book dedicated to the Prisoner’s Dilemma: “Game-Changer,” that tries to show how one could modify the strategic context for his own advantage when playing once or repeatedly the famous strategic game. The author is not at all concerned with the ethical issues in business, but his conclusions and recommendations are quite relevant for our topic. McAdams defines and elaborates six methods to improve one’s chances to win a Prisoner’s Dilemma Game. The most interesting is the third method: “merge or collude”. To put it bluntly, the basic idea is that competitors should try to avoid the costly fight between them, finding a way to cooperate for their mutual benefit.

Surprisingly enough, those who appeal to the game theory to prove the rationality of ethical behaviour in business fail to see that all these logical calculations of enlightened self-interest lead to one main conclusion: the best strategy for shrewd competitors on the market is to *cooperate* for mutual benefits instead of trying to destroy each other. In other words, as Hobbes taught us a long time ago, the war of everybody against all the rest is a self-destructive strategy. Instead of competing against the other players, trying to attract the consumers through better offers, the companies would make larger and safer profits over the long run by secretly sharing the market and making an agreement to control costs, prices, and production, so that to keep a favourable ratio between offer and demand. Taking this viewpoint, the common enemy of all companies are the consumers, the employees, the suppliers, local communities, the state – in a word, different categories of stakeholders. Cynically, but logically one business

leader said, "We believe the competitor is our friend and the customer is our enemy. [...] We should be trusting," he added, "and have competitive friendliness among the companies." (Velasquez, 2006, p. 202)

No doubt, this approach is morally wrong and even the "friendly competitors" realize that – not after getting a deeper understanding of the game theory, but considering certain ethical values and principles that essentially contradict the rational strategies suggested by enlightened self-interest. Why, then, do those who preach that enlightened self-interest suggests that, according to game theory, one should find the right balance between competition and cooperation? That "good ethics is good business"? I think their logic is correct only insofar they limit the scope of their analysis, applying a "rational" strategy at the micro level of *one* company, plus its network of directly involved stakeholder groups. From this narrow perspective, an intelligent business leader can easily understand that, over the long run, it is more profitable for the company to treat ethically right the consumers, the employees, the suppliers, etc. – in short to emphasize cooperation between managers and stakeholder groups. Conclusions radically change at the macro level of a whole market, industry, or social system.

Enlarging the perspective and considering a huge number of variables, game theory would lead to completely different conclusions and suggestions, proving that any temptation of the competitors to falsify their competition will be beneficial for the players only on very short term; over the long run, nevertheless, the replacement of real competition with mutually beneficial cooperation between the main actors will turn out self-destructive, leading to the bankruptcy of the whole market and terrible losses for everyone.

## Conclusions

As I showed in another paper, the enlightened self-interest is not only logically inconsistent, but also entails strong objections from the most important schools in moral philosophy, that should be briefly mentioned. (Crăciun, 2012)

From the viewpoint of Kantian *duty ethics*, the motive of an act makes that act ethically worthy of praise or blame. No matter the consequences, if one respects the interests and rights of the other people *only* for the sake of maximizing his own benefits over the long run, the agent does not act ethically. "Enlightened" or not, selfish motivation – from the Kantian perspective – is incompatible with morality. As long as businesspeople seek to treat fairly the consumers, the employees, the suppliers, etc. only insofar rational analysis proves this fair treatment promises to maximize their own profit over the long run, they do not act ethically; they merely apply an intelligent, shrewd, and effective strategy, acting as effective managers. How could be the categorical imperative compatible with the "supreme law" of business activity, as stated by Michelman? "Once the firm enters the competition, it must abide by the rules of that competition. And all these rules are comprehended by the single Rule: Let the maxim of your action be that which advances the profitability of your firm." (Michelman, 2000, p. 439)

No less *virtue ethics*, inspired by the Aristotelian moral philosophy, would recognize the ethical value of enlightened self-interest. Less preoccupied with

individual acts, virtue ethics focuses on the harmony and nobleness of character; therefore, Aristotelian ethics also rejects selfishness, no matter how rational, as one of the defining traits of a moral person. Self-interest is contrary to generosity, justice, courage, or truthfulness and friendship, the essential virtues, whose constant development through practice leads to the rise of a firm character, able to follow spontaneously the path of good, incapable of committing wrong deeds. The same Michelson does not hesitate to say: "Virtue, being displaced by rationality, has no place in this competition; and the individual is obliged to make a choice between virtue and money." (Michelman, 2000, p. 442) On the contrary, Stephen Young thinks that "a solution to this generalized moral degradation in business environment is to expect from businesspeople some moral character. It is up to the leaders to make ethics work, and character will offer the leaders their direction, as well as the determination to act." (Young, 2009, p. 298)

The only moral philosophy that might support the moral legitimacy of the strategies suggested by game theory is *Utilitarianism* – more precisely Bentham's original utilitarian ethics. From the viewpoint of *case-by-case* utilitarianism, the moral worth of human acts does not depend at all on the agent's motivation; it entirely depends on the beneficial consequences of human actions, according to the famous principle: "the greatest happiness for the greatest number". This is the sole approach that supports self-interest, as long as – assuming a selfish motivation of *all* players of the economic game, including employees, consumers, suppliers, etc. – all of these participants get maximized benefits with minimal costs. Yet not even classical utilitarianism would recognize the morality of a cooperative coalition of the competitors against different stakeholder groups, since such a pervert cooperation would be beneficial exclusively to the minority of unscrupulous investors and managers, but obviously detrimental to the consistent majority of those social categories that appear as losers of the game.

