

ISSN 2069 – 4008 (online: ISSN 2069 – 4016)

Annals of Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava

**PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL AND HUMAN
DISCIPLINES SERIES**

2023

VOLUME II

**Editors:
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Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava Press

**Annals of Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava
Philosophy, Social and Human Disciplines Series**

Bogdan Popoveniuc; Marius Cucu; © Suceava : Ștefan cel
Mare University Press, 2023

ISSN 2069 – 4008 (online: ISSN 2069 – 4016)

**Analele Universității “Ștefan cel Mare” din Suceava
Seria Filosofie și Discipline Socio-umane**

Bogdan Popoveniuc; Marius Cucu; © Suceava : Editura
Universității „Ștefan cel Mare”, 2023

ISSN 2069 – 4008 (online: ISSN 2069 – 4016)

ANNALS
of
Philosophy, Social and Human Disciplines

PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL AND HUMAN DISCIPLINES SERIES

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2023

Volume II

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RESEARCH PAPERS

Translation of Culture/Culture in Translation: A Postcolonial Perspective

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Abstract

*The postcolonial theory of translation has emerged as a pattern of systems that enables a translator to re-conceptualize and revisit texts and redirect his attention to the dichotomy of Subject/Object relationships far from the hegemonic language of the logocentric Europe. Reproducing a text through rewriting is subjugating it to the will and intention of the local – the margin / the Other. Culture and Translation are two very polemical elements in perpetual tension due to the amount and the degree of reliability of the transfer from the source text to the target. Many studies have been made to find an issue and an adequate theory of translation to transfer the culture of the source to the target smoothly. However, these studies are not as effective as they might be because translation is rather a maneuvering and a biased manipulation of the text, and what is transferred as culture is just what is conceived or rather perceived by the translator whose background is the cornerstone of his rendering. Postcolonial theory has come in recourse to translation: its basic strategy is translation through **dualism** and **alterity**. It is a kind of H. Bhabha's **Third Space** or Bill Ashcroft's **Rewrite**: revisiting the text and its culture through the Other's Eye / "I." But this Rewrite pattern of translation needs more adequate mechanisms to transfer one culture into another language and avoid the constraints imposed by the power of the Subject that hinders the reading, rethinking, and interpreting of the text and is, frequently, hovering around and behind any translation activity.*

Keywords: *Eurocentric logic, otherness, postcolonial studies, postcolonial theory of translation, hegemonic language.*

Introduction

It is commonly acknowledged that postcolonial theory is made to exist in order to re-conceptualize and revisit literary criticism so that to give it further philosophical insights into the manner critics and literary scholars try to redirect their intention and challenge the dichotomy of the Subject / Object relationships

based on the logocentric, hegemonic criticism of Europe. In the words of Radha Chakravarty:

Beyond the conventional binaries of colonizer / colonized, First and Third Worlds, or the global North and South, there lies a spectrum of other issues that postcolonial theory needs to address, if it is to survive as a relevant mode of transformative thought and practice. (2017, p. 39)

The critic Chantal Zabus states that:

Looking at the effects of colonialism in postcolonial texts written not only in English but other world languages in a world where the notion of “one language, one nation” no longer obtains is an urgent task. (2015, p. 01)

Postcolonial theory of translation has come out of the conceptualization of the dialogic tension between colonizer / colonized; Subject / Object, and the like.

Deconstructing and reconstructing a text is, in many instances, a matter of reducing or exaggerating its transfer to the target. Whether colonizing or decolonizing the text, there is, frequently, a personal ideology behind it. No translation is ever innocent. Reproducing the text is, in a postcolonial context, rewriting it, i.e., subjugating it to the will and intention of the translator, who is, subsequently, subject to some sensibilities, such as culture, ideology, and intentionality. Jean-Marc Moura claims that: “It is deemed that the traveler really writes, while the sedentary writer only re-writes and otherwise suffocates among too many texts” (2015, p. 21). But rewriting is transferring a text from one language to another. Such transfer is frequently cultural. Here lies the difficulty in reproducing the culture of the source text in the target. In the words of Dia Sulaibia: “Instead of debating the accuracy of a translation based on linguistic criteria, translators and translation scholars are tending to consider how a text works in its culture, whether SL culture or TL culture” (2012, p. 24).

Culture and Translation: A Postcolonial Perspective

No translation is ever possible if language is devoid of its cultural context. Whatever the ingenuity of the translator/writer, who, intentionally or unintentionally, disregards culture, falls into a process of estrangement and cannot manage to reproduce what the text evokes or/and suggests. The translator should know the nation-colonies' cultures before any kind of representation and/or domestication. He has to have a fair knowledge and understanding of “how the formerly colonized perceive themselves, their culture, and their place in the world as far as possible through their own agency, especially through their literature and other creative expression” (Briault-Manus, 2015, p. 48). Translation without

culture seems to be impossible! *BUT*: Which culture do we produce when we translate a text? Is it that of the Subject or that of the Object? Is it that of the Thingifier / Subject or the thingified / Other?

The complexity of translation, then, lies in the dialogical tension between what is in the original source and what is supposed to be in the target. In other words, the translation of an original text could be biased, mainly when it is seen through a Eurocentric “I” – an “I” that considers himself as a Subject and the Other as an Object. Postcolonial studies, along with translation studies, have contested the hegemonic power of the colonizer, who has reduced the Other to an agent who thinks and speaks through the language of the Subject. In his article about African literature and the impact of the English language in shaping thought and culture, Briault-Manus points out that:

Postcolonial studies, focusing mainly on literature in the European languages of imperialist hegemony, has barely contested the anomalous colonialist construct of “African” literature, which reduces over two thousand languages and cultures of that vast continent to what has been conveyed in metropolitan languages for the consumption of Western – and local but Western-educated minority – readerships. (2015, p. 51)

Here lies the complexity of the matter: the manner to approach the text and the tools (which are almost European) used to approach it! This adapted tool is a façade of a colonial discourse used as a method of interpreting for the sake of translation. This is an ambivalence *per se*. Bill Ashcroft, et al. state that: “Ambivalence also characterizes the way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time” (2007, p. 10). They further extend that:

The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values – that is, “mimic” the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery.... The effect of this ambivalence (the simultaneous attraction and repulsion) is to produce a profound disturbance of the authority of colonial discourse. (Ibidem)

In the same vein, Keith Phetlhe acknowledges the impact the colonial discourse has on interpretation as well as on meaning transfer in translation. She points out the importance of not only appropriating the tools used for the discourse but further abrogating and decolonizing it and “cleansing” it of the relics of the West. She says:

Translation must be decolonized as a practice, especially when it is used as a vehicle for cultural productions such as literature and film... It simply refers to challenging and deconstructing the orthodoxy that has established translation as a

practice based on the assumptions of mainstream colonial influences. (2020, pp. 48-49)

In the same context, Ali Ghulam maintains that:

In this system [of Euro-binary logic], the colonizer and the colonized are bound in a relationship that shapes their destinies in a particular way. The power of colonial discourse binds the latter on former's terms and gives license to the former as powerful to organize the social system... It reflects the functioning of power in constructing and maintaining the binary structure in the discourse. (2009, p. 44)

But abrogation and appropriation seem to be backed by ideology. The latter has a hegemonic power over the “Other” in the process of transferring.

Translation as Rewrite, Manipulation and Cultural Transfer

Rewriting an original is a kind of manipulation, which is rooted in the intentionality of the translator and the way he conceives the text to be translated. Furthermore, this rewrite could be conducted by some norms, more than linguistic restriction, so that it becomes a text that adapts with the target needs and cultures. Ghulam states that: “The act of translation is not a transparent process that reflects the socio-cultural realities of source text; rather, it appears to be an activity that represents the source text culture to target text culture.” (2009, p. 59) So, according to Ghulam, translation is supposed to use a strategy that takes into account the social and cultural basics of the target. This fact makes him abrogate and appropriate the source text by contextualizing it within the target space. Ambivalence in the new text makes it hybrid: it is a text whose center is marginalized and restructured around a new pattern imposed by culture, ideology, and the like.

Hybridity is a word coined by Homi Bhabha, which is rather cross-cultural. For Novita Dewi: “Hybridity took to mean cross-cultural exchange and the political implication thereof that characterizes postcolonial literature, and second, the strategy of translating postcolonial literature, mindful of the linguistic, literary, and cultural interface” (2016, p. 70) . But, paradoxically, hybridity gives birth to a third text: a “diasporic” text – a text of intra-texts. In other words, there is no stable source text, and the hybrid is ever anew!

Ashcroft, et al. claim that both the source and the target cultures are in perpetual tension and contending one another within a discourse, which becomes, *de facto*, ambivalent and multilayered. They say:

*The concept is related to **hybridity** because, just as ambivalence “decentres” authority from its position of power, so that authority may also become hybridized*

Translation of Culture/Culture in Translation: A Postcolonial Perspective

when placed in a colonial context in which it finds itself dealing with, and often inflected by, other cultures. (2007, p. 11).

For Shalmalee Palekar, engagement in translation is rather risky since it deconstructs and disrupts the pattern of the text for the sake of transferability. He writes:

It is important to search for the best ways available for deconstructing colonialist and oppressive narratives, and to engage ethically with the subject matter at hand, to show the “infinitely varied inflections of the postcolonial situation”... And it is precisely here that translators can step in / mediate to disrupt homogeneity, to warn against myths of purity, to show origins as always already fissured. (2001, pp. 78-79)

In the above quote, Palekar has proposed some mechanisms that enable the translator transfer the linguistic patterns and the cultural bases. He suggests deconstruction and reconstruction in the engagement of meaning transfer. But, does this method work? There is no certainty because of the intentionality and the bias of the translator in attempting the text.

Postcolonial Theory and Translation: Subject vs. Otherness

The fulcrum around which the postcolonial translation theory revolves is culture. It is the culture that pilots and conducts the text during translation. Sherry Simon claims that: “In fact, the postcolonial condition implies an unceasing flow of cultural traffic, but this flow operates according to different time schemes and achieves differing degrees of equivalence. Detailed studies of specific translating situations provide crucial sites through which to view relations of alterity and to understand their complexity.” (2000, p. 15) In the same vein, Natalie Wilmot and Susanne Tietze point out that: “From a translation perspective, postcolonial approaches have a long tradition of explicitly viewing acts of translation to be exercises of power and which necessarily engage with the politics of representation.” (2021, p. 34) Simon further explains the complexity of translation, pointing out the importance of the new cultural territories and geographies in the act of translation/rewrite. She says:

For translation studies and literary study in general, adopting a postcolonial frame means enlarging the map which has traditionally bound literary and cultural studies. It means moving beyond the boundaries of Europe and North America, and following more expansive itineraries, moving into new territories. But this excursion into new domains of culture – India, Africa, South America, Asia – must take into account the profound scars of colonialism and its sequels, scars which have shaped not only its victims but also its perpetrators. And so ‘we’ must understand our own place on this map. (2000, p. 13)

So, translation via postcolonial theory clashes with the Subject, and its linguistic proponents are deeply rooted in the text! The Other who tries to alter the text with respect to its core and the precepts of the target creates a kind of dialogism which makes the text, either too closer to the “Subject” or too far from “Him”. Here, in both cases, the text is made another text and loses its effectiveness-its own entity. The translator is condemned to be a good negotiator: he tries to demonstrate his ability to respect the core and consciously reshuffles the necessities and requirements of the needs of the target text! This *force des choses* is a kind of re-reading for the sake of rewriting and reproducing what the text is in its colonial context, and what it should be in the context of the postcolonial – the eye / “I” of the Other. In other words, interpreting, for the sake of translating, creates a kind of tension in negotiation, between the Other and the Subject. The text obliges the translator to find a way through this binary, which is the crux of translation.

So, the tension here is between the identity of the Subject and that of the Other; the language of the original and that of the target. Language vehicles culture and ideology; its transfer, thus, is problematic. Susan Bassnett, through the words of Sruthi B. Gupta, claims that:

Non-European nations assert their national identity through literature, long kept at the bay by European theoreticians as “inferior” works... One significant factor which has its influence on the very act of reading, writing, discussing the literature, theory, methodology form a post-colonial space is the concern of production and circulation of “knowledge”. Most of the theories, applications, and methodologies still carry colonial legacies. (2017, p. 391)

Gupta further maintains that: “Post-colonial studies has to go beyond the binary of colonial-post colonial where postcolonial can be a critical contribution to decode neo-colonial manifestations and existing and emerging configurations of power and knowledge within colonial and post colonial.” (2017, pp. 391-92)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak uses the term “subalternity” as a way to read the text for the sake of translation. The subaltern steps beyond the established methods, which are almost hegemonic and fashioned by the colonial: “The idea of universalism,” Gupta maintains, “can be seen as a crafty way to maintain the supreme position of the west” (2017, p. 393). Identity, in general, is characteristically related to culture and its different layers: tradition, morality and religion. Subsequently, postcolonial production in art, literature and translation is prominently dominated by culture – the culture of the one who produces: the European. Here comes the matter. In the words of Notiva Dewi: “No theoretical concept arising from one culture can be transposed unproblematically to different

cultures without considering the limits of its applicability.” (2016, p. 70) Thus, postcolonial theory, in general, and of translation, in particular, has to subvert and obliquely look and account for textuality and its literary intertwinements.

Cultural identity is the corner-stone in postcolonial theory of translation. Culture indicates the identity of the translator / and his awareness of his community. He looks at the text through this sense of belonging. In the words of J. A. Naudé: “The implication for translation is that cultural words and concepts are utilised in the target text (i.e. the technique of foreignisation) to allow the clear demarcation of each cultural group. The terms *resistancy* and *resistance* are used by Venuti (1995) to refer to the strategy of translating a literary text in such a way that it retains something of its foreignness” (2002, p. 53).

But, if the translator challenges the source text in favour of the new – the target, can we dare say that it is a translation? Naudé maintains that:

A resistive approach to translation in practice may involve either choosing to translate a text that challenges the contemporary canon of foreign literature in the target language, or it may mean that the translator uses unidiomatic expressions and other linguistically and culturally alienating features in the translated text in order to create an impression of foreignness and provide readers of the translation with an alien reading experience. (2002, p. 5)

But biased translation often leads to the misrepresentation of the Other / Orient, the colonized. “Colonizer’s biased translation of the native’s culture,” Pratibha Kumari points out, “did an irreparable damage to the image of the Orient that persisted for long and could not be corrected until recently with the advent of the cultural turn” (2017, p. 162). The interplay of the cultural element in translation dismantles the Eurocentric logic as the only referent and challenges the power relationship between the original text and its translation. Maria Remerios Fernandez Ruiz, et al. state that:

It is increasingly on the local level that differences are articulated, negotiated, contested and defended in relation to the process of history... The usually manifest theory is a kind of rewrite of a classical/ colonial text within a postcolonial pattern in target language, resisting to the colonial power of the text and its layers and presenting its contexts as exploitative and prejudicial. (2019, p. 56)

Ideology comes also into play during the choice of the text and the strategy of reading it. The translator is free to select the text for the sake of publication and the importance of the text for the target audience. Amos Wedhowerti and Brigitta Sita Oentari acknowledge the amount of danger which affects translation. They say:

This ideology might even bring controversy to the product of translation. The translator who is way too faithful to the Target Readers might do harm to the culture and the Source Text itself. The ideology of this faithful translator will put aside the minority culture, all the more the oppressed culture. (2020, p. 227)

No one way is tolerated, as no many ways are acceptable. In other words, the subversive component of the postcolonial text is a key aspect that must be taken into consideration in order to preserve the text from its “re-colonisation”. Hassan Ou-Hssata claims that:

It is in this type of colonial contexts when translation can be used, both as a colonizing method and a form of resistance by the colonized, so that the translation metaphor is used to better understand colonial power relations, limitations of cultural transfers and the problem of differences and otherness. (2020, p. 6)

So, the postcolonial translation versions in translation cause harm to the text more than its safety and effectiveness. Colonialism has, we might say, gone, but neocolonialism has emerged with new strategies and façades. Translation has become its first victim. Its supremacy on the field is very remarkable in all fields of translation; even the Subject – the Colonizer translates for the other – the Colonized within his source language, preserving, as it were, his European culture in the target language. What the translator, then, is supposed to do is to be aware of his background and the background of the author of the source text. In the process of representation, the latter renders the Other alien and different. In the words of Wedhowerti and Oentari:

Through observing the postcolonial-translation, the awareness towards cultural and historical differences might be promoted and superiority on the European languages and culture might be reduced. By understanding the cross culture, translator will be able to produce an acceptable translation that considers both source background and target background without being disturbed by the superiority and inferiority in colonial practices. (2020, p. 228)

Translation vs. Eurocentric Discourse

The crux of the matter in the process of translation is the nature of truth attained by the dominant power of the language source and its cultural and ideological interlinks. The text mirrors the Colonizer looking at the Colonized as an Inferior Other. This nature of truth tries to make the reader believe in such truth as absolute and right. The role of the translator is to de-colonize the text and look “faithfully” within the language of the stereotyped Other in order to be closer to the reality evidenced in the text. Ghulam maintains that:

It is evident that the west used the process of rewriting as a tool for the representations of Europe’s Others for its cultural dominance. This ideologically

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controlled knowledge constructs the west as civilized and superior but the colonized people as uncivilized and inferior. This body of knowledge (colonial translations) was constructed not only to construct the colonized as peripheral, uncultured, sentimental and monstrous, but it has also been undertaken to make colonizers well aware of the culture of the natives to administer them in a better way. (2009, p. 3)

But, through the linguistic web of the source text, there are many sub-discourses related to the dialogical interplay of the text with intentionality and the strategy of reading. The translator's oblique interpretative investigation tries to rethink and reconceive the "real" image of the colonized through binary opposition. In this context, Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi state that: "Translation does not happen in a vacuum but in a continuum; it is not an isolated act, it is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer. Moreover, translation is a highly manipulative activity that involves all kinds of stages in that process of transfer across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (1999, p. 2). Such boundaries are embedded within the postcolonial theory and its philosophical foundation: postcolonialism is a mode of thinking and interpreting through binaries and obliqueness. Alexandra Milostivaya *et al.* point out that:

Post-colonialism is a style of thinking as the colonized and the colonizers, as well as methodological tools for the analysis of post-colonial discourse, its myths and history, language and landscape, "Self and Others". (2018, p. 4)

Such interpretation and rethinking of the text and the cultural regeneration of both the Subject (who becomes only a cultural agent) and the Other (who is no longer another but, likewise, a cultural holder of a community) become the corner stone of translation and rewrite. In this context, the translator is supposed to be multicultural and mastering different languages. Theo Hermans claims that:

The issues of otherness, representation and the rationale of cross-cultural comparison in a postcolonial world reappear throughout the accounts of practices and theorizings that do not match the category "translation" pure and simple. If different cultures are to be understood on their own terms, translating becomes problematic. Negotiating these problems, however, does not necessarily have to aim at assimilating the alien concepts into one's own vocabulary. (2009, p. 104)

Language vehicles culture, and, in turn, it is articulated by the culture it represents. Stirring inside the core of the text needs negotiation in order to transfer the culture of the source to the one of the target. Bassnett claims that: "Any translation process meaning would have to be negotiated. It is in that process of negotiation that the inequalities of power relationships between cultures comes to the fore" (2014, p. 46).