Even though it claims to be ideologically neutral and above ethical debates, game theory is not and cannot be a good guide for morality in business. On the contrary, the selfish calculations approaching market economy as a non-zero sum game suggest rather unethical strategies, meant to compromise the fundamental trust that should be the foundation of free enterprise system, since it recommends cooperation between competitors, allied against the stakeholder groups. On the other hand, most of the major ethical theories claim that self-interest is incompatible with morality. Respect for the interests and rights of other people not because they were recognized as intrinsic values, but only as means to enhance personal benefits over the long run might be called an *effective management*, but not *ethical business*. As one prominent theorist writes,

It is widely believed that acting morally is in the interest of business, and thus prudence seems to be one strong motive – perhaps the main motive – for acting ethically. However . . . prudence often dictates a different business decision than does morality. (Beauchamp et al., 2008, p. 4)

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# THE JOURNEY OF MYTHS FROM WEST TO EAST

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this paper is to deal with the myths about the East that medieval Europeans had before geographical discoveries. We will also see how these myths were shared by Orientals with Europeans that were defined as the barbarians of the West. European men of the Middle Ages imagined that India, the islands, and in general the fabulous East were inhabited by animals and men fictional, deformed, with certain physical parts more developed than others, for example men with dogs' heads, men with ears so big that you can use them as a blanket, men with one foot that could be used as protection from the sun etc.<sup>1</sup> These stories were based on medieval Greek and Latin sources; Authors such as Herodotus, (c. 484–425 BC); Megasthenes, (ca. 350 – 290 B.C.) and, especially, Ctesias of Cnidus who lived in the 5th century BC and of whom we analyzed "history of India", etc. had talked about giant ants, griffins, unicorns, etc; a series of imaginative geography reports that were later collected in a work known as the *Physiologus*<sup>2</sup> (third century AD) who had the merit of making known these myths to the people of the Middle Ages. The *Physiologus* became the source for the various "bestiaries" or "book of beasts."*

**Keywords:** *bestiary, sciapods, blemmyes, monocles, Shanhai jing, Wakan sansaizue, diffusion theory of myths.*

A **bestiary**, or **Bestiarum vocabulum** <sup>3</sup> is a compendium, full of descriptions of animals, plants and rocks made popular in the Middle Ages in illustrated volumes that described various beasts and their stories usually followed by a moral lesson. This meant that every living thing had its own special meaning because it was part of God's creation. For example, the pelican, which was believed to tear open its breast to bring its sons to feeding with its own blood, was a living representation of Jesus. The bestiary, then, is also a reference to the symbolic language of animals in Western Christian art and literature.

What distinguishes these people from men living in Europe is mainly the area of origin. The monstrous races always live in distant lands, such as India, Ethiopia, Cathay, places with uncertain boundaries for medieval man, but whose name always evokes mystery and full of mysteries.

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<sup>1</sup> Wittkower R. *Allegory and Migration of Symbols*, Thames and Hudson, New York, 1987 p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Il Fisiologo*, a cura di Francesco Zambon, Milano, Adelphi, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> E. Giovanelli, M.C. Biella, L.G. Perego, *Il bestiario fantastico di età orientalizzante nella penisola italiana*, Tangram Edizioni Scientifiche, Trento, 2013.

In the pictures below are some beliefs of deformed medieval men that were placed in India or China.

**Monopods** (also **sciapods**) are mythological creatures with just one large foot. These were described by Ctesias in his book *Indika*, a fragmented record of the view of Persians. This image was realized by the artist Silvana Arnò and reproduces, accurately enough, the existent drawings of The Monopods contained in the "Nuremeberg Chronicle" by Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514), a native of Nurember in Secunda etas mundi Folio XII"



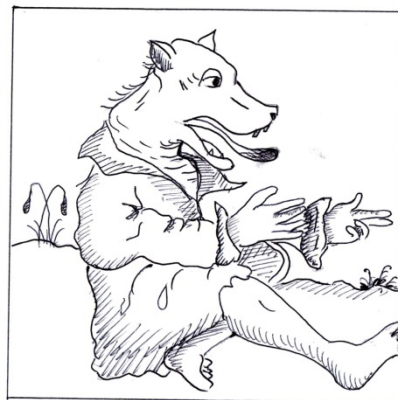
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The **Panotti** (from the Greek words "all ears") were a mytical human race, described as possessing large ears that covered their entire bodies. These were described by Pliny the Elder In A.D. 77-79. This image was realized by the artist Silvana Arnò and reproduces, accurately enough, the existent drawings of Panotti contained in the "Nuremeberg Chronicle" (1440-1514) in Secunda etas mundi Folio XII"



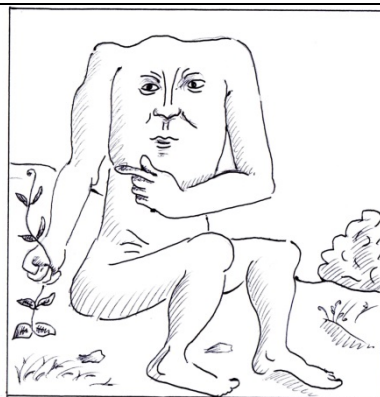
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**The Cynocephaly**, or dog-headed people. The Greek traveler Megasthenes (350 – 290 BCE) claimed to know about dog-headed people in India who lived in the mountains, and that communicated through barking. This image was realized by the artist Silvana Arnò and reproduces, accurately enough, the existent drawings of **Cynocephaly** contained in the "Nuremeberg Chronicle" 1 (1440-1514) in Secunda etas mundi Folio XII"



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The **Blemmyes** (Latin *Blemmyae*) were a tribe described in Roman histories of the later empire. The Greek geographer Strabo (64/63 BC – ca. 24 AD) describes the Blemmyes as a peaceful people living in the East Desert near Meroe. This image was realized by the artist Silvana Arnò and reproduces, accurately enough, the existent drawings of **Blemmyes** contained in the "Nuremeberg Chronicle" (1440-1514) in Secunda etas mundi Folio XII”



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**Antichthones**, (Latin antipodes) in geography, are those peoples who inhabit the antipodes. The term is taken up by Aristotle (De caelo 308a.20), Strabo, Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius, and was adopted into Latin as antipodes. This image was realized by the artist Silvana Arnò and reproduces, accurately enough, the existent drawings of **Antipodes** contained in the "Nuremeberg Chronicle" (1440-1514) in Secunda etas mundi Folio XII”



These myths survived up to the modern age because of two specific factors:

- 1) One was the arrival in the West of the letter of Prester John.
- 2) A second factor is that these beliefs were not only denied but will appear as reliable data in the reports of travelers in the Middle Age.