Constraint, imposed by language universalism, is the real dilemma for the translator to transfer and domesticate the cultural context in the target language, mainly when the local does not possess the global. Simon states that:

Postcolonialism is about rethinking the ways in which cultures relate to one another, recognizing their internal differences and also questioning the poles from which and to which cultural products travel. It makes us increasingly aware of the ways in which hybridity has come to complicate relations of exchange and trouble categories of alterity. The poles of Otherness which supported relations of oppression and contestation have been weakened by the fragmentary nature of contemporary cultural identities. (2000, p. 17)

So, postcolonial theory of translation is essentially based on intercultural exchange and negotiation. Subsequently, in Simon's words: "Translation then is not simply a mode of linguistic transfer but a translangual practice, a writing across languages" (2000, p. 28). Translation, therefore, should not be considered as disorientating, predatory, exploitative, risky and "estranged," but, rather, a kind of challenge for resisting the temptation of the Subject's language and his culture being aware of local / national cultural transgression. Michael Cronin points out that: "Less account has been taken of *translation as resistance* – the ways in which originals can be manipulated, invented or substituted, or the status of the original subverted in order to frustrate the intelligence-gathering activities of the Imperial Agent." (2000, p. 35) This position goes in pace with the response of Alexandra Milostivaya, et al. to translation and the clash of languages, mainly those which do not have the same roots, as Arabic, Anglo-Saxon and Latin. They say: "Colonial and post-colonial processes move and mix the languages of the nations that, in one way or another, affect translatology." (2017, p. 182)

Though the Third Space of H. Bhabha could be a solution for translation, because it is a kind of reconciliation between two cultures, a by-product of a cultural space that unites a world of in-between, it is, nonetheless, very paradoxical and, further, a leap in the dark. This Third Space gives birth to another one (Fourth Space), which is that of the translator, the author of another text with specific cultural perceptions, which are different from that of the original and that of the target. It becomes another creation, less representative of the local and global cultures, more private and very personal: it is a metaphoric world of the translator. In the words of Milostivaya, et al.:

Translatology is no longer seen as the language transformations but the struggle for a new cultural identity... However, the wording of cultural translation refers not only to literary translation that includes two texts in two different languages but also for data transfer term it touches the process and conditions of human migration. A mixture of

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cultures is possible in active migration conditions, which in consequence leads to a change of a language as a reflection of reality. (Ibidem)

So, the new text, in this Fourth Space, is culturally different from the Source Language Text (SLT) and the Target Language Text (TLT). Though it uses some cultural elements from both texts, it, nonetheless, metaphorizes them and makes them a means of representation that could exceed the cultural facts. In other words, cultural elements are not used as facts, but, rather, as symbols that step beyond their common representation.

Postcolonial Theory of Translation and the Translator's Dilemma

Writers transpose culture via language. The text is culturally multi-layered and multi-linguaged: it is, frequently, intertextual. The translator's role is to decode such transposition and metaphorical codes in order to find out the suggested culture(s) the text enfolds. Maria Tymoczko points out that "In the dialectic between source and target cultures the translator is not neutral, but rather engaged in what is at the very least a "symbolic" struggle, that is, a struggle for symbols... Translation becomes a tool of which both oppressor and oppressed can make use" (2000, pp. 255-257). In the same vein, Bassnett maintains that the oppressor via his cultural superiority has undermined others' cultures, and the translators are constrained to look at the text through such superiority. She says:

Translation has been at the heart of the colonial encounter, and has been used in all kinds of ways to establish and perpetuate the superiority of some cultures over others. But now, with increasing awareness of the unequal power relations involved in the transfer of texts across cultures, we are in a position to rethink both the history of translation and its contemporary practice. (2014, p. 16)

The Fourth Space in translation, within the context of postcolonial theory, is the subsequent by-product of the Third Space. In this Fourth Space, the translator, rather, reproduces a metaphorical text, whose roots are both of the source and target cultures: that of the Subject and that of the Other. It generates more signifieds out of one signifier. In this context, Tymoczko underlines the importance of metaphor in translating a text since the latter's language is almost suggestive. She writes:

The penchant for metaphorical speech about post-colonial literature suggests that critics view it as a new literary phenomenon about which we do not as yet know how to speak directly, a type of writing for which we do not as yet have an adequate vocabulary. Because metaphoric speech is cognitively pervasive, a normally harmless and time-honoured linguistic practice, the approach could be extended; metaphors are to hand. (2000, p. 19)

In other words, translation invokes a kind of interpretive activity associated with the suggestiveness of words and expressions the text is composed of. The meaning we get is, frequently, beyond what the writer wants to communicate: the text evokes meanings, which could signify what the reader/translator is intending to find out through his reading. The translator is not the author of the source text; yet, while interpreting for the sake of translation, many layers of meanings come into play. Subsequently, he becomes, in turn, an author of a new text, whose background is the source text and some ingredients of the target culture. Tymoczko maintains that: “The culture or tradition of a post-colonial writer acts as a metatext which is rewritten – explicitly and implicitly, as both background and foreground – in the act of literary creation. The task of the interlingual translator has much in common with the task of the post-colonial writer; where one has a text, however, the other has the metatext of culture itself” (2000, p. 20). In other words, being far from the center, things fall apart because the translator faces a real dilemma: to be truthful to the text, and, at the same time, to reproduce the source thoroughly into the target. So, the only escape from this constraining situation is to use metaphor: the translator suggests and evokes more than says or tells. In the words of Tymoczko:

The two types of textual production [the source text and the translated] converge in many respects; as the metaphor of translation suggests, the transmission of elements from one culture to another across a cultural and/or linguistic gap is a central concern of both these types of intercultural writing and similar constraints on the process of relocation affect both types of texts. (2000, p. 22)

Any translation has its own author, who recreates a text through manipulation of its specificities: its culture and linguistic patterns. So, the translator is somewhere in his work as the writer is in the original text! Rendering a text, then, creates tension between the translator, who claims his product, and the source writer, who is somewhere in the text, yet, marginalized by the rewriting of the text! Dia Sulaibi points out that:

So long that translation is a cultural event, the translator can become a true author, since he has final authority in determining the subject’s meaning in the final version – the TL text – and eventually the TL culture, as well as the original version – the SL text – and eventually the SL culture. (2012, p. 15)

Translation is, frequently, not transparent and further not innocent; it is connected with power operations, which, subsequently, affect the relationship between the text as a source and the text as a target. Such relationship is dialogically related to the nature of the “metropolis” power and its hegemonic dominating language. Jenny Williams states that:

Translation of Culture/Culture in Translation: A Postcolonial Perspective

The colonial power exercises its authority through its own language, and translation becomes a necessity for both the colonizers, in order to impose their will, and for the colonized, in order to understand their new masters and to negotiate the relationship with them. In fact, the translation traffic in the era of empire tends to be in one direction – from the language of the colonizer to the colonized. (2013, p. 56)

Postcolonial theory of translation, then, is a kind of rewrite, a reproduction of the culture of the “colony” via its own language. In the words of Bassett:

The very idea of “writing back” implies a conscious challenge to a dominant power: emergent literatures reclaim colonial languages, reshaping their own versions of those languages and acknowledging the simultaneous presence of other, indigenous languages. Implicit here, however, is the idea of the colony as a translation. For if the colonizing power is the source, the original from which the colony derives, then that colony is de facto a version of the original, a copy, a translation. And the question then becomes how to break the circle that deems a translation to be inferior to its original. (2014, p. 50)

In the same vein, Cristina Sanchez-Martin acknowledges the fact that translation must be manipulative in the sense that the culture of the source and that of the target, in most cases, mainly when domestication is used, are not the same. She says:

The notion of “translation as manipulation” extends the trope of appropriation. Translation [is an act of] rewriting and thus manipulation of an original piece, and hence of its culture. (2017, p. 1)

While Sanchez-Martin adopts manipulation as a tool for translation, Tarek Shamma is in favour of the notion of binary opposition between cultures in translation. According to him, there is no difficulty in translating cultures that are similar. He writes:

The (post)colonial situation is not a unique mode of linguistic or cultural interaction, but one where relations that could otherwise be occulted are crystallized and brought into focus. Yet, it is not difficult to cite many examples where power relations are not the defining element, especially between those cultures that are more or less “similar,” those where there is no recent history of political or military confrontations, or in situations where the power balance does not seem to be dramatically skewed. (2009, p. 187)

But it seems that Shamma has underestimated the commitment of the translator / writer. The postcolonial is a committed “agent” who tries obliquely to find out what the “metropolis” writer hides within the core of the text. Furthermore, the target language that has a specific culture, which is unfamiliar to the source text, creates tension in the process of transfer.

The Fourth Space and the Matter of Cultural Representation

The power relations between the source and the target during the process of transfer create a kind of tension between what the text is in the source and what is supposed to be in the target. Frequently, the translator tries to solve the disparity and constraints via an imaginative heuristic space that is commonly called the Fourth Space. The existence of Four Space in the postcolonial literary transfer is defined by Maria Ruiz, et al. as follows:

[It is] a holistic view of the complex interplay of all agents involved in the reception process... While Bhabha's third space is related to identity, the fourth space is associated with interpretation and representation. The fourth space is an epistemological metaphor located in the postcolonial global imaginary, which represents a country or society with a very limited connection to or experience in a given colonial situation. (2019, p. 61)

The Fourth Space avoids labeling and stereotyping and softens the tension that exists in the source text and the basics of target one. But, can the translator do it without any partiality? So, translation seems to be an illusion because it does not transpose the author's intentionality into the target. In the words of Lawrence Venuti: "The illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translator's effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning. What is so remarkable here is that this illusory effect conceals" (1995, p. 8). This illusory Fourth Space, which, rather, steps beyond the two worlds (The Orient and The West) and overpasses reconciliation avoiding any tension with the Third Space of Bhabha, is generally a space based on imagination and a perception of world beyond tensions and contentions. Eimma Chebinou, in her thesis dissertation about Francophone literature, maintains that the Fourth Space is a necessity for writers to produce their own worlds, which is hovering around their artistic creations. In her study of the novels of the Algerian Leila Sebbbar *Shérazade: 17 ans, brune, frisée, les yeux verts*, of the French Jaqueline Manicom *Mon examen de blanc*, and of the Senegalese Ken Bugul *Le baobab du fou*, she acknowledges that the Fourth Space is neither Algeria, nor France, nor even the hybridity represented in the Third Space, but it is only imaginary. ["Le quatrième espace n'est ni l'Algérie, ni la France, ni la mixité qui représenterait un troisième espace mais un espace imaginaire]" (2015, p. 58). In fictional writing, translation leans more to the Fourth Space, where a world in this world is created. It is a space, which is not forced within Bhabha's Third Space to mix up or represent other's culture to the target in a very faithful way, but, rather, a space where the cultural textuality is metaphorized within a new texture.

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam is the first illustrative example of the difficulty in translating texts, which are not “metropolitan”: a text that belongs to an Other who is “regressive” and “uncivilized”, regardless of the glory of his past. It shows the tension and clash existing between two cultures and two geographical spaces, which are dissimilar in many instances. Supremacy of power has come into play: all what is not European is deemed to be inferior even if this non-European has a very rich past. The Quatrains of Khayyam has been translated via Eurocentric philosophy, which manifests itself through the supremacy of European language over the rest of the world. *The Rubaiyyat* has become famous due to the translations of Edward Fitzgerald and John Pasha. It has become a good art when it has been translated. It has been remolded and reworked artistically so that it fits the hegemonic culture: the European! In the words of Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi: “*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* could accuse the Persians of artistic incompetence and suggest that their poetry became art only when translated into English” (1999, p. 6). Bassnett and Trivedi go further pointing out the priori assumption, which asserts that “Translation was a means both of containing the artistic achievements of writers in other languages and of asserting the supremacy of the dominant, European culture” (*Ibidem*).

The translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* by Edward Fitzgerald (1857-59) into English is very problematic. It does not “faithfully” transfer Khayyam’s thoughts into English: “The problem seems to be a question of meaning and how does the translator render the quatrains’ expressions and words into English” (Bouregbi, 2016, p. 15). As acknowledged by C. Eliot Norton in a comment on the translation, there seems to be a new creative work of art than translation. Fitzgerald has rendered “the Persian artistic incompetence” into art. Norton writes:

He [Fitzgerald] is to be called – translator – only in default of a better word, one which should express the poetic transfusion of a poetic spirit from one language to another, and the representation of the ideas and images of the original in a form not altogether diverse from their own, but perfectly adopted to the new conditions of time, place, custom, and the habit of the mind in which they appear. (1869, pp. 575-576)

Furthermore, and with grandiloquent words, the critic reviewer of *Lippincott’s Magazine*, Edward Hall points out the element of adaptation of the other culture and beliefs in English and praises the skill and the manner Fitzgerald adapts what is not English, so that it fits the taste of the English. He writes: “He [Fitzgerald] has gone far to prove that the acceptableness among us of Oriental

poetry may depend very largely on the skill with which it is transplanted into our language” (1875, p. 261).

Contrariwise, some other critics have put in doubt such a transfer. What Fitzgerald has done is only reproducing his personal understanding and interpretation of Omar Khayyam and matching it with what goes with culture, rather than the quatrains themselves. He has even adopted a meter which is not Persian. Speaking of faithfulness to the text, the critic Edward Heron-Allen maintains that in Fitzgerald’s translation the first stanza of the quatrain is his own—not of Khayyam! (1899, p. 5). Fitzgerald, himself, in a letter to Mrs Cowell in 1867, acknowledged that he did not respect the whole quatrains; he has, instead, mashed and fused many verses together to render some meanings understandable culturally in England. He wrote: “You know I have translated none literally, and have generally mashed up two-or more-into one” (Qtd in Terhume, 1947, p. 229). So, as it is noticeable, the Orient is translated in the image of the West—the cultural referent. In other words, translation is identified as “the founding concept of empire” (Cheyfitz, 1991, p. 120).

Another example suggested by Cristina Sanchez-Martin is very illustrative. Sanchez-Martin discusses the meaning of the words “choice” in M. Kathleen de Onis when discussing reproductive rights in the USA. De Onis contends that this word fails to represent the Spanish-speaking Latinas because it does not hold the same meaning in their tradition and everyday use. She claims that words:

created from a monolingual English perspective do not align with the identities of diverse cultural groups... [The word “Choice”] does not reflect the complexity of the situations in which many Latinas have to make decisions regarding their reproductive health, since it does not take into consideration aspects such as socioeconomic status and cultural values and is associated with privilege. (2017, p. 03)

So, linguistic and cultural ambiguity could not enable the word selected to convey the meaning needs in a community, which has different beliefs and traditions. That is, imposing such word on the Latinas is, purposefully, hegemonic and ideological.

Another illustrative example is that of Khetam Shraideh. In his article “Postcolonial Translation Studies: The Translator’s Apolitical Impartiality in *Men in the Sun*,” Shraideh tries to discuss the impact of transferring the short story (رجال في الشمس) of the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani into English by Hilary Kilpatrick (“Men in the Sun”). He has noticed that the translator, frequently, fails to reproduce the meaning of the text. In order to solve the problem of ambiguity, Kilpatrick uses footnotes for clarification. Here lies the problem! Does the reader concentrate on the text and its insinuation, or does he look for footnotes?

Furthermore, footnoting is a clever way to conduct the reader to the intention of the translator more than the text itself. This recourse to footnoting shows the impact that the hegemonic power (the Eurologic) has on the translator. The text is made to be seen through an English Eye “I”. In page 55 of the translated text, she has used footnotes in order to explain the signification of the term “Hatim”. She writes: “Hatim, of the Bedouin tribe Taiy, is proverbial among the Arabs for his limitless generosity and hospitality” (1999, p. 55).

Kanafani is a committed writer, who belongs to the left wing of Palestinian Organization for the Independence of Palestine: he was the spokesman of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). In one way or another, his stories are supposed to be coloured with his political commitment and ideology. Here lies the matter for Kilpatrick. She is constrained to locate the short story in its social and political background of the author. Shraideh maintains that:

Due to the political thematic scheme of the novella [“Men in the Sun”], every part holds several shades of meanings other than the surface meaning... Accordingly, to capture all the shades of meaning, we need to go beyond the textual level and contextualize the novella in its historical and political settings. (2018, p. 116)

But Shraideh has laid us astray when he tries to explain a word, which is absent in the original text. The word is ‘غراب’ (“ghurab” / crow), but in the original there is only ‘طائر أسود’ (“black bird”). Though it could insinuate to “ghurab”, it does not, in any way, mean “crow”. Kanafani has used the word “black” and “black bird”, not “blackbird” as wrongly quoted by Shraideh in his article (*Ibidem*). The use of “black bird” is a motif that unites the different parts of novella so that it becomes a whole.

“Black bird” (two words) and “blackbird” (one word) are two different terms that have different significations: the former means any bird which is black, and it could be “the crow” as it could be another bird, whereas the latter is a special kind of bird:

A New World songbird with a strong pointed bill. The male has black plumage that is iridescent or has patches of red or yellow... Crows, ravens, and blackbirds are all members of the same order, but crows and ravens are in a different family than are blackbirds. To make things more confusing, not all blackbirds are black. The blackbird family includes the Red-Winged Blackbird, Yellow-Headed Blackbird, Brown-Headed Cowbird, Bobolinks, Meadowlarks, Orioles, Grackles, and other birds with “blackbird” in their name. (Cokatoo Creations)

So, the word is suggestive, and it could mean many things. The translation of Kilpatrick, then, is right and fits the context of the story. In other words, Kanafani

does not, probably, mean 'غراب' ("ghurab" / crow) but he, suggestively, insinuates to it for the sake of metaphor.

Kanafani has used 'طائر أسود' (black bird) in many instances:

“وكان ثمة طائر أسود يخلق عاليا وحيدا” (ص 8).
“والسما تتهج و الطائر الأسود ما زال يحوم على غير هدى” (ص 14-15).

Kilpatrick's translation seems to be acceptable:

“...there was a **black bird** circling high up, alone and aimless” (“Men in the Sun,” 1999, p. 22) and “...and still the **black bird** is still circling aimlessly (“Men in the Sun,” 1999, p. 25).

What we notice in this article is that Shraideh has neglected the suggestiveness of Arabic and the texture of the source text: it could mean “ghurab / crow”, but it does not only mean this! Kanafani has evoked the idea of **blackness** and the **black bird**, probably, to reveal something to the reader! The term “black bird” / “طائر أسود” does not have a cultural background to translate it; it can rather be understood as a metaphorical stance to suggest something evoked by this **colour** and this **black bird**. This can be considered as a Fourth Space. In other words, it is not a matter of appropriation and abrogation, a matter of cultural transfer; the term is more suggestive and seems to be the key motif of the short story.

These three illustrative instances have shown that the significance and contribution of the postcolonial theory of translation is very important in the domain of translation; yet, it faces many obstacles. We still have the empowerment of the hegemonic culture of the referent, on the one side, and the challenging other, who wants to abrogate and subvert the text's culture so that it fits his space – his intentionality, his fourth space, on the other. As noticed in the examples above, there is a challenge in the conceptualization and choice of words that fit the transfer. The process of translation can reduce or exaggerate in the process of transfer.

Conclusion

Post-colonial theory of translation has come into existence in order to revise the relationships existing between Eurocentric Subject and the stereotyped Other: between the dominating power of the language source and what it holds as a hegemonic culture and the marginalized one. It comes to put in doubt the existing parameters, which serve as referent for any act of translation. In other words, it has come to rewrite through the Other “I” what has already been furnished as culture in the source text. Being so, the translator avoids the hegemonic normative

standards and makes of the text an autonomous being, whose source is negotiated for the sake of reconciliation. The translator should master and maintain his skill as an academic agent, who tries to comply with the material of the source text: no distortion is ever allowed in the process of transfer. No loss of information, no use of unrelated words and expression, and, further, no context alterations are permitted. Contrariwise, the translated text becomes an ideological/cultural denial of the source.

In the above-discussed illustrations, what is commonly noticed is the attempt to render meanings of the original. This process has become very constraining due to the impact of the priori assumption the translator has in his mind: the target text is biased. Translation from the source to the target seems to be more, or less, than what the text is. Political beliefs, cultural biases, and intentionality have become tools to use in the interpretation of the source text; thus, pertinence in negotiation waters down.

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The Face of Evil. From the “Banality of Evil” and the “Falsification of the Good” to the Falsification of Freedom*

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Whoever says that man is born to freedom utters a sentence that has no meaning.
(Joseph de Maistre)

Abstract

Decoded in the hermeneutic key of such syntagms as “banality of evil” and “falsification of the good”, twentieth-century totalitarianisms display their true power of moral destruction. The analyses of thinkers such as Hannah Arendt and Alain Besançon are two ways of understanding human nature subject to the aggression of moral violence, whose primary consequence is the annulment of the freedom of action and, even more seriously, of conscience. Projecting, retrospectively, the violent lesson of the twentieth century on the legend of the Grand Inquisitor, Dostoevsky’s prophetism, construed in its anthropologic dimension, may round off the perspective on totalitarian thinking, which, despite having been presented as Humanism, had the falsification of freedom as its main objective. It is what I aim to illustrate in this paper, with the conviction that any undertaking of this nature is, in the present-day context, necessary for becoming aware of the need for continual spiritual resignification of the wounds that the totalitarian ideologies and global crises leave on the body of humankind, consuming from its very fundamentals.