The Letter of Prester John<sup>4</sup>

The letter of John (or Presbyter Johannes) arrived in the West in 1165 addressed to the Byzantine Emperor Emanuel Commeno, which he then sent to Pope Alexander III and Frederick Barbarossa. The sender of the letter described

<sup>4</sup> *La Lettera del Prete Gianni*, a cura di G. Zaganelli, Parma, Pratiche, 1990

himself as “John, Priest, King of Kings and Sovereign of sovereigns”. The letter described the kingdom of this priest located in the Far East. Prester John claimed to hold immense domains that contained also the earthly paradise and the kingdom of Gog and Magog (ancient people cited in the Bible), and described himself as “lord of the three Indies,” and said to live in an immense palace made of gems, nestled in gold, and had, every day, not less than ten thousand guests at his own table. Among his uncanny subjects were also elves, dwarves, giants, cyclops, centaurs, minotaurs, dog-headed beings, blemmyae, and so on.

After asking for tributes to the Western rulers, aimed to launch a crusade to free the sepulcher of Christ from his enemies. Neither the Emperor Emmanuel Comnenus nor Frederick Barbarossa replied, but the Pope, probably by pure charity (because Prester John declared himself a Christian, and a priest for more, and ready to collaborate in the crusade), replied by asking more detailed information and proposing the “sending of his bishop at the court of Prester John after it was determined exactly where it was.” It was an obvious fake (the era was abundant in fakes of various categories) by some scribe with an intention of propaganda against Byzantium, but it did not matter about its origin and authenticity on its reception: the moment that the Pope replied he validates the authenticity of the letter.

In a very long period of time that goes from the X-th century when Venice acquires a leading role with the trade with the East, and later, through the Mongolian pax (which favored the passage of the Europeans on the Asian territory interrupted by the VIII-th century because of the Muslim rule), until the XVII-th century, not only was it impossible to refute the Greek myths about the Orient, but they were confirmed due to the travel reports.

Among the many texts we decided to analyze these:

- 1) Odorico from Pordenone Travels;
- 2) *il Milione* of Marco Polo;
- 3) John Mandeville travels.

Odoric of Pordenone (real name Odorico Mattiussi or Mattiuzzi; c. 1286 – 14 January 1331) was an Italian late-medieval traveler. He visited China and was the first European to reach Lhasa.

The story, as all the medieval reports, objective was in some paragraphs, replete with myths in others. He mentions pygmies, and the dog-headed, tree from whose fruit, when they are mature, come out lambs etc. We must also add that there are two versions of the same travel report: version A, more objective, and B version full of fantasy, and also the report is not of Odorico but was written by William of Solagna to whom Odorico told his memoirs.<sup>5</sup>

We can ask ourselves why medieval men have this lack of objectivity. There are several hypotheses. The men of the monstrous fabulous East had been established as a cultural knowledge for travelers and left them disappointed and surprised not to have met any. Therefore their location was moved to places that had not been visited by the narrator directly but were happy stories heard and repeated from others that

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<sup>5</sup> Sinica Francescana Vol 1, pag. 381-495, Frati Editori di Quaracchi, Firenze, 1929.

swore to have met them. Antonio Pigafetta, in the wake of Vasco de Gama (so that in a time in which it must have been open to serious exploration region) argues that there are men called Panotti not by his direct observation but because a sailor, whose words were always truthful, reported him.

In the worst cases people believed to see what had been inculcated in their mind by conditioning. The traveler applied to the observation of a landscape completely unknown how much he had been told about it, bringing the unknown to something that was known and accepting in advance to be in a place certainly full of wonders that he identifies in things or places for which he hasn't the tools or cognitive categories suitable for grading. For example, Marco Polo, by saying that the unicorn is not that kind of animal it is said, but "a rough graceless beast with a big horn on his forehead." Apparently he had seen a rhino, but thought he saw a kind of Unicorn less beautiful than what is known. The art historian Rudolf Wittkower<sup>6</sup> makes an interesting observation in analyzing a famous illustration of the *Million*, kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris known as No. 2810, built in the early fifteenth century, which related to many miniatures that tend to interpret freely and even to correct the text to make it consistent with traditional beliefs. In the chapter in which Marco Polo speaks of the inhabitants of Siberia, we are told only that it is a very wild race. But the miniaturist shows three samples of this people: one Sciapode, a Blemo and a Monocle.

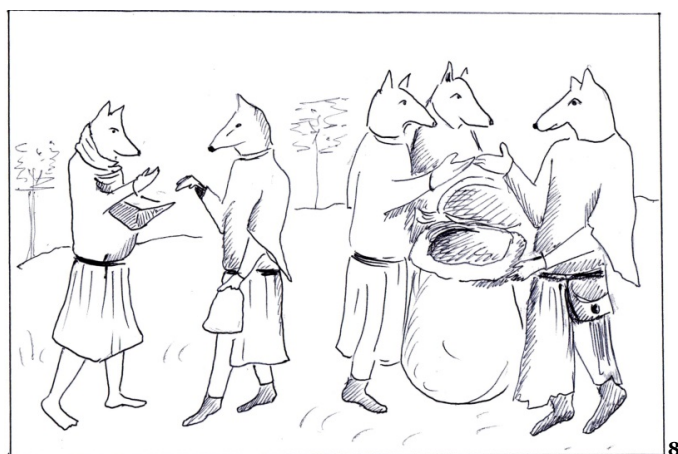


When he speaks of the population of the Andaman Islands (Indian Ocean) Marco Polo says just that they have heads, eyes and teeth a bit similar to those of dogs. The illustrator represents them as dog-headed.

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<sup>6</sup> Wittkower R., *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols*, New York, 1987, pages 82-84

<sup>7</sup> This image was realized by the artist Silvana Arnò and reproduces, accurately enough, the existent drawings of illustration of the *Million*, No. 2810



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However, there were those who managed to be objective as Giovanni from Montecorvino who declares in his reports: "About wonderful men and beasts, and about Eden, very much I looked for and asked; but nothing I've found."<sup>9</sup> (But it seems that these truthful statements would not find favor with the public).

Among the travelers in conflict between making an objective account and say what is expected of the audience stands out the Englishman John Mandeville (? -1372) born in St. Albans. The report of his travels, published between 1357 and 1371, had a very large fortune, and helped to revive the curiosity of Europeans to the lands of the East. Anyway the author personally went up to the maximum in the Holy Land, while everything else is taken from different sources: Pliny, Isidore of Seville, the cycle of Alexander, the letter of Prester John, the Beasts, Giovanni from Pian del Carpine, Marco Polo, Odorico of Pordenone. In particular, the works of the last two, Polo and Odorico from Pordenone, have been the subject of plagiarism. As evidence of the success of his writings during the Middle Ages, of Mandeville's Travels manuscript copies are kept 300 against 119 of Marco Polo.<sup>10</sup> The development of geographical knowledge led not so much to disprove the existence of the mentioned above people but their location, and if for a long time they had been placed in India and China, later they were moved to places still poorly understood like Japan, the extreme north and the New World.

### **The same myths present in China and Japan**

In several Chinese documents, and among all the Shan Hai Jin<sup>11</sup>, we can find monstrous populations highly coinciding with those fantasized by the Europeans depending on contacts occurred and relationships established over the centuries with the Oriental world.

<sup>8</sup> This image was realized by the artist Silvana Arnò and reproduces, accurately enough, the existent drawings of illustration of the Million, No. 2810.

<sup>9</sup> Sinica Francescana vol. I, pp: 335-355.

<sup>10</sup> Boscaro Adriana, "Mirabiglia" in *Occidente e Oriente*, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, Venezia, 1989, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> *A Chinese Bestiary, Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas*, Richard E. Strassberg (Editor), Richard E. Strassberg (Translator), University of California Press, London, 2002.



## Shanhai jing (“Classic of Mountains and Seas”)

*Shanhai jing* is treatise composed in the late Han period, (206 BC – 220 AD), which collects geographic and ethnographic news. However, most of these data are fantastic and describe the “mythical” people lived on the border of China in that time. Really interesting are also the legends which clearly show the contacts occurred with the classical Greek world (Cyclops, pygmies who struggle with cranes), the trades along the caravan routes that connected East and West and also favored the transmission of news, and simple legends that could become amazing stories. By itself the Shan Hai Jin is very short and essential, but in these fantastic notions of countries not known many later writers of fiction would then draw freely.

280 The Demon People  
(Guiguomin) 鬼國民:

*“The land of the demon people lies north of the Corpse of Erfu. The people have human faces with one eye”. This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and reproduces accurately those contained in the book “A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas [Richard E. Strassberg], 2002, page 197.*



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**233 Xigtian 形天:** “Xisgtian and the supreme God “Di” came to this place and struggled against each for ultimate power. The Supreme God cut off Xigtian's head and buried him at Eternaly Auspicious Mountain. Xigtian's nipples then transformed into eyes, and his navel became a mount. He performs a dance with an ax and shield” This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and reproduces accurately those contained in the book “A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas [Richard E. Strassberg], 2002, page 171.



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**286 Ring dog 環狗**

(Huan'gou): "Ring Dog is a person with a beast's head and a human body. According to another version he is called Wei, and his form resembles that of a yellow dog."

This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and reproduces accurately those contained in the book "*A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas* [Richard E. Strassberg], 2002, page 200.



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246 The People who hold up their ears 聶耳民(Nie'ermin):

"The land of the people who hold up their ears is located east of the land of the people without intestines".

This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and reproduces accurately those contained in the book "*A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas* [Richard E. Strassberg], 2002, page 177.



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**243 The flexible people 柔**

利民(Roulimin): "The land of flexible people is located east of the land of the One-eyed People. The people have one hand and one foot. Their knees are reversed and their feet bend upward. According to another version, their land is called the land of Liuli people, and the people's feet bend backward."

This image was realized by





Silvana Arnò and reproduces accurately those contained in the book “*A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas* [Richard E. Strassberg], 2002, page 176.

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**242 The one eyed people**  
**一目民 (Yimumin).** “The land of one-eyed people lies to the east of bell Mountain. The people who dwell here have one eye in the middle of their face.”

This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and reproduces accurately those contained in the book “*A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas* [Richard E. Strassberg], 2002, page 177.



### **We can count in Japan:**

Wakan sansaizue

The ***Wakan Sansai Zue*** (Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia) is a Japanese encyclopedia written by Terajima Ryōan, a doctor from Osaka, published in the Edo period, of 1712. 81 books of 105 collected volumes, describes and illustrates carpentry and fishing and many activities of daily life and also plants and animals, and constellations. As seen from the title of the book 和 (wa), which means Japan and 漢 (kan), which means China, Terajima's idea was based on a Chinese encyclopedia of the Ming times, namely *Sancai Tuhui* ("Pictorial" or "Illustrated Compendium of the Three Powers") by Wang Qi (1607).

Land of the Dog-men. 狗國 (kokoku).

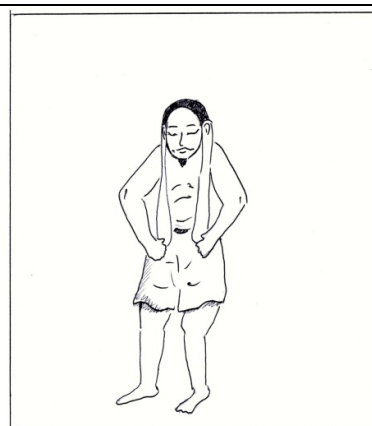
This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and shows the images contained in the site “<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/wakan/wakan-jin/page.html?style=b&part=7&no=50>” where the Wakansanzazue pages in the 14th book have been photographed.



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The land of the men who hold up their ears. 聳耳国 (setsujikoku).

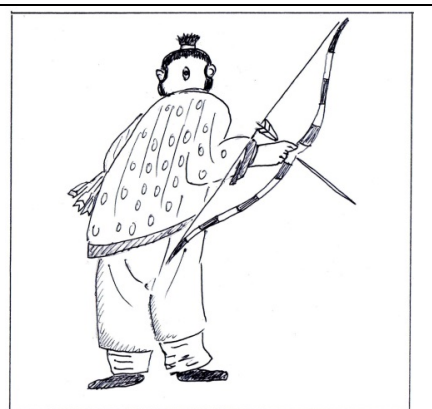
This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and shows the images contained in the site : “<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/wakan/wakan-jin/page.html?style=b&part=7&no=50>” where the Wakansanzazue pages in the 14th book have been photographed.