Keywords: “banality of evil”, “falsification of the good”, falsification of freedom, totalitarianism, the face of evil.

The face of evil in its “banality”

Not all consequences that result from Hannah Arendt’s theory illustrated in the syntagm “banality of evil” have been fully formulated. In this respect, perhaps the interview she gave to Joachim Fest in 1964 (Arendt, 2013) sheds light and resumes her thesis from *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*

* This paper was presented, under the title “The Face of Evil and Russian Prophetism. World History between the Assumption of Freedom and the Fulfilment of the Good”, at the scientific manifestation *Zilele academice clujene* (13-15 October 2022), organized by the “George Baritiu” History Institute, “Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca and the Centre for Population Studies, in the panel *The banality or exceptionality of evil? On repetition in philosophy and history.*

(1963/2008), in which she analyses a human typology specific to totalitarian regimes. The thesis of the banality of evil asserts that Eichmann was neither a fanatic nor a sociopath but a usual and banal person, who justified his actions based on clichés rather than his own thinking and was motivated by the ethics of duty rather than ideology. The banality refers to his actions being motivated by his status as a clerk in a bureaucratic system: he obeyed orders in an unexceptional manner out of complacency. The themes of responsibility and justification of the decision to remain a part of the organization and functioning of the criminal system are encoded by Arendt in a laconic yet suggestive answer: “Those who did go along always justified themselves the same way, as we can see. They always said, “We only stayed on so that things wouldn’t get any worse.” Right? But, well – this justification should be rejected once and for all – it couldn’t have got any worse.” (Arendt, 2013, p. 45) Arendt also clarifies the theme of complicity and degrees of guilt, mentioning the matter of weakness in a totalitarian system. The crime, even in the machine of the bureaucratic system, is understood as an action mode that many people like Eichmann accepted and practiced. Just as many, perhaps even more, saw themselves unably weak in the isolation imposed at a mass level by the system. Arendt considers that “there was no possibility of resisting, since they were all isolated, since they didn’t belong together anywhere, since not even a dozen people could get together, as it were, and trust one another” (Arendt, 2013, p. 46). This perspective on the phenomenon of weakness is related to the way in which she understands the nature of politics as a space of freedom, on the one hand, where people freely express their opinions, and as an agreement with oneself, on the other hand, for fear of the conflict with the self. In the typology of Eichmann, who justified his participation in the crime administration through the ethics of duty (*I was sitting at my desk, doing my job*), Arendt notices the elimination of the person from the very intimacy of self-dialogue, thus annulling the conscience of responsibility, which only occurs when one thinks about what one is doing. Eichmann is not a typical criminal, he does not kill out of passion, and he has no personal agenda: he kills from a safe distance, as a cog in the machine – which actually makes him infinitely eviller, “an incomparably more fearsome type of person than any ordinary murderer” (Arendt, 2013, p. 49).

I will not dwell on the commentary on Arendt’s “banality of evil.” However, worth mentioning is the methodological principle by virtue of which we should understand this thesis that has sprung so much controversy. We cannot read *Eichmann in Jerusalem* separated from the rest of her oeuvre as if there had been two conceptions – a strictly ethical and a strictly political one. On the contrary, the

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two views must be regarded in complementarity, each highlighting the subtleties of the other.

This principle also integrates Hannah Arendt’s doctoral dissertation on Augustine in the unity of her oeuvre. Augustine’s model, *caritas – cupiditas*, transferred to Eichmann’s case, explains “the paradox of evil which is not radical but pedestrian, bourgeois, and seemingly rooted in everydayness” (Arendt, 1996, p. 120). In the commenters’ view, the Augustinian take on evil – *cupiditas* – is the point where Arendt may have returned to for expanding the analysis on the banality of evil. For Augustine, *appetitus* is the connection of the individual with reality. It has two forms of manifestation, *caritas* (which ensures the rebuilding of the world based on shared values) and *cupiditas* (by which the world manifests as materiality and strength). For Arendt, *cupiditas* manifests in human nature as a habit that gives man the sentiment of belonging to the world, preventing him from remembering the true source of his being. *Cupiditas* is the wilful slippage of the spirit under the rule of habit, which has become “second nature” (Arendt, 1996, p. 82). Eichmann seems to embody the human type fallen under *cupiditas* construed as a habit that cancels moral judgment: “Augustine’s paradigm of immobilized will entrapped in habituated worldliness could perhaps be applied to Eichmann, the routinely civilized bureaucrat incapable of the critical distance necessary for moral judgment” (Arendt, 1996, pp. 120-1). We thus see that the annulment of moral judgment must be placed in relation to the misappropriation of Kantian moral philosophy that Eichmann appeals to during the trial, asserting that he has abided by the principles of Kantian moral all his life and made the ethics of duty the rule for his actions: “Capitulating to the world of *das Man* or the “they”, and using philosophy as an instrumental justification, was clearly a subversion of moral reasoning and, significantly, a corruption of Kant’s philosophy” (Arendt, 1996, p. 191).

Totalitarianisms

If we look at the twentieth century from the other side, that of communist totalitarianism, we probably cannot identify an event as important as Eichmann’s trial to help us make sense of the nature of the ideology that enthralled Eastern Europe for half a century. Perhaps, still in the ethical mode, but at the opposite end of an imaginary measurement, the extreme act of Jan Palach, who set himself on fire in Wenceslas Square on January 16, 1969, to protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia, could be a similarly significant event, if we take into account the confession of Jaroslava Maserova, who asserts that,

It was not so much in opposition to the Soviet occupation, but the demoralization that was setting in, that people were not only giving up but giving in. And he wanted to stop that demoralization. I think the people in the street, the multitude of people in the street, silent, with sad eyes, serious faces, which when you looked at those people you understood that everyone understands, all the decent people who were on the verge of making compromises. (Radio Prague International, online)

The demoralization Maserova associates with Palach's act has, I think, much more profound meaning in the context of the way in which the totalitarian regimes (nazism and communism) understood to exercise their power. It is also Arendt who notes, in her monumental *Origins of Totalitarianism*, the brand-new mechanism which sets the foundation of what we can decode as *de*-moralization, in the sense of depriving of the fundamentals of the ethics on which laws have been constituted in the traditional governing systems: totalitarian ideologies alter the meaning of the term "law", in that if it "changed its meaning: from expressing the framework of stability within which human actions and motions can take place, it became the expression of the motion itself." (Arendt, 1962, p. 464). The Law – of Nature, in the case of nazism, and of History, in the case of communism – by which totalitarian regimes assume and exercise power, is the law of killing and is effected through terror, whose purpose is the manufacturing of *new man*, of a new human genus, a purpose for which the individual is sacrificed in the name of the species. The mechanism that the two totalitarian ideologies trigger with a view to rewriting the new code in the gene of humanity is described with microscopic preciseness:

Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action. As such, terror seeks to "stabilize" men in order to liberate the forces of nature or history. It is this movement which singles out the foes of mankind against whom terror is let loose, and no free action of either opposition or sympathy can be permitted to interfere with the elimination of the "objective enemy" of History or Nature, of the class or the race. Guilt and innocence become senseless notions; "guilty" is he who stands in the way of the natural or historical process which has passed judgment over "inferior races," over individuals "unfit to live," over "dying classes and decadent peoples." Terror executes these judgments, and before its court, all concerned are subjectively innocent: the murdered because they did nothing against the system, and the murderers because they do not really murder but execute a death sentence pronounced by some higher tribunal. The rulers themselves do not claim to be just or wise, but only to execute historical or natural laws; they do not apply laws, but execute a movement in accordance with its inherent law. Terror is lawfulness, if law is the law of the movement of some suprahuman force, Nature or History. (Arendt, 1962, p. 465)

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Arendt’s intuitions, outlined in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and included in the theory on the banality of evil, can be related to those of Alain Besançon who, in a dialogue with Marius Stan and Vladimir Tismăneanu (contributors.ro), asserted that, far from the idea that the problem of totalitarianism is the abolition of the distinction between good and evil, it resides in the falsification of the good, which consists in “taking courageous, devoted, well-oriented individuals and making them commit crimes with a clear conscience, without even being aware that they are criminals.” What Arendt designated by elimination of the person from the intimacy of self-dialogue, for Besançon, is the distancing of the consciousness of doing evil that the criminal assumes as an effect of the moral destruction whose instrument is this falsification of the good (Besançon, 2007, p. 40). What Arendt expressed with the idea that total terror, as the essence of totalitarian regimes, is a band of iron that holds individuals “so tightly together that it is as though their plurality had disappeared into One Man of gigantic dimensions” (Arendt, 1962, pp. 465-6) – an abstract entity that embodies in history the idea of *new man*, Alain Besançon places “outside the human as if we had been faced with a negative transcendence” (Besançon, 2007, p. 40), assimilated with the idea of demonical. At the end of the day, man’s annihilation as a person and the imposition of an ideological abstraction on humankind opens, in the history of the twentieth century, the path of radical evil through the totalitarian regimes that Leszek Koakowski characterized with the formula “the Devil embodied in History”, a century whose meaning cannot be understood “if we do not acknowledge the uniqueness of the revolutionary left and right experiments in reshaping the human condition in the name of presumably inexorable historical laws.” (Tismăneanu, 2012, p. 18)

In what the relation to Nature and History is concerned, the ethics of nazism has at its core the idea that the good consists in “the restoration of a natural order corrupted by history” (Besançon, 2007, p. 40), and this task is encoded in the fate of the white race. In the case of communism, nature is the environment in which man is fulfilled and will be perfected under the strength of historical dramatic progress because “dialectical and historical materialism ensures the unity of nature and history” (Besançon, 2007, pp. 48-49) and justifies the destruction of the old order, understood as a sacrifice that generates the new (Besançon, 2007, p. 50).

The face of evil in the “falsification of the good”

Besançon’s thesis is that the falsification of the good is more profound in communism than in nazism because the moral split between crime and good is

much more diffuse than in the case of nazism. The left-wing ideological lie establishes a continuity between the traditional and the new ethics, which, for a large number of adepts, will never be challenged – this gives birth to the argument of those who consider that, despite its numerous crimes, communism is still frequentable. Moreover, the lie must be continual because, once capitalism is eliminated, socialism is delayed. Against this background, moral destruction is almost complete: “a universe of counterfeits meant to substitute the true one. Thus, an atmosphere of generalized lies builds up whilst the facts move away from the words that have to describe them. The good asserts itself frantically to deny the reality of evil.” (Besançon, 2007, p. 57)

What Besançon terms *pedagogy of lies* is rebuilt in the following architecture: the party is at the center and, under the commands of ideology, must eliminate the class enemy – in the name of utopia, the moral conscience is intoxicated to accept the destruction of several categories of people; when it is noted that the “ritual decimation” has not met its aims, a step further is taken from utopia to the preservation of power and a second terror is unleashed, whose aim is to fully control people’s lives and minds (“everyone informs against everyone; everyone betrays serially”); at the third stage, that of safeguarding against the eternal purging, the party “is content with the routine management of its power and security. It no longer believes in ideology but continues to speak its language and makes sure that this language, which it knows to be mendacious, is the only one used because it represents the sign of its dominance. It accumulates privileges and benefits. It turns into a caste. It enters generalized corruption.” (Besançon, 2007, p. 58)

In this architecture of the totalitarian system, the pedagogy of lies, accurately described by Besançon, is applied to the whole population that is threatened, exposed to lies, and required to participate in crime. The methods of implementing this pedagogy are:

1. *border closing* – besides the need to conceal crimes, the entire society is a school in which education means replacing capitalist values with socialist ones;

2. *information control* – what happens outside and inside should not be known; history must be rewritten. Orwell synthesized this idea in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: “Who controls the past, controls the future; who controls the present, controls the past.”

3. *imposing a pseudo-reality* with the help of “a body specialized in falsification” (journalists, historians, writers, artists, economists); a follow-up to the second method, this one sets the lie as truth and introduces it in history. It is also a practice described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where Orwell shows how

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propaganda needed an endless series of victories over memory, in fact, just another name for *reality control* or *doublethink*. (Orwell, 2020)

With a profound intuition, Besançon synthesises an anthropological view that constitutes the foundation of the pedagogy of lies:

The construction of this huge set occupies millions of people. What is it for? To show that socialism is not only possible, but that it is on the way to becoming a reality, to being consolidated or, moreover, that it has already been achieved: that there is a new, free, self-regulated society, where “new men” grow up, thinking and acting spontaneously according to the canons of reality-fiction. The most powerful instrument of power is the creation of a new language in which words take on a meaning different from the usual one. Its diction and special vocabulary give it the value of a liturgical language: it denotes the transcendence of socialism. It signals the omnipotence of the party. Its use by the people is the immediately visible mark of their subservience. (Besançon, 2007, p. 59)

To put it otherwise, this is the description of a huge Potemkin village in which *doublethink* means *to deliberately believe the lie to be true*. Besançon analyses the consequences of the *pedagogy of lies*, identifying at first the bona fide that accepts the crime as punishment against the enemies of the happiness promised by socialism, but results in *moral brutalization and loss of intellectual terms of reference*; then, *shame and moral abjection, obedience* out of fear of the ceremonies that approve the sentencing; the last stage is *desperation and self-loathing*; *doublethink* is abandoned and people prefer to stop thinking – they become irresponsible, lazy and passive (Besançon, 2007, pp. 59-61). No one can escape the pedagogy of lies, moral destruction is complete, and architecture and mechanisms are totalitarian. What Eichmann’s trial had shown at the heart of Europe was to be known in the communist concentration camps for a longer period of time and dig deeper into the body politic of societies. This is precisely why the history of the twentieth century enables Besançon to claim:

The communist idea had perverted the principle of reality and the moral principle to such an extent that it could indeed survive the 85 million bodies, while the nazi idea had collapsed under the burden of its victims. Thinking that he was talking like an honest, idealist, and intransigent man, he had uttered a monstrous sentence. Communism is more perverse than nazism because it does not require man to consciously take the moral step of the criminal and uses the spirit of justice and goodness present throughout the globe to spread evil everywhere. Each communist experience begins in innocence. (Besançon, 2007, p. 64)

Dostoevsky's prophecy – the face of evil and the strangling of freedom

Commenting on *A Short Story on Antichrist*, Fedotov observes that Solovyov's Antichrist is a spiritualist and a righteous austere, animated by social ethics of charity, whose aim is "the instauration of peace on earth and the general equality of the satiated" (Fedotov, 2000, p. 86, our translation from the Romanian version). In Fedotov's opinion, Solovyov's Antichrist does not fully belong to the ecclesiastic tradition, but the essence of his nature remains the same: under the face of righteousness, haughtiness and the lack of love are hidden, traits that will eventually reveal the face of the hideous tyrant. This is the reason why Fedotov's key of interpretation reveals the prophetic nature of Solovyov's *Short Story* from the historical perspective of the twentieth-century Russian political struggle and of the totalitarian nature of Russian Marxism. Considering that communism is the ultimate expression of the Antichristic attack, Fedotov stresses the idea that, more than the so-called Humanism, Russian Marxism "does not tempt by way of compassion and not even by way of equity (...) but by meeting one's interests: not with the good but with the goods and – subconsciously, but at its vital core – with the pleasure for revenge and the pathos of class hatred" (Fedotov, 2000, p. 95). This dissociation shows, on the one hand, the hate for the ethical foundation of its purposes and the anti-humanistic and anti-ethical nature of communism, and, on the other hand, the fact that the fate of such an ideology originates and is fulfilled in dictatorship and violence.

Fedotov remarks that serving the good is just the form in which the Antichrist fulfills his action – Solovyov himself prefaces the *Short Story* with the text "On the falsification of the good," in which he confesses the will to show that the shiny cover of the good and truth is just a deceiving mask under which the darkness of evil is hidden (Solovyov, 1992, p. 31).

The *Short Story*, which is considered a match to *The Grand Inquisitor* (Solovyov, 1992, p. 18), is undoubtedly a journey into the empire of evil. But Dostoevsky's allegory stresses the falsification of the good more subtly because, on the one hand, the Antichrist assumes the face of the ascetic – "a withered face and sunken eyes" (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 287) and, on the other hand, there is an incompatible tension between freedom and happiness. The ascetic face endows him with authority in front of the masses. He wears a monk frock made of rough fabric and scans the crowds from afar, a crowd that is used to submit to him without comments – the people's habit of stepping aside and worshipping him describes the same type of human behavior that belongs to the *cupiditas* area of human nature understood as *habit* (Arendt). Through habits, the individual feels

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that he belongs to a crowd that represents the false body politic, invested with false decision-making power since they have given up their liberty and accepted the authority of leaders. This is why, with Dostoevsky, *the falsification of the good is related to the theme of freedom – the central theme of the Grand Inquisitor story*. The Inquisitor knows the psychology of the crowd, which should not be disturbed by reassessing the theme of freedom; the crowd, with its condition as a subject to authority, needs “one wave of [his] hand to rush to rake up the embers on your bonfire, do you know that?” (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 287). By way of consequence, the scaffolding of the Grand Inquisitor, on whose basis Jesus Christ is accused and sentenced, rests on the *falsification of the idea of freedom*: on the first coming, the Messiah confessed to the freedom of the human being, and now the Grand Inquisitor no longer gives Him the right to confess or add anything else, nor to take away from the people the freedom for which He fought tooth and nail. We gather that two perspectives on human nature are being opposed here; Christ cannot speak to defend His teachings on man’s absolute freedom, while the Inquisitor is speculating the nature of faith itself – its freedom must be defended/preserved by eliminating the miracle from people’s lives. Thus, the weakness of the freedom of faith has opened the path to its falsification:

Was it not you who so often used to say back then: “I want to make you free”? Well, but now you have seen those “free” people,” the old man suddenly adds with a thoughtful and ironic smile. “Yes, this task has cost us dearly,” he continues, looking at him sternly, “but we have at last accomplished it in your name.” (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 288)

This mission consisted of the falsification and strangling of freedom as, in the Inquisitor’s view, man is mutinous by nature, and mutineers cannot be happy. Therefore, in order to be happy, men, convinced that they were free, had to be determined to get rid of this burden of absolute freedom: “They themselves have brought us their freedom and have laid it humbly at our feet. But we were the ones who did that.” (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 289) It is obvious that this is not the freedom affirmed by Jesus, but the old man is certain that he has the merit of having strangled freedom and sacrificed it for men’s happiness.

The architecture of falsification is made up by misconstruing the three questions Christ was asked in the episode of the temptation in the desert. The assault on freedom is carried out through:

1. *the temptation of miracle*:

You want to go into the world and are going there with empty hands, with a kind of promise of freedom which they in their simplicity and inborn turpitude are

unable even to comprehend, which they go in fear and awe of – for nothing has ever been more unendurable to man and human society than freedom! Look, you see those stones in that naked, burning hot wilderness? Turn them into loaves and mankind will go trotting after you like a flock, grateful and obedient, though ever fearful that you may take away your hand and that your loaves may cease to come their way. (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 290)

2. *the temptation of mystery*: on the edge of the temple and urged to throw himself into the void, the tempter staked the freedom of Jesus' trust in the Father and the very freedom of the Father, so that the Son might prove His divinity or, in other words, the exceptional character of which, from the Inquisitor's perspective, men, in their ineptitude and mutiny, are not capable.

3. *the temptation of authority* lies in the recognition that men need a master whom they can worship, entrusting their consciences to in the name of the undivided unity of the human race, of a universal kingdom, and the pacification of the earth.