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The land of the men with one eye on their backs. 後眼(kougan)

This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and shows the images contained in the site “<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/wakan/wakan-jin/page.html?style=b&part=7&no=50>” where the Wakansanzazue pages in the 14th book have been photographed.



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The land of pigmies 小人(kobito).

Here too, the presence of the Greek myths is quite obvious. It is impressive that the image not only depicts the pygmies but puts them side by side to cranes in their legendary struggle.

This image was realized by Silvana Arnò and shows the images contained in the site "<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/wakan/wakan-jin/page.html?style=b&part=7&no=50>" where the Wakansanzazue pages in the 14th book have been photographed.



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The fight between pygmies and cranes is represented in this manner on one of the red-figure Kraters from Volterra workshop (ill. 145).

Krater painting. Clay. 4th century B.C.

Florence, National Archaeological Museum

The original image has been reproduced by Silvana Arnò.



For almost a century ethnologists have worked on this with two antagonistic theories: the diffusion of techniques, ideas, concepts and art forms, against the spontaneous generation of culture in different parts of the world. Since the last century, "Diffusionism" is a research hypothesis accepted worldwide for advanced civilizations with literary tradition, while the independent convergence (or spontaneous generation) is related to primitive societies<sup>12</sup>.

The ultimate test of diffusion lies, of course, in the proved existence of definitely traceable roads of migration. Even in prehistoric time caravan roads existed bridging the vast expanses of the Asian land mass between China and Europe, a northern route via the Caspian and Black seas and a southern route via the highland of Iran and Syria<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Wittkower R. *Allegory and Migration of Symbols*, Ed. Thames and Hudson, New York, 1987 p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Wittkower R. *Allegory and Migration of Symbols*, Ed. Thames and Hudson, New York, 1987 p. 11.

## The Hellenistic era

The first major step in opening the Silk Road between the East and the West came with the expansion of Alexander the Great's empire into Central Asia<sup>14</sup>. In August 329 BC, at the mouth of the Fergana Valley in Tajikistan he founded the city of Alexandria Eschate or "Alexandria The Furthest", later become a major staging point on the northern Silk Route. The Greeks remained in Central Asia for a lot of time with the establishment of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom. There are indications that he may have led expeditions as far as Kashgar in Chinese Turkestan, leading to the first known contacts between China and the West around 200 BC. The Greek historian Strabo writes "*they extended their empire even as far as the Seres (China) and the Phryni.*"<sup>15</sup>

## Chinese and Romans

Chinese and Romans had mutual knowledge of the existence of the two empires as early as the Han era but probably even earlier. They started trade as early as the second century B.C. The Romans imported large quantities of silk from China, while the Chinese preferred the Roman products of glass. From the diplomatic point of view China and the Roman Empire approached gradually first with the embassy of Zhang Qian in 130 B.C. and then with a second embassy of the general Ban Chao in Rome around the year 100. Ancient Chinese historians recorded some Roman embassies to China, the first on record dates back to the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius and arrived in China in the year 166.<sup>16</sup>

The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* or *Periplus of the Red Sea*<sup>17</sup> (Latin: *Periplus Maris Erythraei*) is a Greco-Roman Periplus, an ancient document written in Greek, probably dating back to the first century, which describes the shipping lanes of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf and that in particular describes navigation and trading from Roman Egyptian ports along the coast of the Red Sea, and others along Northeast Africa and the Indian subcontinent. The text has been ascribed to different dates between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD. The document consists of 66 chapters, where a number of ancient ports were described. The original *Periplus*, now lost, was written in Greek, probably by an Egyptian merchant from the Roman empire. The text was received to our day through a Byzantine manuscript of the tenth century, preserved at the Heidelberg University Library. Through these contacts it is easy to imagine that some of the

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<sup>14</sup> The Indo-Greek Kingdom or Graeco-Indian Kingdom was a Hellenistic kingdom covering various parts of the northwest regions of the Indian subcontinent during the last two centuries BC. (A.K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 2003.)

<sup>15</sup> Also several Greeks, such as the historian Megasthenes, followed by Deimachus and Dionysius, were sent to reside at the Mauryan (India) court. Presents continued to be exchanged between the two rulers: India and Greece.

<sup>16</sup> Mario Bussagli, *Asia centrale e mondo dei nomadi* in *Asia centrale e Giappone*, Torino, 1970. / "The Roman Empire as known to Han China." A review article on *The Roman Empire in Chinese Sources*. D. D. Leslie and K. H. J. Gardiner. Rome. Review by Edwin G. Pulleyblank. JAOS 119.1 (1999), pp. 71–79. JSTOR 605541 / Hill, John E. (2009). *Through the Jade Gate to Rome: A Study of the Silk Routes during the Later Han Dynasty, First to Second Centuries CE*. BookSurge, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Casson Lionel, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text With Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Princeton University Press, 1989.

myths, of Greek origin, transported by merchants who loved telling stories, have reached China and then Japan.

Myth has always been part of Greek culture. The myth of the pygmies, that we also refer to, appears in the Iliad of Homer (eight century BC) taking into account that the oldest written sources are Greek and we believe that their origin is Western.