Throughout the development of this architecture of falsification, man is described as depraved and stubborn, weak and infamous, a weak-spirited slave always willing to know to whom must he renounce his freedom and submit, prone to worshiping gods or, in their absence, idols. For this man, freedom is his currency for a clear conscience, and the one who succeeds in this will gain control over human freedom itself, insomuch as the individual is capable of giving up his own bread to follow the one who has managed to enthrall his spirit. The ones who share the Inquisitor's view downgrade human nature to what is depicted as the mystery of freedom that few can master and in which few truly believe:

Peace of mind and even death are dearer to man than free choice and the cognition of good and evil. There is nothing more seductive for man than the freedom of his conscience, but there is nothing more tormenting for him, either! (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 293)

Only now, the three temptations balanced against the mystery of freedom reveal their subtle nature, able to falsify the essence of freedom:

There are three powers, only three powers on the earth that are capable of eternally vanquishing and ensnaring the consciences of those feeble mutineers, for their happiness – those powers are: miracle, mystery, and authority. You rejected the first, the second, and the third, and yourself gave the lead in doing so. (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 293)

Towards the end, the Inquisitor assesses what followed after the first coming of Jesus, describing world history through two types of conflict – one between the mystery of human nature governed by the three forces and the mystery of freedom, and the other, between the promise of real, earthly loaves of bread and heavenly

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nourishment. He also evaluates the consequences of Christ’s sacrifice, which only resulted in unrest, trouble, and unhappiness, after all the suffering Jesus endured in the name of men’s freedom, which justifies the fight against freedom in history.

The course of history has been set during the temptation in the desert, but rejecting the three temptations, Jesus also rejected the foundation of the world empire under His scepter and the completion of peace. Consequently, the task of this project that has been assigned to those who denied Him may be fulfilled by those who offer people loaves of bread and control their spirits.

Demystifying and minimizing the heart’s freedom to choose between good and evil, the Inquisitor replaces it with obedience, against one’s conscience, in the wish to correct the Messiah’s work in the world. The foundation of faith in the Christic sacrifice is opposed, in the mission for humanity, by the three forces – the temptations of miracle, mystery, and authority – which themselves become the concealed purpose of Jesus’ sacrifice – here lies, in fact, the essence of the falsification of freedom.

They are depraved and mutineers, but in the end, they too will grow obedient. They will marvel at us and will consider us gods because we, in standing at their head, have consented to endure freedom and rule over them – so terrible will being free appear to them at last! But we shall say that we are obedient to you and that we rule in your name. We shall deceive them again, for we shall not let you near us anymore. (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 292)

The accomplishment of the mission of falsification of freedom is placed by Dostoevsky towards the end of the monologue – an accusation worthy of the well-known Stalinist political trials, a utopian prophecy of the propagandistic description of a perfect society, in which happiness won over freedom:

In our hands, though, everyone will be happy and will neither mutiny nor destroy one another anymore, as they do in your freedom, wherever one turns. Oh, we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom for us and submit to us. (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 297)

Projecting the violent lesson of the twentieth century over the legend of the Grand Inquisitor retrospectively, Dostoevsky’s prophetic should be construed in its anthropologic dimension. The collective character of the class enemy that communist ideology identified as a scapegoat that needs to be sacrificed by the laws of history is personified by Jesus in *The Grand Inquisitor*. He is the threat, the external aggression to an order that acts against freedom. In Derrida’s terms, “the character of the *pharmakos* has been compared to a scapegoat. The *evil* and the *outside*, the expulsion of the evil, its exclusion out of the body (and out) of the

city – these are the two major senses of the character and of the ritual.” (Derrida, 1997, p. 130)

The reason why Jesus must be sacrificed is that, if he comes back among people, He can remind them (*anamnesis*) of the essence of freedom, now estranged from the “body politic” that is going to violently expulse Him out of the city. Moreover, the second sentencing of Jesus becomes the anticipative symbol of the collective violence that communist totalitarian ideology was going to justify in the name of the falsified values of the good and freedom.

Conclusions

Isaiah Berlin noted that Joseph de Maistre expressed in his theses “truths unpalatable to his contemporaries, indignantly denied by his successors, and recognized only in our own day” because the “order which Maistre regarded as the only remedy against the dissolution of the social fabric came into being, in our own time, in its most hideous form” (Berlin, 2013, p. 177). In the spirit of Maistre, Dostoevsky’s Inquisitor admits that man is an unfortunate being who comes into the world with the gift of freedom, but his greatest concern is to place this torturous burden into someone else’s hands. The totalitarian regimes understood the fact that freedom is a gift that may subvert the oppression system but also a weakness that can be annexed, falsified, and turned into a tool of terror. This is why the task of terror is to “eliminate from the process not only freedom in any specific sense but the very source of freedom which is given with the fact of the birth of man and resides in his capacity to make new beginnings.” (Arendt, 1962, p. 466), so that, under the justification of the laws of Nature or History, totalitarian terror eliminates races and classes to accelerate its processes. Under the nazi criminal bureaucracy and the lie added to the crime promoted by communist ideology, thought is crippled and freedom is annihilated – the banality of evil and the falsification of the good are two faces of the same radical evil prophesied by Dostoevsky.

After the twentieth-century experiments, freedom has become the only truly foundational value for humanity and political life. The two totalitarian systems that justified mass murder have revealed, for the first time, the value of human freedom as a foundation of social and individual life. This is the lesson of the twentieth century, a lesson from those who died in concentration camps and the Gulag, a lesson that we need to recall every time when the present is threatened by the dark specters of the last century.

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Once again, Hannah Arendt’s and Alain Besançon’s intuitions are topical. The Grand Inquisitor’s prophecy that “centuries will pass, and mankind will proclaim with the lips of its wisdom and science that there is no crime and consequently no sin either, but only the hungry” (Dostoevsky, 1993, p. 292) should be read through the prism of the analyses of the two and construed as a warning against the degree of moral degradation that humankind may reach under the influence of propaganda and lies, inasmuch as not only can it no longer tell the good from evil but also, to their detriment, these values can be canceled in the name of others, deemed superior, which justify the crime.

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From Granularity to the Big Picture: Construction of the “Narrative Thread”*

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Abstract

In this article, we intend to illustrate, in an educational setting, the mechanism of crafting a narrative thread by the arrangement of concepts created via a particular mental representation that attempts to represent its components accurately. To accomplish this, the process is formulated by a spectrum of representations that then allow the efficient realization of the desired path to meaning, taking into account the fact that the solution is contained within its data. A concept can be thought of as a single piece of a mental puzzle. Developing a new concept, such as the idea of creating a “narrative thread”, involves various aspects. These include understanding how the concept is used in various contexts, connecting it to what we already know, using real-life examples, finding similarities to other concepts, breaking the concept down into smaller parts, applying it in practical situations, forming emotional attachments to it, and repeating and reviewing it. Therefore, the concept is fixed in the mental representation with a “thirst for the real” that determines its nature.

Keywords: *concept, narrative thread, meaning, mental representation.*

Introduction

This paper delves into the details of concept formation – a pivotal element shaping our understanding of the world. This paper endeavors to contribute to the collective knowledge of how individuals construct meaning by arranging concepts, focusing on the nuanced nature of the concept “narrative thread” and cognitive development of concepts in children, emphasizing the distinctive features of their conceptual acquisitions. Drawing insights from psychologist L. S. Vygotsky, we underline the productive nature of concept formation and its role in communication, understanding, and rationalization.

Education practices introduced herein seek to impart complex concepts with a deliberate focus on awareness beyond mere memorization. Our attention then

* *Author note:* The article is to be published in Romanian in *Revista de Filosofie*, LXX(4) 2023, pp. 437-448 under the title *De la detaliu la întreg: despre construcția „firului narativ”*.

shifts to the practical application of the discussed concepts. Through a holistic educational approach, we observe students actively engaging in the process of creating a “narrative thread,” highlighting the tangible impact of theoretical perspectives on practical learning experiences.

The Concept - Between Linguistic Tag and a Standalone Entity

A concept can be thought of as a file containing information and data. The word concept contains this information, including features about a certain thing that is presented in the form of a linguistic tag. This “file” contains information that would otherwise have been scattered, difficult to perceive, and challenging to systematize into a cognitive whole. Therefore, a concept is a mental representation of a category that has specific functions, one of which is to allow us to determine whether an element is part of a category or not (e.g., whether a literary text would fall into the category of “stories,” considering the characteristics it has). A category is, in turn, a set of similar concepts or that share specific common characteristics. The data “file” ties them together by virtue of several factors, including similarities, so that the ease with which we understand them, generalize them, classify them, and communicate them is in accordance with the organization of the surrounding world based on these particular categories of concepts.

Similarity, meanwhile, is a fundamental principle of organizing categories (Douglas & Coley, 1998, p. 405). This fact allows us to ask the opposite question – how do we undertake the breakdown of a concept into the properties that itself is composed of? These word “files” can be arranged in a mind map, which is a method of generating ideas through associations, starting from a central theme that generates keywords, concepts, data, and figures (“narrative” would order other keywords after it, such as “prose,” “fact” or “event,” “subjective perspective,” “narrative,” “narrative thread,” etc.) The organization of data into themes helps, in turn, to visualize the problem whose solution is being sought and, thus, facilitates productivity and analysis of the targeted subject, plans solution strategies, and provides space for new ideas and creativity.

Therefore, a word in and unto itself does not explain but binds information together into a concept; it is a representation, the glue that holds our mental world together. However, the concept is open-ended. In other words, it is not a frozen abstraction or static knowledge; a concept requires inputs and dynamic adjustments to keep up with the times. Precisely, this aspect is essential in its view, the fact that a concept not only accumulates information and stores it but also is

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itself updated in a continuum of knowledge. A concept links past experiences to present interactions with the world.

Concept formation occurs in two directions – from general to particular and from particular to general. The child acquires the concept of a “story” before acquiring the particular names of stories, which does not demonstrate thinking abstractly, but rather, general words are used to indicate particular objects. Thus, the concept is the tool with which knowledge is sought. Knowledge is found in conceptual forms; it is abstracted starting from the concrete reality; it is generalized starting from the particularity of the concrete; they resemble each other, starting from the distinctions encountered in reality. Theories about what a “concept” differs in the kind of relationship they establish with thought and the world, while the mechanism of knowledge passes precisely through these processes of abstract modeling of reality.

The concept aims at the problem of universals, which is central to philosophy and in fields such as epistemology, logic, and semiotics. Addressing several theories, such as realism, the concept exists in the world as a real entity and preserves the essence of objects. The dimension of forms in Plato’s dialogues defines concepts (piety, courage, justice, knowledge, virtue, wisdom, etc.) as perfect, eternally valid, abstract, and non-sensory entities in contrast to the ever-changing world. In moderate realism, it appears that it is Aristotle’s definition of the concept that sees the universal, the ideal form subsisting in each of the particular objects, being their essence.

Thus, in what follows, we are going to explain the journey from the abstract to concrete, from concept to tangible manifestation, and practical application by exemplifying the concept of “narrative thread” in its material being, in a school work activity with sixth-grade Romanian language and literature.

The Evolution of Concept Theory

The classic view of the concept (Katz & Postal, 1964) grounds it in the definition in terms of necessary and sufficient features. Therefore, the definition *is* the concept. The definition of a “narrative thread” is actually the concept of “narrative thread,” and it is taught starting from the definition. The simplicity of this resides in the fact that it bypasses the entire process of concept formation; it has to do immediately with the result that is written in the textbook or on the blackboard; it has to do with a ready-made product, in which the dynamics of the process itself have been omitted, limiting themselves to the reality of the word. All that remains for the students to do is to memorize it.

This theory was opposed by the Russian psychologist L. S. Vygotsky in his well-known work “Thought and Speech,” in which he notes that cognitive abstraction, the concept, does not survive being isolated and frozen in its static form. It performs functions in processes of communication, understanding, rationalization, and problem-solving. Vygotsky (1986) argued that the formation of concepts has a productive rather than a reproductive character (p. 117).

In contrast, the textbook answers learned in the classroom contain two logical aspects of definition: necessity and sufficiency. The need for parts must be found in the definition; otherwise, it is not a member of the category. The sufficiency of the parts existing in the definition, which share it with a certain category. Thus, the concept is mentally represented as a definition that provides necessary or sufficient characteristics. A thing is either part of a conceptual category or not, a fact that resides in the law of excluded middle. But the reality is much more complex, and we are dealing with exceptions and variations of various forms. Otherwise, the classical view would suit only a closed and definite system, in accordance with the tradition of logic and with the possibility of a hierarchical order of the categories in the system, such as the upper-intermediate level and its sublevels (a form of communication / verbal / fiction/genre / epic-type story). Therefore, hierarchies organize and structure concepts, clarifying their relationship to each other and to the world.

As a response to the classical perspective, Eleanor Rosch proposed, in 1975, that the prototype perspective of concepts in the field of cognitive psychology, in which each category is represented by a central prototype, is the best example of a certain category that has the most common and familiar characteristics with other entities in the category. “The most prototypical members of common superordinate, basic level, and artificial categories are those which bear the greatest family resemblance to other members of their own category and have the least overlap with other categories.” (Rosch & Mervis, 1975, p. 599). Thus, the quality of being a member of a category is determined by its degree of similarity to the prototype.

Concepts are classified around a median representation, which is a prototype of the category. The entire category is represented by a unified entity, not by separate representations of each member in the category. Some entities may be closer to the prototype (considered typical entities) or more distant (atypical entities). The story “Domnu Trandafir” would be a typical example of the category of stories, while the story “At the North Pole” by Marin Sorescu would have new characteristics that are not found in the fold of those of the species, so it would move away from the prototypical model, but would still be included in the

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category by virtue of the familiarity of the imminent features. This fact would influence the ease with which a thing is classified or not into a certain category of concepts.

A complement to this perspective is the exemplar view developed by Douglas L. Medin and Marguerite M. Schaffer (1978), in which the concept of “story” includes neither all existing characteristics nor its defining characteristics, which they are more or less found, but a set of stories that one remembers from experiences and is stored in memory. Therefore, the mind stores memories, namely these individual examples from the past, defines the concept, and contrasts it with new things experienced in everyday life (when I read a text, I classify it as a “story” by contrasting it with the set of stories I read prior to this one).

Thus, categorization occurs according to how well the new object matches other objects encountered in stored past experiences, how similar they are, and how the new object can stimulate the retrieval of stored information from past examples. “The greater the similarity of a stored example to a new text, the more likely it is that the analysis will retrieve the information associated with that.” (Medin & Schaffer, 1978, p. 210). The diversity of examples in a category contributes to a better and more flexible understanding of the concept since the diversity of experiences drives the categorization as such, just as several stories read in the past finalize the concept of “story” in the set of common characteristics found in each particular experience. Thus, knowing several examples, it is possible to note the similarities and differences, solidify a “big picture” concept, and developing skills for classifying species of a given category.

The Cognitive Role of Concepts in Language And Communication

Essentialization, by definition, represents the principle of conceptual rationalization. How else could the elements of the world have existed if a singular word had named each? Besides, there would only be a particular “file” with an infinitely large capacity to store words. So, by mediating the induction from one element to a new element of the series, by extending the properties from the group to new entities – represents one of the fundamental functions of the concept.

Douglas L. Medin and John D. Coley (1998) distinguished seven cognitive functions such as categorization, understanding, argumentation, explanation, reasoning, learning, communication, and combination (p. 404). Categorizing in this way allows us to access relevant information that helps us understand and make predictions about how, for example, a story would end.

The representation of the meaning of a word resides in the concept. Thought uses words as tools to express ideas. The use of the word is mediated by the voluntary directing of attention, i.e., the abstraction of the characteristics that are synthesized through the mediation of the symbol. The word is a linguistic symbol that signifies something; it is a content in which Eugen Coșeriu distinguishes three kinds in the study “Man and His Language”: designation, significance, and meaning. Denotation indicates reference or referring to something external to the word (for example, the word “story” refers to a particular story in the library); the meaning is the very content of the word and through the mediation of which the designation as such is achieved; meaning refers to thinking in a textual unit, in a statement or text, such as a statement, finding, question, order, assumption, indication, answer, protest, etc.

The word cannot be summed up, as Eugen Coșeriu wrote. Sign, symbol, word, just a sound envelope, or just a pure expression; the word is a sign with meaning, a unity of these two. Language, therefore, creates the world and mediates towards it; language starts from meaning and goes back to things through it. Thus, the world created through language “is a world of the possibilities of being and not a world of concrete existences” (Coșeriu, 2009, p. 126), a world in which things are configured and “species” are created – but not in the material sense of creation, but the fact-of-being. “Language is not a passive copy or reproduction, but an original and intentional configuration” (Coșeriu, 2009, p. 127). Thus, things are not created by language but are given as “things” by it. He makes things be things, explains the fact-of-being-thing, namely by representing this fact of being – one mediates, passes through, accesses the things themselves. In this way, meanings are the tools (not the objects of interpretation) by which things are accessed in a language-ordered world, a conception and representation of the being of things explicitly, and at the same time, access to the things themselves.

The concept is not possible without the word, just as the fact of thinking in the concept is not possible in the absence of the word (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 127). The meaning of a word is an instrument of speech; the word has meanings precisely to be able to clarify the world; it goes without saying that in order to theorize about the narrative perspective, one must understand what “narrative” means. The meaning of the word, therefore, fixes the being of the narrative, indicating what it is, without depicting the set of characteristics that coagulated this category.

Cognitive Development of Concepts in Children

Conceptual acquisitions in children differ from those in adults in their content; the smaller number of experiences the child has led to a constant acquisition process. Since child concepts eventually develop into adult concepts, any qualitative difference between the two poses a problem in explaining development. Thus, the prototypical model in children invokes the elements considered central in a category, which have an advantage in that it is easier to perceive, learn, classify, evaluate, and communicate.

As mentioned above, the prototypical model resides in an average and summary representation of a category that, being appropriated, is updated through experiences and practical applications. Children learn from simpler concepts, from empirical data, and achieve better performance in acquiring typical elements, those with characteristics closer to the prototype. If children cannot rely on knowledge, they use an associative learning mechanism, based on empirical examples or associations based on features that lead to the category.

This is what happened to Helen Keller, who, following an illness, remained blind and deaf. At seven years old, she met a teacher named Anne Sullivan (a moment Helen called her “birthday of the soul”), who taught Keller to read and write using the fingers of Sullivan’s hand to make letters and form words, therefore developing the Braille system. The word at that time was not only a symbol but replaced the concept of the thing in the world. Sullivan said that language means more to the mind than light to the eye. The first thing Keller deciphered via Sullivan’s hand signs was “doll,” the doll she was holding. She was then using an alphabet for deaf people so that her fingers would learn the alphabet. At the end of the work, as the play “The Miracle Worker” by William Gibson suggests, Sullivan stated that she intended to teach her all the vast things in the world, all that people feel, think, know, and share through words, so that no one is left in the dark. Anne longed for at least one word from her hand to reach her mind, that is, her understanding and the dilemma of how she could tell her that a word led to that thing he had placed in her lap; how to realize this connection between the two. The word can become the “eyes” of the little girl so she can see everything beyond and inside her. What is she without words if she cannot think, have ideas, or communicate without them? Otherwise, no thought could be hers.

The “miracle” happened when, at the climax of a family conflict, Sullivan and little Helen are outside pumping water, and Sullivan signed with her fingers the word w-a-t-e-r, after which, repeated several times, the miracle of

understanding occurs in which Keller's face is transfigured at that moment when the light of knowledge shone.

Narrative as a "Biology of Meaning"

The concept is grounded in knowledge and theory, so categorization does not remain a simple matching of the characteristics of the new element with those of the category of concepts but rather requires that any new element fit into the explanatory relationship of the theory that organizes the concept into a based structure on the ability to combine, starting from relationships. The concept is, therefore, a part of the theory, a brick from which the foundation of thinking is built. Theories thus determine which properties are relevant in the categorization exercise and are more concerned with content than with structure itself, as narrative perspective theories do.