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→<http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/wakan/wakan-jin/page.html?style=b&part=7&no=50>

# AMA NO IWABUNE, AMAKUDARI, HAGOROMO SETSUWA – INSTANCES OF A PERMANENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

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**Abstract:** *There are many elements in Japanese mythology - ama no iwabune, ama no ukihashi, ama kudari, hagoromo no tennyo for instance – that point to a complex religious thinking, which induced the ancient Japanese to perceive Heaven and earth, or this world and the world of spirits, as being in constant contact, communication, and even contiguity. Some of Joseph M. Kitagawa's essays – such as "Reality and Illusion: Some Characteristics of the Early Japanese 'World of Meaning,' Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia 11/1970 - show that the early Japanese world was a "one-dimensional monistic universe", that is, the three realms of the High Heaven, the Manifest World, and the Nether World were interchangeable, or interconnected. As Kitagawa put it, "Even the gulf between the world of the living and the world of the dead was blurred by the frequent movement of spirits and ghosts and by other channels of communication between the two realms, such as oracles, fortunetelling and divination. In other words, the world of early Shintō had a unitary meaning-structure, based upon the kami nature pervading the entire universe, which was essentially a "sacred community of living beings" all endowed with spirits or souls." In this paper we will look at some instances of ama kudari by means of (ama no) iwafune, which "left their traces" in several jinja from the Nara-Osaka area which have iwafune in their name, and among their relics or sacred land marks.*

**Keywords:** *ama no iwafune, Iwafune Jinja, amakudari, tennyo, Iida Takesato, Karl Florenz.*

The starting point of my research was the Heavenly Rock Boat, *ama no iwafune*, mentioned in *Nihonshoki* Book 3, with which I dealt more extensively in „A Symbolic Use of the Boat in Japanese Mythology”, *Cogito - Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2012. Book 3 mentions a kind of ancestor of Jimmu, Nigihayahi no mikoto, who: “... *Nigi-haya-hi no Mikoto soared across the Great Void in a Heaven-rock-boat, he espied this region and descended upon it. Therefore he gave it a name and called it Sora-mitsu-Yamato.*”

If one focusses on the boat, as I did in the above mentioned essay, one is tempted to associate it with a UFO<sup>1</sup>, and thus limit one's possibilities of

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understanding, but if one focusses on the action of flying the possible associations are richer. Focussing on the idea of flying we can have the following:

Firstly, we can explain the episode of Nigihayahi no Mikoto flying in this boat over the land of Yamato (*sora mitsu Yamato*) as an instance of communication between the worlds of gods and men. The idea of communication between Heaven and earth is more important than the detail of a boat flying in the sky. This is, I think, also the way in which Hirata Atsutane understood *ama no iwabune*, and Atsutane's comment is the earliest comment of a Japanese scholar that I could find (and one of the few) about *ame no iwabune*. He actually associated it with *ama no ukihashi*, and this information is given by Iida Takesato (1827-1900), a scholar of National Learning (*kokugaku*) and follower of the teachings of Hirata Atsutane, in his *Nihonshoki Tsūshaku*.

As a scholar representing "the final stage of traditional *kokugaku* scholarship" <sup>2</sup>, Takesato's monumental translation and interpretation of *Nihonshoki*, *Nihonshoki Tsūshaku*, contains many quotes from scholars like Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane. There we find some interpretations of *ama no iwabune* as being the same with *ame no ukihashi*.

In his comments on "Ama no Ukihashi" <sup>3</sup> Takesato says:

"*Ama no ukihashi*. In the *Sha*[ku Nihon]gi it says: "Kanekata has the opinion that Ama no Ukihashi is Ama no Hashidate. "Motoori in his *Kojikiden* says: „Ama no Ukihashi is between (connects) heaven and earth. It is the bridge used as road when the Gods deign to coomute up and down. It is hanging in the sky therefore it is called ukihashi. In the *Tango Kuni Fudoki* it is said: "In the N-E corner of the district of Yosa no Kōri there is Haya ishi no sato. In the sea of this village there stretches a long, big promontory. The length is 2,229 jō. The width, at some points, is less than 9 jō.....In former times it was called Ama no Hashidate. ....It is said, the land creating god, Izanagi no Mikoto, in order to go back and forth to heaven, erected a ladder. Therefore it is called Ama no hashidate [Heavenly standing ladder]. While the god was sleeping, it fell over."

"Furthermore, in the *Harima Kuni Fudoki* it is said:"In the village Mashike in the Kako district there is a stone bridge. One legend goes that in the ancient times this bridge reached up to heaven. Eighty companions were coming and going down the bridge, therefore it is called Yaso Bridge."

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<sup>1</sup> and this would be a very nature-myth type of approach, just as Karl Florentz considered that elements in the Japanese myth, like *Ama no ukihashi*, 'the floating bridge of heaven', must refer to natural objects, in this case the rainbow (*Japanische Mythologie*, 1901); a present-day example of such an equivalence between *ama no iwabune* and UFO is found in Namiki Shinichiro's book, *Mikakunin hikōbuttai UFO daizen* [未確認飛行物体 UFO 大全], edited by Gakken, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Michael Wachutka, *Historical Reality or Metaphorical Expression?*, London, Literatur Verlag Munster, Hamburg, 2001, p. 11

<sup>3</sup> Iida cites many comments on this matter, from *Shaku Nihongi*, a compilation from late Kamakura period, where the author, Urabe Kanekata, collected all the research on *Nihongi*, of which the peak until then had been in the Heian period. cf. Wachutka, op. cit. pp. 139-141



Finally, he mentions: “Furthermore, Hirata the Venerable [Okina] says: “*Ama no ukihashi* was used when gods deigned to come down from Heaven. They let it float in the big empty sky [when they] used it, and therefore it is called floating bridge. ... Moreover, it seems that this thing to go back and forth with, because it was like a boat riding on water, was also called Heavenly Rock Boat [*Ama no iwabune*].”, Atsutane is further cited to have said in *Tamadasuki*: “*Fune* really means a utensil of any kind”.

And Iida commented on these fragments from *Fudoki* like this: “We see that this also is a bridge for traffic with heaven. ***In the Age of Gods, bridges leading up and down from heaven must have existed here and there.***” (my underline)

And here we retain also the idea of **Ama no hashidate**, and other places as **connecting points between the worlds**.

The fact that certain places, on the mountain near a village, were used for burial in ancient Japan<sup>4</sup>, as they were considered to be places where the two worlds communicate, is significant. Just in the same way, some Romanian forests, caves, ravines (Hoia forest near Cluj city in Transylvania, Calugareni forest near Giurgiu, on the Danube, where a famous battle with the invading Turkish army was won by the Romanians, etc) are considered places where supernatural beings like the *yele*<sup>5</sup>, or other forces unknown to man can be encountered.

The idea of **descent** of successive generations of gods who appropriated the land of Yamato is also important. For it we have the Japanese keyword **amakudari**, as it seems that several generations of gods have descended to the Japanese land in *iwafune*, not only Nigihayahiko mentioned in Book 3 of Nihongi, as aiding Jimmu Tennō to conquer the land.

Descent of the gods from above (*ama kudari*) – sometimes in *iwafune*. There are several *jinja* in the Nara-Osaka area which have *iwafune* in their name, among their relics or sacred land marks. This is proof of the strong belief in a close connection between gods from Heaven and the land of Yamato.

Many *jinja* are connected to the descent – *amakudari* – in *iwafune*, of Jimmu Tennō or Nigihayahi no Mikoto. For example, in Kakogawa, Onoe-cho, Imafuku, in front of the Imafuku Yawata-sha there is a rock 1,9 m long and 72 cm wide, called *ama no iwafune*, said to be the boat in which Jimmu Tennō came to the East („神武天皇が東征の時乗ってこられた岩船”). The stone is said to have been in a *kofun*<sup>6</sup>, as the central part of a stone coffin. In Edo times it was well known, as we have in

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<sup>4</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, ed., *Asian Mythologies*, University of Chicago Press, p. 272

<sup>5</sup> these are very powerful fairies in Romanian folklore, who can be beneficial to humans, giving them deep insights, but they can also be dangerous, their songs maddening those who enter the woods (Calugareni woods, for example) especially in the night of June 24<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Kofun are the tumuli, or burial mounds erected for Japanese emperors from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

*Harima Meisho Junranzu* (播磨名所巡覧図):「・・・尾上村の田の中にあり、俗に天の岩船という・・・」<sup>7</sup>

In Kagoshima Prefecture, Minami Kyūshū-shi, Kawabemachi shinden is the place where Jinmu Tennō is said to have ordered his soldiers to sharpen their arrow heads and further up in the valley is a big rock in the shape of a boat, said to be the *iwafune* in which Ninigi no mikoto came down to earth (*amakudari*). Then there is the Yatogi no Taki, in Kawakita, Miyazaki-ken, where Nigihayahi is said to have sharpened his arrows. On top of the mountain, in Osuzu Jinja Nigihayahi is venerated.

In Hyogo-ken, Takasago-shi, Sone-chō there is another *iwafune* stone relic, said to have been the boat by which Nigihayahi descended to earth, and the local explanations point to its extra-terrestrial nature.



(image from

<http://gyokuzan.typepad.jp/blog/2013/05/%E5%A4%A9%E7%A3%90%E8%88%9F.html>)

In Kyotanabe-shi there is Iwafune Jinja, originally called Hachiōjin no Yashiro, and registered as Iwafune Jinja since 1881. Nigihayahi is said to have descended here with *iwafune*, first on the mountain top of Kajika-mine, then on Takerugamine in Kawauchi. Of course, to the north of the shrine there is a big rock as a relic of the boat.

In Shimane-ken, there is the Mononobe Jinja (Ooda-shi, Kawai-cho), at the border of Izumo and Iwami, dedicated to Umashimaji no mikoto, son of Nigihayahi no mikoto. According to a variant in the Nihonshoki, Nigihayahi no mikoto came down in *iwafune*, with the ten treasures known as *Tokusa no kandakara*, landing on Ikarugamine in Yamato, before Jinmu. He then married Kashikiya-hime, the younger sister of a local chieftain, and had a son, Umashimaji no mikoto, considered to be the ancestor of the greatest clan in Yamato, the Mononobe. It is also said that Nigihayahi and his son helped Jinmu

<sup>7</sup> <http://ir.minpaku.ac.jp>

to subdue the local chieftain who's sister he had married, and then pleaded allegiance to Jinmu Tennō.

However, a very old Iwafune Jinja where Nigihayahi is enshrined, mentioned in Engishiki, exists also in Niigata Prefecture, on the Chūbu Hokuriku *shizen hodo*, and on October 19 every year there is even a *iwafune* festival, when stands bearing *iwafune* are paraded around the villages.

And last, but not exhausting the list of Iwafune Jinja, I would mention Hikō Jinja in Yawata, a small town that grew around the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine, south of Kyoto. It was founded in 1915 by Ninomiya Chūhachi, a fore-runner of aviation in Japan. Preoccupied with the many deaths in plane crashes, he built this shrine to pray for the spirits of air victims. The three *kami* enshrined here are Nigihayahi no mikoto, Konpira, and the souls of those killed in air accidents. It is interesting that Nigihayahi is also taken as an ancestor for those involved in flying.

Descent of other beings - moreover, there are quite a few legends about celestial beings (*tennin*, coming from Buddhist and Indian deities called Apsaras, who served the Devas), Celestial Maidens (*tennyo*) who come down to earth, flying in their feather robes, and who sometimes stay on earth to marry a villager. The reverse of this situation is the case when a mortal like Urashima no ko or Tajima Mori goes to the realm below the sea or to the Tokoyo beyond the sea, where he can have a glimpse of the eternal life.

The Celestial Maidens are depicted wearing beautiful, waving clothes called *hagoromo*, and playing various musical instruments. Of special interest is the legend of Chikubushima, situated in the middle of lake Biwa, where, according to the Kegon Sutra, the Buddhist deity Benzaiten had taken residence. A medieval buddhist writing, *Keiran shūyōshū*, compiled by monk Kōshū (1276-1350) of Hieizan, presents three sacred places (Pure Lands) where Benzaiten resides in Japan, namely Tennokawa, deep in the Yoshino mountains, Itsukushima in Aki and Chikubushima in Gōshū. „These three places, like the three jewels of eloquence, are linked together by an underground tunnel.”<sup>8</sup>

Also interesting are Ninyo (二女), the two sisters who represent the two conflicting tendencies in the human psyche: the Sister of Merit, Kudoku Tennyō (功德天女) and the Dark Sister, Kokuannyō, (黒闇女), who brings out the spending and wasting tendencies of man, and notably they always go together.