The narrative participates in the "biology of meaning" (Bruner, 1990, p. 72), which is not only a mental achievement but a practical social exercise that leads to stability in the child's social life. Meaning is a cultural phenomenon that depends *a priori* on the existence of a common system of symbols. The structure of the narrative is inherent in the praxis of social interaction before its linguistic expression, based on social openness to meaning. As the cognitive narrative theory states, one of the most widespread and pronounced forms in communication is the narrative, based on four grammatical constituents: human action, undertaken by an agent and oriented towards a goal; sequential order of events; affectivity towards the laws present in human interaction; the narrative perspective, the presence of a narrative voice (Bruner, 1990, p. 77). Human beings think, understand the world, and organize their experiences through the mediation of these narratives, a thesis developed by Jerome Bruner that highlights how the stories constructed and stored in our minds help us make sense of the world.

Some of the key aspects of this theory are that stories are a complex way of understanding, in which we organize and make sense of our experiences; the narrative is a cognitive tool through which information is stored and transmitted or is a means of communication (public speeches, presented in the narrative form of the story); the pattern of identification with the characters in a story, in which we project our emotions and experiences onto the characters, thus creating space to work with them.

Just as human affectivity towards art resides in the fact that we do not keep in mind the totality of the abstract theses that are part of our own philosophy –

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otherwise, art just brings metaphysical values and reasoning back to the level of consciousness perception, thus making their perception as concrete as possible.

Systemic Awareness of Scientific Concepts

The concept is not a simple collection of association-based connections between entities in categories; it is not an automated habit, but a complex and authentic act of thought that internalizes itself through the mediation of the sign. Success is not possible through memorization, but through cognitive functions such as voluntary attention, logical memory, abstraction, comparison, differentiation, etc. Direct instruction in working with concepts is difficult to achieve, otherwise it would turn into learning without awareness of one’s own learning, as suggested by Vygotsky. Vygotsky investigated how the awareness of one’s own consciousness takes place, since this act presupposes the object of consciousness as its own activity – understood as a generalization and involving a certain level of skill.

The specific nature of the scientific concept aims at its relationship with the object to which it relates – a relationship mediated by other concepts that, in turn, participate in a hierarchical system of reciprocal relationships.

We thus recall here the fundamental distinction of education between “instruction” and “development”, between scientific concepts learned through instruction and everyday concepts which are acquired spontaneously in the natural process of personal development through experiences. The concept taught in school differs by its nature from the one acquired in everyday life. Training is useful when it is carried out in front of development, the process of growth and maturation, otherwise it would not be necessary, wrote Vygotsky.

Training and learning is an impetus to use concepts deliberately and consciously in solving tasks and problems; they become operational tools on demand with the teacher’s support. Thus, everyday concepts are restructured under the influence of learned scientific concepts, and the willful and intentional mode also moves to that level of spontaneity with which the everyday concept, perhaps “water”, is learned. Thus, the learning process of scientific concepts only has to be one based on structure, relating to other concepts already learned. The child is aware of the concept itself, not just what it represents. Concept whose essence lies in enriching the perception and reflection of the surrounding reality that it represents.

Thus, for example, in the network of the conceptual structure of “narrative” is also involved “storytelling” whose definition from the sixth-grade textbook of

Romanian language and literature states that “it is a species of the epic genre in prose in which they are presented, from a subjective perspective, facts focused on a single epic thread, from the point of view of the narrator, character or witness of the events described (Grama-Tomiță et al., 2020, p. 151). The definition of the concept of “storytelling” includes other concepts related to the systemic network, such as “epic genre”, “prose”, “perspective”, “narrative thread”, “narrator character”, etc. An unfamiliar concept to the students in that class (within the definition of the concept of “storytelling”) is the “narrative thread.”

Although the students know from experience what the word “thread” means and have learned the notion of “narrative”, they find it difficult to conceptually abstract what the words mean when they form a sentence. Starting from the process as such to form this concept (aimed at shaping an epic thread), it will be made together with the material from which it is made in the story. A work technique suitable for this mission should be the modelling technique, in which, through the prism of interdisciplinarity with technological education and plastic art, the concept will thus define a concretely constructed one.

The concept-producing mechanism has a purpose, just as any action directs its forces to achieve a particular goal. The concept is formed with the emergence of the need to be satisfied in the concept – an activity oriented towards finality. So, through the mediation of a task that is to be solved by the formation of the concept – we note that the purpose of a task consists of solving it by building as such the concept targeted as a solution, as it does not just boil down to a chain of associations, but involves a process complex of thinking and moving thought further towards knowledge. The solution is, therefore, contained directly in the task it sets. But is the presence of a goal or a task a sufficient or only a necessary condition of concept formation?

In this example, students were given the task of writing a story with reference to different creative writing topics given, such as a story about a world where all the glass has disappeared or a snippet of a day watching a black and white film, and the narrator realizes that it is about himself / herself and from that moment the events begin; a story of how the letter “H” disappeared from the alphabet and what happened afterwards; someone from the neighbours is packing their bags in a hurry and the events continue like this; a cat the size of a block of apartments appears in the yard; stories about things kept in pockets; a text written from the perspective of the toothbrush, etc.

Students wrote down, in a short outline of ideas, the main sequences of the sequence of the story, which they wrote on separate sheets and which are

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determined by the moments of the topic. They connect with a thread that, by the end of the activity, becomes a “narrative” one. They would look like this:

Figure 1

Narrative threads, Source: Workshop with students from Anenii Noi, Moldova



Through this educational practice, the definition of the “epic thread” is arrived at, which consists of chaining the narrative sequences of the story into a whole that has a beginning and an end; it is a thread that connects the narrative sequences in a story; the moments of the subject chained in a thread that connects them in a whole text that is perceived as a whole made up of parts and whose parts are integrated into this whole by the force of the thread: exposition, plot, the unfolding of the action, the climax and the denouement, with openness to the fact that they can also appear in other sequences, depending on the intentions of the one who writes the actual story.

Conclusion

A concept is like a single piece of a mental puzzle, a piece of ever-expanding understanding. The mind is an architect of knowledge that builds and reconstructs unexpected connections between concepts – to create semantic structures of the inner and outer world alike, branching out into a radiant mental map of meaning. These pieces are assembled in the ascent or vice versa: from the concrete to the abstract, from the particular to the general – moving away from the physical, tangible and individual aspects of a thing perceived in experience towards the deeper, more general and respectively less tangible aspects.

The intricate mechanism of crafting a “narrative thread” in an educational context involves a spectrum of representations facilitating the realization of a meaningful path, recognizing that the solution lies embedded within the data itself. Conceiving a concept as a mental puzzle piece, the development of the “narrative thread” is a multifaceted journey.

Rooted in the insights of psychologist L. S. Vygotsky, the study accentuates the dynamic and productive nature of concept formation. From linguistic tags to standalone entities, concepts serve as mental files organizing scattered information into coherent representations. The conceptual landscape, however, is not static; concepts evolve with time, linking past experiences to present interactions, reflecting the continuous flow of knowledge.

Learning a new concept, such as that of creating a “narrative thread”, requires contexts such as understanding the ways in which the concept appears (the definition of “story” and its composition); building connections with previous knowledge (past readings or the relationship of the concept to the epic genre); the use of concrete examples (the narrative sequences themselves, which form nodes and connect to this thread); the search for analogies (the “narrative thread” is analogous in structure to a thread); dividing the concept into smaller parts (the expression as such, “thread” and “narrative”, sub-concepts); applying the concept in practical situations (noting the simple plan of ideas of the story on a certain theme on sheets attached to the “narrative thread”); establishing an emotional connection (the theme on which the story is built that meshes with the inner world of the writer); repetition and revision (the more narrative threads are presented in the classroom, the easier comprehension will occur); according to which the concept is fixed in the mental representation with a “thirst for the real” that determines its nature.

Understanding transcends from specific ideas to broader categories. As concepts evolve, they embody the essence of knowledge. This paper advocates for a purpose-driven concept formation, where the solution is embedded in the task itself, fostering a profound and authentic act of thought.

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Acknowledgment: *The work was carried out within the grant Epistemological approach to personal development and education for society: from transdisciplinary strategies to the pragmatic purposes of the current society in the Republic of Moldova; digit 20.80009.1606.08.*

Intelligence from the perspective of inference. The problem of abduction for general artificial intelligence

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Abstract

In this article, we want to analyze some of the limits of artificial intelligence. In order to have a significant development of this type of technology, one of the problems that requires a fundamental approach is the problem of inference. We will explore three types of inferences: deduction, induction, and abduction. Deduction was the basis for developing classical Artificial Intelligence (expert or symbolic system). Induction is used by modern Artificial Intelligence (neural networks), which requires a massive amount of data and very high computing powers. General Artificial Intelligence (currently in research) needs a theory of abduction that experts do not yet know how to program into a computational system.

Keywords: *inference, deduction, induction, abduction, reasoning, knowledge, Artificial Intelligence.*

Introduction

Today's technology has reached an advanced level that astounds us in numerous ways. In particular, Artificial Intelligence (AI), a broad term encompassing various types and research domains, has yielded remarkable results, fueling the perpetuation of myths surrounding sentient machines. This era is witnessing the revolutionary impact of AI, not only shaping our actions but also reshaping our understanding of ourselves. The predictions of artists, media, and renowned researchers regarding the near and distant future seem incredibly fantastical. While current achievements in weak AI, such as Deep Blue, Watson, AlphaGo, and ChatGPT, provide insights into the potential of strong or general AI, they also mask the existing barriers and limitations faced by AI today.

In this article, we aim to delve into the analysis of AI's limitations, which can temper the exuberant optimism of those promoting a highly technologized future. Doing so will situate ourselves in a discussion about the present reality. Unlike half a century ago, when AI systems were far less impressive than they are

today, and limitations were seen as temporary and solvable, the omnipresence of AI in our lives now allows us to witness real-time testing of its inherent gaps. Consequently, it becomes evident that contrary to initial beliefs, the limitations of AI stem from fundamental aspects of knowledge. One crucial issue that necessitates a fundamental approach to advancing AI technology is the problem of inference. Eric J. Larson accurately argues that we currently lack promising ideas to efficiently program the specific types of inferences necessary for AI to perform tasks at a level comparable to human general intelligence. Larson concludes, “The problem of inference is central to the debate about artificial intelligence because it directly relates to intelligence, both humans and machines” (Larson, 2022, p. 12). While we acknowledge the existence of other equally significant challenges, this article will specifically focus on the problem of inference.

Inference towards the best explanation (abduction)

Firstly, let us clarify the meaning of the concept of inference. According to a more general definition provided by the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Philosophy, inference is the mental process through which one draws conclusions from one idea to another (Clement, 1999, p. 247). In simpler terms, inference is a type of reasoning that can be either deductive, where the conclusion is logically necessary (e.g., syllogism), or inductive, where the conclusion is based on probability. While some sources consider inference and deduction to be synonymous, it is evident that deduction is merely a specific type of inference. Moreover, deduction and induction are not the sole forms of inference. “The Dictionary of Philosophy of Knowledge” (volume II), following a different general definition of inference, provides an explanation of a distinct type called inference towards the best explanation, also known as abduction. This form of inference serves as a legitimate non-deductive reasoning that presents an alternative to both deduction and enumerative induction (Dancy, 1999, pp. 36-40). Abduction can be represented in the following structure:

O - occurs.

If E had occurred, we would have expected O.

Therefore, it is highly plausible that

E - occurred.

Let's consider a simple example to illustrate this form of argument. Imagine an experienced hunter who comes across wolf tracks in the snow. Based on his expertise, he may infer that a wolf passed through that area because he knows from experience that wolves are likely to leave such distinctive tracks, unlike those of bears or foxes. These types of abductive inferences are common in our daily lives,

and we make them effortlessly without much intellectual effort. In fact, they dominate many of our reasoning processes. However, it's important to note that while abduction is a valid form of reasoning, it can still lead to incorrect conclusions, similar to deduction or induction. This is because there are often numerous alternative explanations for a given event, such as the wolf tracks in the snow.

To demonstrate this, let's imagine another scenario where a mischievous hunter decides to play a prank on their friend. He creates a template of wolf tracks and imprints them on the snow. In this case, the inference that a wolf made those tracks would be incorrect. Although the hypothesis of the prankster hunter could be true, the experienced hunter would find it unlikely because wolf tracks are smaller than human tracks, and it would be highly unlikely to find only wolf tracks without any accompanying human footprints. This peculiar situation challenges us to question how such a scenario is possible. However, if we consider the possibility of bear tracks or tracks from a larger animal, and the mischievous hunter wore the templates while walking through the snow without leaving human footprints, then the hypothesis of the prankster becomes more plausible.

Thus, a valid abductive inference requires us to consider a wide range of factors that depend on our existing knowledge. The more we know about a particular subject, such as internal combustion engines, the better equipped we are to observe details and make accurate inferences. For instance, a skilled mechanic can use his hearing alone to infer the likelihood of certain engine malfunctions. On the other hand, someone without knowledge of engines would be unable to make the same inferences. While not everyone possesses expertise in hunting or mechanics, every person possesses a substantial amount of general knowledge that enables them to make various inferences within their specific knowledge domains.

For example, based on our experience, we can easily distinguish between a cat and a dog. When we see a cat, we instinctively recognize it without much contemplation. However, based on additional observations, we may also infer that this particular cat is our neighbor's favorite because we have frequently seen it on their balcony. Furthermore, if we notice the cat outside, limping, and considering that we haven't seen it wandering outside before, we might deduce that it likely fell from the balcony. Children can even perform these relatively simple reasoning processes, yet they can present challenges for AI programs. In certain cases, how these difficulties can be overcome is not evident. For instance, image recognition programs rely on massive datasets and deep learning algorithms to identify objects like cats in images. Although these programs have achieved impressive

performance, they can still be easily misled by manipulating a small number of pixels, resulting in erroneous classifications.

At this moment, we will not go into the specific technical details of how such programs make errors. Similarly, we will not explore the notion that minor pixel modifications do not pose any challenges for human vision in correctly classifying an object in an image.

It is essential to highlight that humans possess not only simple vision (where the concept of a cat is not necessary to see one) and associative vision (connecting visual input with mental faculties to conclude it's a cat and not a dog) but also deliberative vision. Through deliberative vision, humans make abductive inferences, for instance, speculating about the real-life circumstances of the identified objects. Consequently, despite the impressive performance of machines in image recognition, they have no understanding of the actual existence and context of the recognized objects.

One might argue that even humans lack knowledge about the real-life aspects of a person they encounter for the first time. While this is true, humans can still make plausible hypotheses about that person based on observations (e.g., clothing, manner of speech). Initially, these hypotheses can be either true or false. However, our inferences become increasingly precise as we gather more knowledge about the person. This process is an inherent part of our daily lives. We continually form inferences, some of which are trivial, and it is worth noting that many of these inferences cannot be easily converted into algorithms.

The Role of Abduction in Science

Aside from the mentioned usual inferences, there are numerous examples of inferences in the history of science. One notable event in modern science is the Copernican Revolution, which brought about a paradigm shift by replacing the geocentric model with the heliocentric model (Koestler, 1995). This historical fact may not seem particularly significant today, as even young children learn early on that the Earth revolves around the Sun. However, in the early 16th century, when Copernicus was promoting his heliocentric hypothesis, such an idea was considered scandalous and ignited intense discussions. It is intriguing to understand how Copernicus arrived at formulating this hypothesis when, using terms employed in computer programming, the majority of the available data seemed to prove the exact opposite and, consequently, support the Ptolemaic system.

First and foremost, Copernicus needed considerable courage to reinterpret a vast amount of data accumulated over centuries. He did not wholly discard everything that was known at the time. On the contrary, by observing the complexity of the Ptolemaic system and studying certain ancient Greek philosophers (such as Philolaus and Seleucus of Seleucia) who were not part of the mainstream philosophers of that era, Copernicus made an inference towards the simplest explanation. This inference led him to propose heliocentrism as a model capable of replacing geocentrism. It assisted him in explaining certain astronomical phenomena more simply and logically, even though the Copernican system was not yet fully developed or proven. Within the new model, certain phenomena remained uncertain for the time being. What we want to underscore through the narrative of the development of the Copernican system is that scientists consistently put forward various hypotheses that, at that moment, are not proven but are subsequently subjected to multiple tests to be either confirmed or refuted. This process is crucial for the further advancement of science.

Once again, it is clear that we currently lack the knowledge to design machines capable of exhibiting intelligent behavior similar to humans. This becomes even more complex when we consider that many scientific hypotheses do not arise automatically from the vast amount of accumulated knowledge, despite the importance of big data for deep learning algorithms. The sheer quantity of data does not guarantee the emergence of new information, and the abundance of information available today does not inherently lead to the production of knowledge. Remarkably, there are instances where significant breakthroughs occur in the minds of scientists, sudden flashes of inspiration. In his book “We, the Particle and the World” (Chapter 6 – “The Vision of Reality and the Reality of Vision” (Nicolescu, 2002, pp. 114-136)), the distinguished Romanian physicist Basarab Nicolescu presents numerous examples of such enlightening moments that have unexpectedly propelled the progress of science. Nicolescu emphasizes the complexity of the scientific creative process, stating that while technical and partial scientific results are often achieved through the rigorous development of specific formalisms, the fiery imagination plays a predominant role in the grand pursuit of scientific invention, surpassing the unyielding calculations of scientific logic. This erroneous conflation of human intelligence with computational capabilities not only oversimplifies the concepts of intelligence and humanity but also undermines the very essence of scientific inquiry.

In 1931, the renowned Austrian logician Kurt Gödel published the proofs of two groundbreaking theorems in mathematical logic, commonly referred to as the incompleteness theorems, which exposed the limitations of formal mathematical

systems. Gödel's first theorem demonstrated that within a minimal formal system encompassing arithmetic, there exist propositions that are true but cannot be proven within the confines of that system. The philosophical implications of this theorem, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence, highlight the impossibility of achieving complete formalization of human thought. Gödel's work revealed a striking insight: provability and truth are distinct concepts. Consequently, it becomes evident that the algorithms employed in AI cannot produce all possible truths merely by following formally correct rules. Gödel's theorems shed light on inherent limitations associated with formal systems and, by extension, present formidable barriers to achieving Artificial General Intelligence comparable to human intelligence. Furthermore, as with Copernicus, the fact that these groundbreaking ideas originated in the minds of brilliant individuals attests to our unique human capacity to perceive phenomena that technology alone cannot grasp.

The limitations of deduction in the development of intelligent machines

What exactly is deduction? According to the "Dictionary of Philosophy and Logic," deduction refers to a "valid reasoning process in which it is impossible, without contradicting oneself, to affirm the premises and deny the conclusion" (Flew, 1999, p. 88). In essence, deduction tells us that if the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true. This type of reasoning has been extensively utilized in classical AI, which, although it has not made significant strides in achieving general intelligence, has played a crucial role in the advancement of AI. Deductive-based artificial intelligence programs have been able to generate automated proofs for various mathematical theorems. Additionally, deduction has been employed in error-checking, logical consistency verification, and even computer manufacturing. Deduction has proven more beneficial in these domains than modern systems relying on statistics and machine learning. Therefore, while we cannot disregard the use of deduction in AI, it is important to recognize its limitations when striving for general intelligence.

One of the primary issues to consider is that certain conclusions can be formally correct but, if based on false premises, they end up asserting nonsensical statements. Let's consider a well-known example where both the premises and the conclusion are true:

If it is raining, the streets are wet.

It is currently raining.

Therefore, the streets are wet.

However, suppose we modify one or both premises in such a way that they become false in relation to reality. In that case, we obtain a formally valid argument with an evidently false conclusion:

If it is raining, pigs can fly.

It is raining.

Therefore, pigs can fly.

This example highlights that strictly adhering to logical rules does not necessarily guarantee the attainment of truth. The human mind can easily discern the falsehood of the first premise because our collective experience informs us that there is no connection between rain and pigs flying. Moreover, it is blatantly evident that pigs cannot fly. Despite the argument being valid in its structure, it is, in reality, an absurdity.

Another important aspect to consider relates to the concept of relevance. If the premise of flying pigs is considered absurd, then a statement claiming that if it's raining outside, the boss goes to work becomes irrelevant. While there may be instances where this premise holds true, such as when it's raining and the boss does indeed go to work, there is no direct causal connection between rain and going to work. In fact, in many cases, rain might serve as a reason for not going to work. Numerous examples can be provided to illustrate deductive logical constructions that are valid but lack relevance.

Let's envision an AI system that incorporates a database and deduction-based rules. Applying such a model might not be inherently problematic, but it is crucial to recognize that the program lacks understanding and cannot differentiate between what is relevant and what is absurd. Thus, machines relying solely on deduction are oblivious to these errors and necessitate human experts to ensure their proper functioning.

The above example also highlights another challenge of deductive reasoning, namely, the problem of knowledge. As Larson suggests, "deduction never adds any additional knowledge" (Larson, 2002, p. 112). The knowledge already exists within the stated premises, and deduction simply reaffirms a conclusion. However, the issue of knowledge, intertwined with common sense, warrants separate attention (often referred to as the problem of the bottomless bucket). Knowledge plays a pivotal role in designing general intelligence. It is important to emphasize that relying solely on deductive inferences is far from sufficient for significant advancements in AI.

Can induction be of any assistance?

The emergence of the internet and, subsequently, social media platforms has led to an astonishing phenomenon: an explosion of data accessible to researchers in the field of AI. Prior to this development, the AI field was divided into two camps with different approaches. Some sought to teach computers to emulate intelligent behavior through the encoding of specific logical rules (deduction) in what is known as classical AI, employing expert systems or symbolic approaches. On the other hand, proponents of modern AI aimed to recreate the human brain itself, focusing on neural networks. Despite neural networks being introduced as early as the 1960s, they did not achieve the same level of success as classical AI, leading to what is referred to as an “AI winter” in the 1980s. The history of AI has witnessed multiple such winters, characterized by decreased interest and funding for AI projects.

However, with the vast amount of data available on the internet and the advancements in computing power, neural networks have gained prominence in AI research. The massive volume of data is crucial for training neural networks, enabling them to recognize patterns effectively. Present-day researchers have access to extensive databases with a wealth of examples, and the current computing capabilities allow for rapid analysis. Consequently, deep learning-based Artificial Intelligence has emerged and achieved remarkable performance. Nevertheless, it is essential to emphasize that we are still far from achieving a technology of general intelligence.

While classical AI relies on deduction, modern AI is propelled by induction. Induction is a method of reasoning whereby general laws or principles are inferred from observed particular cases. Unlike deduction, which does not generate new knowledge, induction employs an enumeration mechanism and can acquire fresh insights from experiential data. Induction serves a vital purpose, not only by organizing the world through categorizable hypotheses but also by facilitating predictions. For instance, when observing 100 crows in nature, all of which are black, we cannot make a certain deductive inference that all crows in nature are black. However, we can make a probabilistic inference that most crows are black and, therefore, it is likely that all crows are black. In addition to drawing conclusions, induction allows us to predict that the next crow we encounter will probably be black. The level of certainty increases significantly with a larger sample size, such as observing a hundred thousand crows. However, an unexpected occurrence, such as encountering a white crow, undermines our inference about crows, as it is a rare event in nature. The ever-changing nature of

our world implies that much of the knowledge gained through inductive reasoning is provisional. Even our current understanding of intelligence may evolve in the future.

However, the advancement of modern science would not have been possible without the utilization of induction. It is crucial to remember that scientific knowledge cannot be solely derived from induction alone, as relying solely on observed instances is not foolproof. As we have witnessed, induction can still lead to false conclusions even with true premises. Many authors use the “Russell’s turkey” analogy to illustrate this point. Imagine a turkey being fed at the same time every day, leading it to assume that this pattern will always hold true. However, during a festive occasion, the turkey is slaughtered, shattering its inductive inference. In addition to the inherent fragility of induction (as new data may deviate from past observations), our preconceived notions based on past experiences can sometimes hinder us from perceiving new possibilities, as we tend to be strongly anchored to traditional patterns. Therefore, in order to achieve general artificial intelligence, just as with deductive inferences, inductive inferences are necessary but not sufficient.

Conclusions: Deduction, Induction, and Abduction

Through a brief analysis of these three types of inference, we can conclude that all of them are indispensable for general intelligence. While classical AI relies on deduction and modern AI on induction, a comprehensive theory of abduction is required for general Artificial Intelligence (which is currently in the developmental phase). However, experts are still grappling with how to incorporate it into computational systems. Since these are distinct types of inference, none of them can be transformed into another. We cannot expect deduction or induction alone to encompass abduction. Nonetheless, abduction is the core inference mechanism behind general intelligence. As we have demonstrated, humans consistently employ this type of inference in their everyday lives. The essence of human existence and what we refer to as common sense necessitate a nuanced understanding of the real world. Even the comprehension of seemingly straightforward matters is essential for individuals and society as a whole. The complexity of the surrounding reality renders formal systems insufficient for its comprehensive description. It is nearly impossible to amass a sufficient amount of elementary knowledge in a machine to enable it to perform the myriad of real-life tasks that humans excel at. Our intelligence relies on all possible senses, including intuition, to make inferences about our environment. Ray Kurzweil posits that by

the end of the third decade of this century, we will have Artificial Intelligence capable of attaining human-level general intelligence and subsequently surpassing it with superintelligence. Despite the predictions made by visionaries and futurists like Kurzweil, we are currently uncertain about how to reach such a level, as solving the problem of inference is one among numerous challenges that need to be addressed.

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Mentality and representation

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Abstract

In this study, I try to bring a speculative analysis of the concepts of mentality and representation by referring to the nature of the mind. I started only from a few more well-known positions in the history of ideas to obtain a summary and a significant picture of the concepts under consideration. The aim is to show that, on the one hand, the use of the concepts of mentality and representation in current hermeneutics is, from our point of view, indispensable. On the other hand, the ultimate content of the mentality remains an unknown, because the mind, as part of the human being, is a mysterious phenomenon, due to its divine origin, impossible to know in its ultimate data.

Mentality results from an objective psychosocial process based on exchange and negotiation. It is about exchanging information between the individual and society and negotiating the consensus of the individual versus society, translated into norms – religious, economic, social, political, but also scientific, philosophical, and artistic.

The forces participating in the identity coagulation process of the mentality are multiple and interdependent, and the role or superior importance of one over the other is difficult to establish. In their convergence are born the representations of the real space, the interpretations and evaluations given by the individual to the world outside him, and the various reactions in the vast continuum of human-world communication.

The world primarily known by the person and the community shapes the soft relief of the mental space in forms that, once installed, tend to stiffen and self-reproduce. This is how the representations that dynamically nourish the mentality are born. Fortunately, however, the ultimate content of the mind remains an unknown, in scientific terms, a great mystery that is part of the divine nature of man.

Keywords: *mentality, representation, mind, reality, mental space.*

Introduction. Mind and mentality

Understanding the mentality of any people has always represented a great challenge for historians and philosophers if we look into the past. And if we return to the present, the analysis and description of individual and group mentalities, be they European or non-European, represents a test of maximum scientific ability to which small armies of sociologists, psycho-sociologists, and anthropologists,

ethnologists, and semioticians, political scientists, all engage in developing the photograph closest to the truth of the collective mental spaces. The objective is not at all easy to reach, and the answers, even if scientific, are content to be incomplete but legitimate hypotheses. The explanation lies in the nature – as volatile as it is real – of the mind:

...the intellectual history of mankind is nothing but the game of the human mind with itself and it cannot be anything else. The interaction between the mind and the world produces symbols. But also, the application of the mind to itself and to its own possibilities produces symbols, and these are more durable than the others. (Culianu, 2002, p. 29)

Mentality is a product of the mind; it lives, one might say, in the mental space (turning, therefore, into a fundamental attribute of it) and expresses itself mainly with the means offered by the nature of the mind.

What is the *mind*? The question, which is asked more and more often, arises as troubling every time and is associated with two others, even more uncomfortable: what is and where is the mental space? Cognitive sciences still do not manage to give clear and satisfactory answers to these fundamental questions. The etymology of the word is simple: *mind* comes from the Latin *mens, -tis*. *Mind* means, in the common perception, summarized by the dictionary, especially the faculty to think, to understand. It can also mean sound judgment, fair reasoning, wisdom, and thoughtfulness. Just the simple chaining of these explanations given to the mind shows its complex and controversial nature. The term mentality (from fr. *mentalité*) is part of the same paradigm and designates an attribute of the mind: the particular way of thinking of an individual or of a collective, ways of acting, of thinking of an individual; intellectual habits, beliefs, behaviors characteristic of a group.

Ioan Petru Culianu, historian of religions and anthropologist with a revolutionary vision in the research of mental space, warns:

The location and properties of “mental space” are probably the most challenging enigmas that people have faced since ancient times; and, after two dark centuries of positivism trying to explain them away as fictitious, they came back stronger than ever with the advent of cybernetics and computers. (Culianu, 2002, p. 36)

The mind is the place where reason, judgment, imagination, memory, and dreams develop. From childhood, we learn to distinguish between the physical space of real objects and events and the mental space, which we see inhabited mainly by our imagination. The physical, molecular, atomic, and, for some time, the quantum world represents for us the crucible of reality. In complementarity, we reserve the status of the laboratory of subjectivity to the mental space and give it

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an administrator: thinking. The separation between the two worlds is clear, as is the imperative need to distinguish them. The categories of knowledge, typical of Western European civilization, reflect this differentiation through oppositions such as exteriority versus interiority, objective versus subjective, real versus imaginary, history versus myth, verified facts versus hypotheses, and reality versus fiction. The coexistence of the two worlds is possible precisely because of this complementary differentiation, and those who fail to differentiate between the two worlds are considered dysfunctional and treated as such. The attitude towards any aspect of the physical world permanently enriches the world of ideas and subjectivity – the mental space.

Mentality, between reality and unreality

Mentality is the result of an objective psychosocial process based on exchange and negotiation. It is about the exchange of information between the individual and society and the negotiation of the consensus of the individual versus society, translated into norms – religious, economic, social, political, but also scientific, philosophical, and artistic. Norma defines thinking and rational knowledge in Western culture since ancient Greece, according to the principle of non-contradiction. Western man does not have to contradict himself in his rational acts. If he violates this norm, he becomes irrational. This is how the Western cultural model was constituted until the end of the 19th century, when scientific discoveries, the theory of relativity and Freudian psychoanalysis, but also the new post-Nietzschean philosophical visions introduce another norm: the principle of probability, which legitimizes the hypothesis in knowledge, a substitute for the indisputable truths of thought European before the 20th century.

The forces participating in the identity coagulation process of the mentality are multiple and interdependent, and the role or superior importance of one over the other is difficult to establish. In their convergence are born the representations of the real space, the interpretations and evaluations given by the individual to the world outside him, and the various reactions in the vast continuum of human-world communication. Any attitude, voluntary or involuntary, is a response to reality. Our simple presence in the world, living and traversing physical space irreversibly involves us in a relationship with the world. Reality is, above all, an inexhaustible territory of interrogations. In this forest of questions, each individual gives his own answers, and they compose his existential path step by step, in which any previous answer conditions and partially anticipates all the others to be given.

It is a matter of subjective determinism, in the unfolding of which the recognizable mentality of the individual is deposited layer by layer, the one that gives the measure of his irreducible identity. Every answer given to the questions with which real-life greets the individual means inventing a meaning or choosing a meaning among several possible ones. In this way, the forest of questions metamorphoses into a “*forest of symbols*”; the existing world is tamed and transformed into the known world.

The nature of the answers and implicitly the meanings with which the individual populates both the real space in which he evolves and his own mental space, therefore, depends on two fields of forces, external and internal, in a permanent negotiation or at other times in an open conflict. In the foreground are the actors of the real world: society and nature. The external reality is by no means a passive space in the development of the individual mentality. The forms of social reality and natural reality together condition the mentality, and between them, the forms of conditioning, limitation, or openness represent an important part of human history. The constraints and challenges coming from the space external to the individual are taken over by the field of internal forces, which are insufficiently defined and understood until today. If the protagonists of the real world are easy to identify because they submit to verification and description, the internal forces are often even hard to name; they have a relative, fluid consistency that resists any attempt to reveal their ultimate profile.

Thus, by internal forces, we mean consciousness and unconsciousness, genetic inheritance or temperament, desires and aspirations, predispositions, etc. Psychoanalysis seduces us with the accumulation of all internal forces under the apparently too capacious umbrella of the ego, divided into several areas, among which the unconscious and the subconscious dispute their somewhat repressive authority over the individual. Psychoanalysis promised to solve the whole problem of mental space and to tell us, finally, what the mind is. Obviously, the tools provided by psychoanalysis in the interpretation of the mental territory remain valuable and with punctual validity, but after a century of psychoanalysis, it is clear to everyone that the mental mechanisms, the protoplasm of the mental space and the dynamics of mentalities, expressed in the representation of any forms of reality, it exceeds the inclusive power of psychoanalysis and its language, far too poor for such a rich world as that of the mind.

Before psychoanalysis, modern philosophy polarizes the field of internal forces between consciousness and the irrational and brings into play a slippery phantom: the tutelary shadow of the self. This is how the third source of pressure is focused on the individual, along with nature and society: existence.

Philosophers, from Socrates to Kant, preferred, like the mystics, the opposition between *spirit* and *body* (or *soul* versus *body*) or between *spirit* and *matter*, translating the communication between the *mental* and the *physical* universe through a struggle of opposites, from which results and during which the human being is defined.

It would follow from all that I have said that the distinction between mental space and physical space, therefore the difference between what we now call the inner world and the outer world, is clear and definite, and that, just as we do not doubt their different nature, so then we would have no reason to doubt their different reality. However, the relations between the two worlds are by no means domesticated in definitive truths. We observe even today that mental space has rather the status of a fictional world or a world parallel to the real reality. The inner world would be synonymous with imagining, imagination, and illusion. That is why the inner world is often associated or even wrongly confused with the fictional worlds from mythology, literature, and, more recently, from the territory of virtual culture. The question arises: is the inner world real or not? Does *mental space* really exist? And if it exists, why is it called unreal? We meet even in contemporary scientific discourses such formulations as fictitious mental space. However, mental space is increasingly being dealt with by a fairly recent philosophy of mind, which is associated in research with cognitive psychology and sometimes with neurophysiology.

The right balance between the *unreality* and the *reality* of mental space has not yet been found in the cognitive sciences. But what we know for sure exists is precisely the mentality because it produces representation and attitude, and through these instruments, man intervenes in the external world, invents and re-invents the real spaces from which society and the known world are perpetually born. The flow of mentalities directs the process of objectifying subjective mental projections in the very real spaces that make up the diversity of cities and rural worlds, all material civilization and social structures, and the interference between man and nature. It is certainly time to get used to the idea that mental space is not an unreality but a different reality than the physical one. Moreover, the interdependence between the mind and the physical world is undeniable.

First, philosophy and then Einsteinian physics, the biological sciences, demonstrated that one cannot exist without the other. The emergence of virtual culture and cyberspace helps us go through a necessary mutation of mentality:

...the world outside us and the one inside us are not really parallel, believes Ioan Petru Culianu, and that is not only because they interfere with each other in many

ways, but also because we can't even be sure where one ends and the other begins. does this mean that, in fact, they share the same space? (Culianu, 2002, p. 38)

Culianu's questioning follows a whole tradition in Western philosophy, before and after Descartes, of problematizing the curious relationship between the subjective world and the objective world. If common sense naturally tends to question the reality of mental spaces, philosophers have often wondered, on the contrary, how much we can trust in the existence and truth of the physical world. Some philosophers have reached the radical conclusion that the world outside us is a pure mental construct of perception. Under such conditions, the so-called "*objective world*" would be the combined result of the conventions created and structured by our organs of perception. Schopenhauer briefly dictated: "*The world is my representation.*" He says that man

...has the full certainty that he knows neither sun nor earth; he knows, in a word, that the world by which he is surrounded exists only as a representation in his relation to a perceiving being, which is man himself. (Schopenhauer, 1995, p. 15)

But perhaps the best-known vision is that of Plato in the *Republic*, synthesized in the well-known analogy with the cave, which starts from the existence of two principles, of which "*...one reigns over the intelligible order and domain, the other over the visible.*" (Plato, p. 309) In *Part III* of the *Republic*, Socrates shows how the mental representation operates as a mediator between the intelligible and the visible, actually deciding the degree of reality of each and privileging the mental image over the object, in the sense that the image is primarily more important, therefore truer than the object itself:

Then you also know that they [geometrists, arithmeticians] use visible figures and that they discuss about them, without reasoning on them, but, in fact, on those entities that the figures only resemble: in view of the square itself and of its diagonal he discusses and not in view of the figure he draws; and the same goes in the other cases. They use the figures they make up and draw – figures that have images in water and shadows – but they use these figures as images in their turn, seeking to see those realities themselves, which could not be otherwise seen only through reason.

And then, he summarizes

I said that the soul is forced to investigate in this division of the intelligible, with the help of "postulates." He does not go to the principle because he cannot rise beyond the postulate; he uses as images even the objects imitated by others inferior to them, using these images as entities that impose themselves on the opinion with clarity and weight, for the knowledge of the other superordinate realities. (Plato, 1986, p. 311)

Mentality and representation

The priority of the image before the object results, here, from the fact that the mental image is closer to the “*superordinate realities*” to the world of the Platonic Ideas, the only objective reality impossible to manipulate through the senses; the object, on the contrary, would be the least real, because it is only the fruit of the way in which our deluding senses convey to us the world outside us.

We do not need to be enthusiastic followers of Platonic hypotheses to admit mental reality and to understand its nuclear role in the spatio-temporal movement of the individual and communities. Philosophers, however, make us more sensitive to the power of the mind over reality and force us to ask ourselves whether any type of reality is not a product whose birth the mind participates in and which it continuously influences, including administering it according to norms only partially accessible to knowledge current. Mentality itself, as a direct product of the mind, is a set of intricately layered norms in a kind of tectonic movement hardly visible, but where an earthquake or a volcano, that is, a destructive rupture or a revolutionary change, is in principle possible at any time.

Knowledge plays the most important role in the edification of the mentality within the individual because it trains and develops thinking and gives rise to individual consciousness. There is no mentality outside of knowledge. Any group mentality corresponds to a certain type of knowledge, because the mentality presupposes precisely the processing of a field of information, subject to selection, assimilation through social representations, and then analytical norming. And the type of knowledge also gives the content of the mentality, its irreducible pattern. For example, if the modern European mentality is authoritatively based on rational knowledge, including the rationalization and incorporation of the irrational, the archaic mentality, evident in primitive societies but also in traditional societies, is primarily based on irrational knowledge, manifested in mystical communication, in the culture of myth and of the dream, in rites and divinatory techniques.

Archaic African cultures are the fruit of totemic thinking, which comes from unconditional faith, without explaining the phenomena but investing them with the meanings dictated by mythical representations. And today, sub-Saharan Africans live in a world radically different from the European one, where the dead never leaves the living for good; they only turn into ancestors, uniting the visible world with the “world beyond” in an absolute coexistence natural, evident in the practices of everyday life. Such a mentality is inaccessible to the Europeans. Western European cultures receive their energy from rational thinking, formed in the cult of logic and explaining the causality of phenomena. If there is a myth central to the current European mentality, it would be precisely that of individual

reason capable of disposing of reality, even controlling and shaping it for its own benefit.

Rational knowledge takes multiple forms in European culture. Scientific knowledge, philosophical knowledge, and practical knowledge, as predilection areas of the rational, do not exclude mystical or artistic knowledge but admit to them a relation of complementarity, sometimes active, sometimes suspiciously tolerant. Mentality, as a psychosocial phenomenon, results, at this level, especially from the exchanges of information that take place between scientific knowledge and knowledge specific to common sense, from the way in which they feed each other, oppose each other, or simply exclude each other. When we judge scientific knowledge, we notice that it belongs to the reified universe, which undertakes to systematically explain the world, impartially and independently of the human subject, because it rests on what is considered to be pure reality.