More than 30 variants of the so-called Hagoromo legend exist in Japan. In the basic form one or more Celestial Maidens come down to earth to bathe in the sea, and a poor fisherman named Hokuryō steals one *hagoromo* left on the branch of a tree by one of the *tennyo*. She begs him to return her dress and he agrees only if she dances for him. In other variants the villager hides the *hagoromo*, in order to persuade her into marrying him and bearing him children.

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<sup>8</sup> Andrew Mark Watsky, *Chikubushima: Deploying the Sacred Arts in Momoyama Japan*, University of Washington Press, 2004, pp. 55.

In a legend from Tango<sup>9</sup>, eight beautiful Celestial Maidens alighted one day near a village called Hiji, where there was a spring forming a nice lake on top of Hiji mountain. They bathed all day in that lake. An old man and woman came up to the spring, from the village, to take water. They were called Wanasa no okina and Wanasa no onna, and were a greedy pair. They decided to take one of the hagoromo hanging in a tree, and keep it as a treasure. The beautiful maidens returned from the lake and went up to the sky with their hagoromo, except one maiden who could not find her dress. The old man appeared and asked her to come down to the village and be their daughter, as they had no children. The old woman joined in and asked her to forget about returning to heaven, as they would spoil her as an only child. She agreed, but asked the two to give her back the hagoromo, however, they refused. In the beginning they treated her very well, and she also helped them, so that their house became filled with joy and laughter. The Celestial Maiden started to prepare a very special sake, that could heal diseases and made people feel younger and more energetic. People came from the neighboring villages to buy that sake, and even from far places. The greedy old parents made her make more and more sake, to have more money, and she complied to their wishes, making them very rich. They made her work for them without a pause, and then they started to talk one day that they cannot leave her all their fortune, as she is not their kin. Hearing them, she started to cry and asked them why they were so harsh with her, but the greedy old couple sent her away, returning her the hagoromo. However, the poor tennyo could not fly back to heaven, for, even if she eventually stood up in the air with her hagoromo, she could not remember the way back home. So she went, from village to village, knowing no one, her beauty fading away. She finally died lonely in a corner of Tango province.

Although such motifs exist in Romanian, Bulgarian, or German mythology (the famous “Tinerete fara batranete” or *Everlasting Youth*, encounters with the bad yele fairies, unfortunate transgressions in the “haunted places”), in Europe the other-worldly beings are often bad, and their descent or intrusion into the human world, ominous. In the Japanese tradition there seem to be more instances of beneficial contact to the humans. The ancient Japanese seem to have lived in deep harmony with the less understood forces of nature.

We have shown in another study<sup>10</sup> that many of these seemingly supernatural phenomena from our ancient literature can be explained perfectly with the concepts of quantum physics. However, such an approach is just as rationalizing as Tylor or Max Müller’s, which I believe is quite revolte considering our present state of scholarship and understanding.

The association of the idea of flying with that of holiness, or sacredness is very specific to Japan. The capacity of flying down from the sky is a sign that the respective being embodies the sacred quality of *kami*. The capacity to fly across the sky is also associated with the holiness of

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<sup>9</sup> “Hiji no sato no tennyo”, in *Nihon no densetsu (Nishi Nihon hen)*, ed. Tsubota Jōji, Okawa Essei, pp. 161-169.

<sup>10</sup> “Distortions of Time and Space”, *Euromentor*, 2011.

Taoist or Buddhist masters. Interesting in this respect is the legend of the flying bowl and the flying rice bags, *Sora wo tobu komedawara*.

“In olden times there was a holy man called Hōdō Shōnin, who settled in the mountain of Hokke-san, east of Himeji, to practice asceticism. As he was practicing his ablutions with ice-cold water and reading the sutras all day, his provisions of rice finished at a certain point. As even he, an ascetic, had to eat at least some rice, he summoned his iron bowl and ordered it to go down to the village and bring him some offerings. The bowl flew through the air and landed on a farmer’s door step. Recognizing the ascetic’s bowl, he filled it with some rice. Then the bowl flew to another door, and so on until it was full of rice. Having done this several times, the villagers realized that the holy man had great powers, much like a sennin and respected him (Yama no naka ni hitori komotte, **sennin mitaina shūgyō** wo shite iru, Hōdō Shōnin to iu kata wa, taihenna **hōriki wo motsu**). Once the bowl flew to the south, up to the sea, and reached a boat that was transporting big bags of rice. The boat owner who saw it, also realized that the bowl begging for alms belong to a person very skilled in magic, but being a miser, will not give it any rice (katte ni tonde kite, ofuse wo kure to wa, **amari mushi no yosugiru** wa). So, all his bags of rice flew up in the air, and off to the ascetics’s mountain. Persuaded by the villagers that only by apologizing to the holy man he will be able to recover his rice, the boat owner proceeds to do so, and the rice bags fly back to his boat. However, one of them drops down in the middle of the field, as a tribute to the villagers.”<sup>11</sup>

**Conclusion:** The above mentioned myth elements and motifs can be approached in various ways, in a rationalizing, “nature-mythology” type of approach, or a comparative approach, which was the European approach of Karl Florenz, Ernest Satow and other early scholars of mythology. In this way, *ama no ukihashi* “becomes” a rainbow, and the episode of Amaterasu hiding in cave, a solar eclipse. Then, there is the Nativist approach of viewing the myths as history, or the metaphorical, buddhist interpretation prevalent in the middle ages. However, the modern views expressed especially by the non-specialists, which are present on personal blogs, or in the official sites of these *iwafune jinja* give new insights and are interesting to study in themselves, as a kind of metadiscourse on Japanese myth, outside the academic circles. They all point to a belief in a historical origin for *shinwa*.

The conception of the *kokugakusha* that Japanese mythology – *shinwa* – is history is very similar to Mircea Eliade’s much later definition of myth. It is also very close to the mythologies of primitive peoples, where every myth is a creation myth, that tells the history of an object, or phenomenon, etc, and that also tells about the eternal reenactment of that primordial event by the rituals performed every year by the believers.

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<sup>11</sup> *Nihon no densetsu (Nishi Nihon hen)*, ed. Tsubota Jōji, Okawa Essei, pp. 271-276

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