Knowledge and common sense

Common sense knowledge is profoundly different, because it belongs to the consensual universe, structured according to the reaction of the human subject to information, based on the principle of negotiation and mutual acceptance. And common-sense thinking is by no means as systematic as scientific thinking; it is based on collective memory and consensus, it actually builds group mentalities. Common sense is interested both in the material elements of immediate reality and in speculative inquiries, metaphysical questions like – *Is there a God? Who am I? Where do I come from where am I going? What is the origin of the universe*” are naturally associated in the mind of the anonymous citizen of today’s European societies with the direct questions: *“What kind of state do I live in? How does the law work? Who is doing me justice? Who do I vote with? Who represents me? How is the economy doing? What is the job market like...”*

The psychosociologist Serge Moscovici is one of those who plead for the rehabilitation of common sense, showing that the representations produced by common thinking are as rational as any others:

...I tried to rehabilitate common knowledge; it is based on our daily experience, on common language and on daily practices. But in reality we were reacting to a fundamental idea ... namely that “le peuple ne pense pas”, that is, not all people are capable of thinking rationally, but only intellectuals. My childhood and adolescence were marked by the fascist regime, so one could say that, on the contrary, intellectuals are not capable of rational thought, since, in the middle of the 20th century, they were also the moral authors of such theories as irrational as racism and Nazism. (Moscovici, 2002, p. 167)

Mentality and representation

In *The Phenomenon of Social Representation* (1984) Moscovici studies the path from science to common sense. His hypothesis can be considered provocative, but it opens a new perspective on the mutations in current European mentalities. Moscovici says that, initially, science was based on common sense; progressively, however, it transformed common sense into somewhat less common territory.

Today, we can say that common sense means science made known to everyone. Thus, the contemporary European man acquires his political mentality and economic mentality, social behavior and philosophical-religious attitude, in accordance with the new world shaped by technology and science, precisely extracting from the area of scientific knowledge not demonstrations and theories, but general ideas, explanations, opinions and images that populate and restructure the collective mental space, defining a new field of common knowledge. Moscovici's vision goes in the same direction:

If there is a knowledge system, the question arises: who is the subject of this knowledge, how can we imagine it in practice? For example, in recent social psychology he has been visualized as a science enthusiast, non-professional, as a novice, compared to an expert or a sophisticated scientist. When I started my research activity in the '50s, I anticipated an opposition between the professional researcher and the amateur philosopher, the former coming up with concrete questions about phenomena, and the latter asking questions of a general nature, about specific phenomena, and, instead of systematizing, it structures the elements of knowledge and the information collected in mental archives. Thus he extracts heterogeneous elements from the field of science, for example, and invests them in a meaningful whole that has a practical value for him. (Moscovici, 2002, pp. 181-182)

The phenomenon of representation

Cognitive psychology establishes that representation is the first level of organization of autonomous mental activity, independent of the presence and direct action of external objects. The source of representation is the information provided by sensations and perceptions, and its objective basis is memory itself, with its extremely complicated mental archives. If we abandon the too sterile language of psychology, we see the process of representation like this: a tree, the sun, a child, a circle, a man, gravity, thought are objective presences that populate the horizon of the world. The mind takes note of the existence of all these things and conceives an image capable of denoting the presence of the thing external to it and at the same time replacing it. From the mere sight of the work by the viewing subject, his own mind passes to the reflection of the work through resumption and repetition, for the benefit of the viewer, Transformed into a thinking subject. This

is how representation is born, an operation of reflexive transfer of work into images and ideas. There is, however, always an orientation in the representation process, which comes from the thinking subject's participation in the reflection of the thing.

No representation is absolutely innocent. It is also the reason why from the image of the representation to the idea provided by the representation there is a flexible interval, a kind of representational micro-space in which the meanings created or accepted by the thinking subject move, those that make the indissoluble link between the thing and its own representation in our minds. That is why the representation is not reduced to the image nor to the idea, it incorporates them into a dynamic sign, which even indicates the participation of each community and each individual in the invention and permanent re-invention of the world.

Representation is the beginning of any form of knowledge and any communication between man and the world. And the world itself is representation to the extent that to re-present means to duplicate everything in the world through a clear – a meaningful structure within reach of the thinking mind. The re-representation shows that each thinking subject would have his own mental copy of the world, if we ideally agree to substitute the sign for the presence of the thing and reduce the sign to the thing itself. All the dynamics of the representation of the world in the mind of the thinking subject is based on a mimetic economy, in which the work is split into a sign and an idea in order to be able to enter into mutual substitution operations. Only in this way does communication become possible, because the sign and the idea are manifested through language. I take the corporeality of language, its forms, its arbitrariness and logical rationality to tirelessly cover the distance between presentation and representation, between the reflective opacity of the sign and its transitive transparency, between the alienation of the thing in the sign and the identification of the thing with the sign. The plurality of languages makes it possible for the mimesis of representation to be competed by a non-mimetic economy, existing especially in artistic thinking, in the mythical and mystical imaginary.

The languages themselves and, through them, the communication phenomena are the first witnesses to the fact that the process of representation is not a dance between two, a mental game between the individual and the object – of whatever nature, physical, social, imaginary or real – subject to his attention. The dance of representation always has three partners, and the third is the otherness to which the individual self is constantly related, whether it is another individual or a group, a community or society as a whole. Therefore, the representation of the object is born in the interactive relationship between two subjects, the individual

subject and the social subject. The individual himself is never completely alone, just as he is never completely consumed by social otherness.

These aspects are commented on in psychology and social psychology studies, from Freud to Serge Moscovici. Freud still said:

The opposition between individual psychology and social psychology or crowd psychology, which may seem important at first sight, loses much of its sharpness if it is examined in depth. Of course, individual psychology has as its object the isolated man and seeks to find out in what ways he tries to obtain the satisfaction of his impulses, but, in doing so, it is only rarely – in certain exceptional conditions – capable of abstracting from the individual taken in isolation. The other regularly intervenes as a model, support and adversary, and by this fact, individual psychology is also, globally and simultaneously, a social psychology, in this extended but perfectly justified sense. (Freud, 1982, p. 123)

Just as there is objectively a society, outside of us, so each of us carries in mind a society from within, in which the voices of the family are associated and contradicted, with the voices of friends and colleagues, the voices of enemies, with the personalities of the day and of the to those identified as leaders, etc. And between the society inside and the society outside there is an open conflict, never exhausted, from the birth to the death of the individual, translated through victories and defeats on one side and the other, through negotiation and truce, through collaboration and incompatibility, through adaptation to social reality and the loneliness of the individual in the world.

The awareness of the fact that the representation is born on the same route in the circuit as the mentality (*mind - man - world*) indicates the representation as the fairest unit of measurement of mentalities. But it is not, in principle, all mental representations, but in particular social representations, because through them the multiple ways of organizing thought (in concepts, truths, beliefs, ideals, rules or prohibitions) and the plurality of ways of organization are manifested of the imaginary in symbols and sets of symbols. Social representations are more than a screen, an interface between the individual, society and the world; they are our natural way of thinking about the world, processing realities and exploring virtualities. Finally, social representations express our humanity and the specific way we place ourselves in the world.

But what are social representations, anyway? The concept and the expression itself were launched by Emile Durkheim in 1898. For him, social representations are a very general class of psychic and social phenomena, inherited and stable, produced by collective conceptualization, specific to the family, group, tribe, and encompassing myth, ideology, science. In Durkheim's view, social representations

are equivalent to the mental or cognitive part of the self-structuring of the rituals, beliefs and fundamental values of a society into sources of immutable authority:

A man who would not think through concepts would not be a man; since, once reduced to simple individual perceptions, he would not have a social being, but would be undifferentiated and animal. [...] To think conceptually does not mean only to isolate and group a set of characters common to a certain number of objects; it means to subsume what is variable to what is permanent, the individual to the social. (Durkheim, 1967, pp. 626-627)

In the 1960s-1970s, Serge Moscovici revived the concept and renamed it, focusing the social representation on the idea of evolution and mental change, induced by new knowledge. Moscovici's goal is to describe the movements and understanding at the level of public opinion, to observe the originality of social thought processes. Serge Moscovici thus founded a general theory of the elaboration and diffusion of knowledge in society, in organizations and in situations of confrontation, of divergence between groups. In this way, the study of social representations favors in research the positive relationships between people and their sociocognitive adaptation to an increasingly evolving world. The orientation given to the concept by Moscovici makes social representation a transdisciplinary notion, a dynamic ensemble hierarchically composed of knowledge and meanings, from which personal opinion, social attitude, collective imagination, the behaviors of groups and individuals in an evolutionary seen social environment are born:

The representations social are... dynamic ensembles, their status is that of producing behaviors and relationships with the environment, of action that changes both of them and not of reproducing these behaviors or relationships, of reacting to a stimulus exterior given. (Moscovici, 1994, p. 38)

From the perspective opened by Moscovici, social representations become tools of maximum efficiency in the study of mentalities. understood as systems with their own logic and language, with a structure of implications bringing together values and concepts, social representations have their own autonomous discourse about the specifics of any community's journey through the world:

Consistently they exceed what is immediately given in science or philosophically, the given classification of facts and events. A corpus of themes and principles can be seen here presenting a certain unity and applying to certain areas of existence and activity: medicine, psychology, physics, politics, etc. What, in these areas, is received from the outside and included in them, is subject to a transformation activity, of evolution, in order to obtain a knowledge that most of us use in our daily life. (Moscovici, 1994, p. 38)

Mentality and representation

During the use of social representations, the public and private spaces are populated with beings, with anonymous heroes and figures, social behavior is fueled with meanings, concepts come to life, become concrete, so that the texture of the reality of each of us is enriched by continuously shaping the dynamics of mentalities. That is why, since the 70s of the last century, there has been talk of the need for a pedagogy of social representations, because they delimit the field of possible communications, manage the values and ideas present in the visions adopted by any community, regulate desirable or accepted behaviors, specify prohibitions or limits at the level of a group's habit.

The visual culture and, after the explosion of the Internet, the virtual culture, constitute today real autonomous machines for manufacturing representations, enormously accelerating the process of their coagulation, change and schematization of representations, a phenomenon that decisively influences the contemporary flow of mentalities. Serge Moscovici and the entire psychological school initiated by him invite us to have a fundamentally intercultural vision of human thought. Imagining social groups in contact, with different situations and humanities, that advance, build, select, sort, recompose and renew the stock or archive of knowledge at their disposal, we can see the film of the mentalities and social-historical realities from which they come. The key to Moscovici's theory on social representations lies in the definition of objectification and anchoring mechanisms through which it is demonstrated that the influence of a community or a reference group can be decisive in the formation of major cultural orientations, within a vast social ensemble or in relation to certain values more or less universal.

In the description of mentalities, researchers prioritize the study of social representations and self-representations reflected in the discourse of freedom, knowledge, altruism, intolerance, religiosity, social justice or democracy, totalitarianism, the leader and the money, the sovereignty of the law, etc.

Conclusions. Mentality, a product of the known world

In order to analyze the mentality and to quantify it in images able to compose its identity imprint, we should know how to enter the mental space, how to read it and then how to translate it. But as long as we look at the mental space as an autonomous world, today we cannot speak of a parcelling and a universally recognized scientific regulation of it, especially after the partial bankruptcy of psychoanalysis and psychologism. "Pure" travel in mental space, totally independent of the outside world, is perhaps as nebulous and difficult as travel in outer space.

Fortunately, mental space is both autonomous and dependent on the outside world:

Even if we describe our mental space, with all its strange “mental substance”, as a complete universe, existing in parallel with the world perceived as being outside of us, both are nevertheless interdependent, to different degrees: the external world could not exist without the mental universe that perceives it, and instead the mental universe borrows its images from perceptions. Thus, at least the scenery and scenario of the mental universe depends on the real structures of perception. (Culianu, 2002, p. 38)

Therefore, there is an intangible fabric between society, nature (the real world, the perceived world) and the mind of each person. If we cannot describe the mentality as a product of the mind by situating ourselves only in its pure interiority, it is possible instead to analyze the mentality as a response of the mind to the demands of nature, existence, and society. We cannot know precisely what is happening in people’s minds, but we can observe how they act and how they react to reality, as a dynamic ensemble of stimuli and conditioning, limits and freedoms, chance, and predictability. On the other hand, the socio-natural environment influences and shapes individual mental spaces, feeds their imagination and memory, can direct the type of thinking and action.

In order to show the importance of the interweaving between *mind, nature, existence* and *society*, as a mechanism for expressing mentality, we must understand that the world known to any person orders and conditions his mental space, legitimizing a certain type of mentality. The mental space is an individual and collective reality in whose subtle dynamics the structure of the world known in childhood and adolescence often intervenes authoritatively, as a factor regulating perceptions and motivating decisions and value judgments. In these terms, the “*known world*” is synonymous with the original cultural model for an individual, for a group or for a generation. The need to preserve the original model is usually greater than the temptation to change or overcome it because it provides security and satisfies the eternal human nostalgia of returning to the past, a past often mythologized and associated with “lost paradises.”

When the known world brutally changes its face and becomes oppressive towards the Persian, in the specific terms of totalitarianism, a radical transformation of the space outside subjectivity occurs, which automatically leads to “...*the severe restriction of the limits of imagination and the imaginable and therefore of the perception of the real itself (for the real and the imaginable feed and enrich each other).*” (Călinescu, p. 202) The observation belongs to Matei

Călinescu and is the result of personal experience lived in the communist world in post-war Romania.

The world primarily known by the person and the community shapes the soft relief of the mental space in forms that, once installed, tend to stiffen and self-reproduce. This is how the representations that dynamically nourish the mentality are born. Fortunately, however, the ultimate content of the mind remains an unknown, in scientific terms, a great mystery that is part of the divine nature of man.

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Investigating the Future of ESP Teaching in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

A tendency in education is gradually slanted towards technology-integrated language learning. The majority of countries around the world have been increasingly compelled to use computer-mediated language learning in their higher educational system to bridge the gap between the learners' requirements and the needs of the global era. This current investigation is a case study conducted on 40 English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practitioners from various Algerian Higher Education institutions. It aims to explore the teachers' perceptions towards the use of artificial Intelligence technological applications in their ESP classrooms. It also examines the future of ESP teaching in the age of this current trend. Results revealed that teachers in general are aware of using a variety of AI tools to fit the digital revolution, be up-to-date with the current technology, meet the learners' needs and wants, and assist their teaching practices such as the process of Evaluation and assessment, course design, needs analysis and Identification. It has been recommended that the Algerian government should train ESP teachers to use AI as a supportive tool and exert excessive efforts and take the lead to implementing and designing suitable courses that are intended to bridge the gap between the fieldwork and the demands of the students' virtual age.

Keywords: *Age, Artificial Intelligence, ESP, future, Teaching.*

Introduction

Throughout history, ESP has witnessed a dramatic evolution and various approaches to course design with the ultimate aim of helping learners function effectively in their target discourse community. Anthony (2018) proposes that ESP is characterized by its specific approaches and features, which differ from general language teaching. These are, according to him, the Learner-centered Approach of Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the Multi-disciplinary Approach of Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), An attention to theory and practice, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Problem-Based Learning, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Content-based instruction (CBI). A tendency has also shifted from

traditional teaching to “online classroom”, “computer-assisted education”, and “personalized learning”. Scholars, as well as language practitioners, seek to improve language learning through technology-based approaches (Nickerson & Planken, 2016; Rahmani & Ghounane, 2023). An example of this cutting-edge technology is Artificial Intelligence (AI).

AI is known as a multidisciplinary concept, which is basically part of the area of computer science that focuses on finding solutions to cognitive issues like learning, problem-solving, and pattern recognition, which are frequently linked to human intelligence (Viktorivna et al, 2022). It also refers to a machine-based system characterized by “...its ability in providing a simulation of human intelligence processes that are handled by machines; in particular computer systems” (Zuraina, 2020, p. 1). Similarly, according to Huang et al. (2023), AI is a human-machine system that “can make predictions, recommendations, decisions influencing real or virtual environments” (p. 112).

Since the introduction of AI by John McCarthy in the 1950s, an enormous number of applications of language learning devices have been progressively developed. They are mobile apps that have a web-based version. In this vein, these phone-based apps such as Duolingo, Rosetta, Language Pro, Memrise, and chatGPT can be downloaded via Play Store. Some of them are free of charge, and others are allocated. Each one is characterized by its own function. In general, they are used to assist students in learning a new language, correcting their grammar, learning the four skills, developing their conversation and writing skills, summarizing texts, translating, paraphrasing articles, and so on (Prenga, 2020). Muhammad (2014) defines these applications as “...electronic neural networks, developed hybrid systems, applications of developmental algorithms, electronic auto-copying, adaptive electronic platforms, bio-robots, Nano-technology, chemical and organic systems, and advanced controlling systems” (p. 18).

Literature Review

ESP TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), by definition, is a goal-directed activity; it is an approach to language teaching that focuses on teaching those aspects of language use, skills, and genres that address the learners’ academic and professional needs. Anthony (2018, p. 1) states that “... English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners, focuses on the necessary language, genres, and skills to address these needs, and assists learners in meeting these needs through the use of general and/or discipline-specific teaching materials

and methods.” Students, in this context, play a central role, being old, knowledgeable in their field of study, and active participants in their teaching and learning process and are believed to be much more conscious of the importance of using English and their learning and target needs (Basterkmen, 2006; Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Thus, within the multimedia landscape and the advent of science and technology, it becomes indispensable to bridge the actual gap between the students’ language requirements and the needs of their global age. This cannot be done apart, according to Constantinou and Papadima-Sophocleous (2020), far from involving ESP learners in the learning process and developing their identities as global citizens. In the same respect, Deacon, Parkin, and Schneider (2017, p. 137) argue, “...it is now widely accepted that universities have a direct responsibility to prepare students for employment, and in the 21st century, this preparation needs to include digital literacy and competencies.”

As a result, an increasing trend in education is gradually oriented towards integrating technology into ESP classrooms. The majority of countries around the world have been increasingly compelled to use computer-assisted language learning (CALL) or Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in their higher educational system to modernize their curricula and their teaching frameworks, use a variety of technological evaluation and assessment techniques, and effectively respond to the process of globalization. Thus, the vision of face-to-face teaching, formal and traditional education in an ESP context becomes subject to revision and reconsideration. Different software applications have been used for pedagogical purposes. A final concern that has become an issue of heated debate is the notion of using technological tools to develop students’ 21st-century skills, such as collaborative learning, critical thinking, autonomous learning, lifelong learning, etc.

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of incorporating technology into ESP classrooms; Nickerson and Planken (2016), for instance, believe that nowadays, with the arrival of blended learning, it becomes necessary to use teaching materials that incorporate diverse forms of communication, along with various media and technological tools. This approach would enhance students’ comprehension of the latest media resources at their disposal, as well as their understanding of how these resources interact with each other and with conventional media. Classroom assignments and task-based simulations can play a crucial role in preparing students to utilize Business English in the context of new media while also equipping them with the skills to employ such media in a Business English workplace environment.

Likewise, Kirovska-Simjanoska (2020) considers that ESP learners are consistently connected through a variety of digital devices. Their lives are also heavily reliant on technology. Consequently, students bring with them their technological experience, as well as their beliefs and perceptions that technology should play a role in their education. Therefore, it is of great importance to shape and reshape the roles of both the learners and the teacher. He believes that the process of teaching and learning a language does not occur in a traditional classroom and should not end up after the learners leave their language classroom. Technology, according to him, has the potential to enable convenient access to content and mitigate the impact of geographical constraints.

To go a step further, Bouguebs et al. (2023) report that ESP teachers' role has to be modified to fit the requirements of the learners in today's digital world. In addition to teaching, designing adequate courses, collaborating with subject specialists, doing research, and evaluating, the ESP practitioner is now required more than ever to possess digital literacy and to keep their skills up-to-date with digital progress. This new profile will enable the ESP instructor to fulfill the multiple roles attributed to them in an ESP setting on the one hand and to meet the students' communicative needs of the digital age on the other. In this respect, they argue that these instruments can "brought new modes of teaching and learning to the surface, including Moodle platforms, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Google Classroom, Zoom, etc., reshaping ESP teaching and learning environment. Consequently, ESP pedagogy has been profoundly affected by ICT progress" (2023, p. 149).

THE USE OF AI IN ESP CLASSROOM

Many studies have been conducted on the use of AI-related technologies in English Language Teaching (ELT), in general, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in particular, where AE technological tools are assumed to be more effective and beneficial for both teachers and learners as they contribute to developing their deep learning, communicative skills, abilities, linguistic competence, etc. (Prenga, 2020; Kushmar et al, 2022; Chao et al, 2023).

Istrate (2018), for instance, presented her work on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning – Future Trends in Teaching ESL and ESP at an international scientific conference on eLearning and Software for Education, which was held in Bucharest. Indeed, she urges the need to adjust e-learning programs to the students' needs. She adds that universities should create artificially intelligent e-learning platforms that are tailored to the needs of the students through the integration of e-learning chatbots. This trend in ESP teaching, according to her,

will place a greater emphasis on the accomplishments of the individual, provide more chances for success in the acquisition of the target language, and allow for one-to-one interaction.

In another research, Zhu (2022) conducted a classroom-based investigation on teaching English to engineering students from the College of Foreign Languages at Jilin Agricultural University. He suggested a **Back Propagation Neural Network** (BPNN) approach based on the improved Grey Wolf Optimizer (GWO) algorithm. The findings demonstrated that this model is very beneficial for an ESP practitioner to discover his students' learning difficulties. Additionally, it allows for more student-teacher interaction and collaboration. He also found that the improved BPNN method based on the GWO algorithm can evaluate ESP teaching quality more scientifically and adequately in terms of teaching objectives, content, methods, and techniques. It can also offer valuable reference values for further improving the rank of ESP teaching.

Another research carried out regarding the effects of using ChatGPT in the Teaching and Learning of ESP is that of Ahmed *et al.* (2023) from the Cyprus International University and Near East University. They argue that this current AI technological platform uses powerful machine learning to produce text input answers that are remarkably human-like responses. Thus, learners can enhance their English language ability and “perform various natural language processing tasks, including text completion, translation, question answering, and summarizing” (p. 43). They add that this device is a very convenient tool for text generation. ESP instructors, in this respect, will get at their proposal a large dataset of texts depending on their learners' target discourse community such as business, medicine, and technology. This can be achieved by collecting sources from books, articles, magazines, and so on. Furthermore, they go a step further; they believe that ChatGPT can be a prevailing instrument to develop customized grammar and vocabulary courses for ESP learners due to its ability to gather a database of the students' subject-specific language use, in other words, what are the most common linguistic structures and terminology of a particular target setting. These task-based activities can be adapted to the students' requirements, language ability, and linguistic background.

Purpose of study

There are two principal aims of this current research:

1. To determine whether the ESP teachers' awareness of the significance of using artificial intelligence in their language instruction in different departments of various Algerian institutions in higher education.

2. To explore the role of this AI technological trend in enhancing the status of ESP teaching in the future.

This research highlights the importance of technology-integrated English Language classrooms in general and specialized language courses in particular. It provides the major extensive consideration of the role of the process of Needs Analysis and Identification in fitting the learners' needs and the demands of their digital age. It is hoped that this investigation constitutes a significant contribution to research by reconsidering the profile of ESP practitioners and revising the process of the course and syllabus design.

In accordance with the aforementioned objectives, the subsequent inquiries were addressed:

Q1. Are ESP teachers aware of the significance of using artificial Intelligence in their language classroom?

Q2. How can Artificial Intelligence enhance ESP instruction in the future?

To provide reliable answers to these research questions, it has been hypothesized:

H1. ESP teachers may be aware of the significance of using artificial Intelligence in their language classroom as it may have the potential to bridge the existing gap between learners' target and learning needs and meet the expectations of the global age.

H2. AI may enhance ESP instruction in the future by offering advantages for the teaching and learning process. ESP practitioners may manage their time, and develop their teaching abilities and practices.

Methodology

This current investigation is a case study conducted in Algerian higher education institutions in the first semester of the 2023 / 2024 academic year. This type of research is, by definition, a useful tool to explore and describe a phenomenon in context through the administration of one single or mixed-method approach. It has the potential to provide "...a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 181).

It was built on a total number of 40 ESP practitioners from various Algerian higher Education institutions and departments, including eleven Universities and the Higher School of Management, Tlemcen. The simple random sampling of this target population is composed of men and women who teach different types of ESP courses and their instructional experiences range from minimal to extensive level of experience who willingly agreed to take part in this investigation. The table below provides further description of the ESP practitioners' profiles:

Table 1
ESP Teachers' Profile

Item	Characteristics	Percentage
ESP teachers	women	26 = 65%
	men	15 = 35%
ESP Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	17 = 42,5 %
	From 5 to 10 years	10 = 25 %
	More than 10 years	13 = 32,5 %
Institution	Higher School of Management, Tlemcen	3 = 7,5%
	University of Tlemcen	8 = 20%
	University of Ain Temouchent	4 = 10%
	University of Oran	4 = 10%
	University of Tiaret	4 = 10 %
	University of Saida	2 = 5 %
	University of Mascara	6 = 15%
	University of Blida	2 = 5 %
	University of Naama	4 = 10 %
	University of Setif	2 = 5 %
	University of Adrar	2 = 5 %
University of Biskra	2 = 5 %	
Types of ESP course	English for Business and Commercial Science	12 = 30 %
	English for Science and Technology	15 = 37,5 %
	English for Social Sciences	8 = 20%
	English for Occupational Purposes	5 = 12, 5 %

A web-based questionnaire was administered to 40 ESP practitioners to identify their perceptions on the use of new emerging AI technology in ESP classrooms. This data-gathering instrument is recognized within the realm of educational research as affording the investigator an occasion to "... obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality, and behavioral intentions of research participants" (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 254). Moreover, the utilization of digital surveys is commonly accepted for its flexibility in being conducted in different formats, its ability to reach a larger sample of participants, its administration and analysis to be

accomplished in a time-efficient manner, and its use of various question types (Balka et al., 2013).

This online questionnaire comprises three distinct sections. The initial part pertains to the information background of ESP teachers. The second one concerns teachers' attitudes towards the use of artificial Intelligence in education. The final rubric is about the advantages of using AI in ESP Classroom. Regarding the protocols employed in the data collection process, it was carried out via Google Forms and distributed to ESP teachers through Uniform Resource Locator (URL) via their private electronic email addresses or teachers' social networking accounts and groups.

Results

To align with the objectives of the present investigation and obtain what is known as valid and reliable results in educational research, the researcher selected qualitative and quantitative data analysis to examine the questionnaire as a data-gathering tool. Additionally, the results were subsequently condensed and exhibited under the subsequent categories:

ESP teachers' awareness of the significance of using artificial Intelligence in their language classroom

Based on the results derived from the questionnaire as a data gathering tool, the findings have disclosed that ESP teachers, in general, were found to be aware of the significance of using artificial Intelligence in their language classroom. When asked to describe this current trend, most of them were able to define Artificial Intelligence. The majority of the responses stand for the use of technology, applications, and devices to solve human problems. The reported answers have been set out in table 2 below:

Table 2
ESP Teachers' Definitions of AI

Statement	Percentage
machine learning	5 = 12,5 %
a simulation of human intelligence	15 = 37,5 %
a digital revolution where technology is used to perform tasks	20 = 50 %

Additionally, most of the participants (65%) approved the use of AI in their ESP classroom. Furthermore, teachers were required to provide justifications for their answers. The most frequently cited rationales are reported as follows:

- To reach technology.
- To be always updated with nowadays teaching materials and techniques.
- It may be helpful for the teachers in many processes.
- It can be useful for elaborating the syllabus, preparing lessons, and setting adequate objectives.
 - It is helpful to assist our teaching practices.
 - It helps teachers to gain time and energy using smart tools.
 - It provides the advantage of organized information, allowing students to access knowledge from various sources effortlessly.

On the other hand, a minority of them (40%) expressed opposing views where they reported some issues related to the role of the teacher, the absence of human intelligence, and human face-to-face interaction, feelings, and kinesics.

In this respect, one participant commented:

[I am] in favor but with restrictions so that it does not go outside scientific ethics. It provides the advantage of organized information, allowing students to access knowledge from various sources effortlessly. However, it limits students' work and creativity.

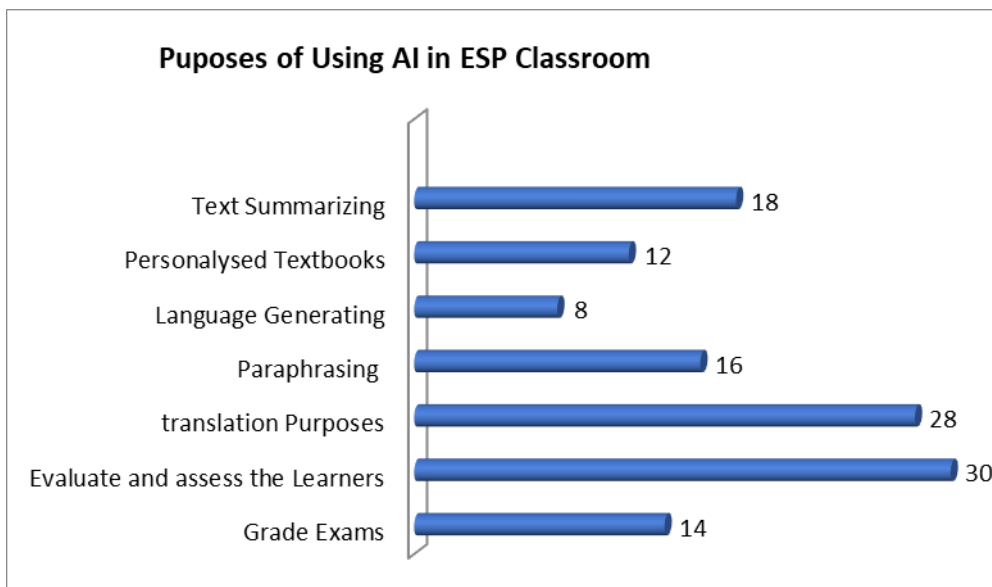
Another informant stated,

Yes, because it brings all students together virtually, it makes a long journey short by shortening distances and avoiding an opportunity for everyone to attend from their homes. No, because the reliability of AI is increasing so fast that it can probably replace human beings and eliminate their role as teachers and instructors. For students, it can raise their dependency on it, so there will be no originality and authenticity in research and academia.

Results also show that teachers encourage their ESP students to use different AI application tools. Chat GPT and Duo Lingo (35%) were claimed at the highest percentage, followed by Language Pro (30%). Rosetta Stone (15%) was placed at the lowest proportion. Additionally, the minority of them did not use any of them.

Further analysis of the data reveals that ESP teachers have different purposes for using AI, as illustrated in Figure 1. The process of Evaluation and assessment of the learners' performance was suggested as the highest percentage (75%), followed by translation Purposes (70%), Text Summarizing (45%), Paraphrasing (40%), and Grade exam (35%). In contrast, personalized textbooks (30%) and language generating (20%) were selected by only a minority of the teachers.

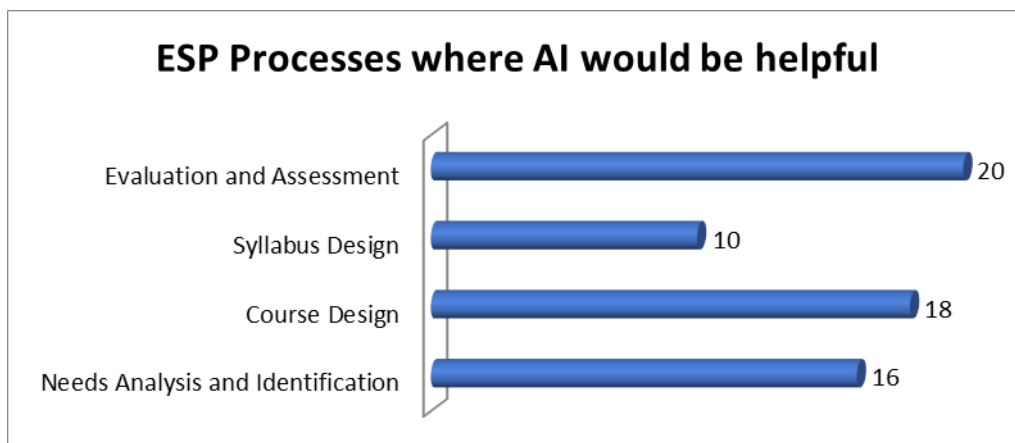
Figure 1
Purposes of Using AI in ESP Classroom



ENHANCING THE FUTURE OF ESP TEACHING THROUGH AI

To investigate the future of ESP instruction in the light of artificial intelligence, practitioners were required to pinpoint the various processes where this current trend would be very helpful. Results unveiled that **over half of those** surveyed indicated the process of Evaluation and Assessment at the highest rate, 45% agreed on Course Design, 40 % pointed out Needs Analysis and Identification, and less than 30 % proposed Syllabus Design, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2
ESP Processes where AI would be very helpful.



Investigating the Future of ESP Teaching in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

To explore the advantages and disadvantages of using AI in an ESP context, results showed that just about two-thirds of the participants (65%) reported that it would save teachers’ time and effort, 4% expressed their disagreement, while the minority (25 %) remained neutral. Around 60% of the ESP practitioners believed that AI technological applications would enable them to undertake the process of Needs Analysis and Identification, the minority of them (15%) did not accept this statement, and 25% were neutral. Another major trend displays a significant proportion of about (85 %) of the answers, which stands for the report of using AI for more time management and course planning. Over half of them suggested that it permits for an easy assessment of learners’ tasks and abilities; it enables students to improve their language and academic achievement and enables students to improve their language and academic achievement.

As summarized in the same table 3, results also unveiled that almost 45 % of the teachers believed that AI permits them to adapt the content to the learners’ requirements, a minority of them (15 %) disagreed with this idea. Findings also suggested that just under half of those surveyed indicated that AI will enable students to develop their 21st-century skills, such as problem-solving and autonomy; 35 % stated that it enables students to enhance their critical thinking.

Table 3
Advantages of using AI in ESP Context

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
AI will save teachers’ time and efforts	26 = 65%	4= 10%	10 = 25 %
AI will enable ESP teachers to analyze the learners’ needs	24 = 60 %	6 = 15 %	10 = 25 %
AI allows for more time management and course planning	34 = 85 %	4 = 10 %	2 = 5 %
AI permits an easy assessment of learners’ tasks and abilities	22 =55 %	6 =15 %	12 =30 %
AI permits to adapt the content to the learners’ requirement	18 =45 %	6 =15 %	16 = 40 %
AI will enable students to improve their language and academic achievement	20 =50 %	10 = 25 %	10 = 25 %
AI will enable students to enhance their critical thinking	14 = 35 %	16 = 40 %	10 = 25 %
AI will enable students to develop their 21 st century skills such as problem-solving and autonomy	18 = 45 %	8 = 20 %	14 = 35 %

Teachers were also invited to provide their opinions about the future of ESP in the light of AI. In this respect, they were requested to state if this new technology can enhance their roles. The majority of the responses were very positive; they argue that AI application tools can become a great teacher’s aide and supportive device that will enable teachers to inspire and guide students, do better in their language classroom, and provide more opportunities for self-directed learning.

Some felt that it was becoming trendy to study online rather than onsite. The reliance on applications to learn a language, for example, is more effective for better language acquisition. AI will enhance ESP teachers’ roles and many others because it gives more importance to the learners’ needs and lacks. However, others considered that AI can be a risk for the learners as they will be accustomed to the use of online platforms and social media and they tend always to return back to their smartphones’ applications. Face-to-face interaction and a variety of psychological aspects, such as their wants, motivation, and attitudes to learn the language, were also reported to be among the issues that can influence the ESP teaching and learning process.

As demonstrated in Table 4, findings indicated that the majority of the practitioners (80 %) supported the statement that ESP teachers, as well as learners, need to receive technical training to use AE in language classrooms. The overwhelming majority (90 %) endorsed the need to be supported to form partnerships to enhance their skills. Additionally, over two-thirds of them (65%) expressed a desire to be funded to purchase AI applications and tools.

Table 4
Recommendations for Using AI in ESP Classroom

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
ESP teachers, as well as learners, need to receive technical training to use AE in language classroom	32= 80 %	00=00%	8=20 %
ESP teachers, as well as learners, need to be funded to purchase AI applications and tools	26=65 %	6=15 %	8=20 %
ESP teachers, as well as learners, need to be supported to form partnerships to enhance their skills	36=90 %	00=00 %	4=20 %
ESP Teachers and learners should develop a positive attitude towards technology-integrated learning in general and AI in particular	30=75 %	00=00 %	10=25 %

Discussion

The starting objective of this current investigation is to determine whether the ESP teachers are aware of the importance of using artificial Intelligence in their language teaching. The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that practitioners, who are in charge of teaching different types of ESP, encouraged their learners to use a variety of AI to fit the digital revolution, be up-to-date with the current technology, meet the learners' needs and wants, and assist their teaching practices. This finding broadly supports the work of other studies in this area linking ESP to technology (Constantinou & Papadima-Sophocleous, 2020; Nickerson & Planken, 2016) who found that it is necessary to integrate different forms of technologies as well as different media and technological learning tools to fit the students' linguistic requirements and fulfill the needs of their global discourse community.

Moreover, the most compelling finding was that the overwhelming majority of teachers were conscious of the significance of AI in the process of Evaluation and assessment, course design, needs analysis and Identification. These identification results are in accord with recent studies indicating that Education must be adapted in one way or another to be consistent with the ever-changing social world imposed by the Net Generation (Jacobs & Nader-Grosbois, 2003). In light of these results, one can say that the first hypothesis is confirmed with states that ESP teachers may be aware of the significance of using artificial Intelligence in their language classroom as it may have the potential to bridge the existing gap between learners' target and learning needs and meet the expectations of the global age.

The second objective of this study is to explore the role of this AI technological trend in enhancing the status of ESP teaching in the future. Results unveiled that the vast majority of the teachers believed that AI could be a toolset in improving the teaching and learning process due to the various benefits it would offer for both instructors and learners. The bulk of answers stands for the idea of saving teachers' time and effort and analyzing the learners' needs. Over half of them believed that AI would permit an easy assessment of learners' tasks and abilities and enable students to improve their language and academic achievement. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in Ahmed *et al.*, 2023; Cardona *et al.* 2023; Istrate, 2018; Kushmar *et al.*, 2022; Rebolledo & González, 2023).

However, this study has been unable to demonstrate that AI can be used as a tool to adapt and personalized the content to the learners' requirements, develop

their 21st-century skills such as problem-solving and autonomy and enhance their critical thinking (Chen, Zou, Xie, & Cheng, 2021; Kessler, 2018). These surprising findings could have been generated by the absence of face-to-face teaching and human interaction, the lack of technical training, practitioners' negative attitudes towards the use of these new technologies in their language classroom, and its challenges to diminish their role as needs analyzer, course designer, and materials provider. Thus, in the light of these results, one can say that the second hypothesis, which states that AI may enhance ESP instruction in the future by offering advantages for the teaching and learning process, is also confirmed. ESP practitioners may manage their time and develop their teaching abilities and practices.

Conclusion

This present case study was based on 40 ESP teachers from different Algerian Higher Educational Institutions. Its primary objective was to explore the ESP practitioners' awareness of the significance of using artificial Intelligence in their language instruction and to investigate the role of this technological learning trend in enhancing the status of ESP teaching in the future. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that practitioners felt the necessity to integrate different forms of technologies as well as different media and technological tools to fit the students' linguistic requirements and fulfill the needs of their global discourse community. This study has found that they were generally conscious about the significance of using AI in the process of Evaluation and assessment, course design, needs analysis and Identification. This study has also identified that AI can be used as a toolset in improving the teaching and learning process for the numerous benefits it would offer for both instructors and learners.

The results of this study indicate that teaching English for Specific Purposes is increasingly providing too much concern to fit the learners' academic and professional requirements. Considering this fact, Algeria, like any other country, should exert considerable effort and take the lead in implementing and designing suitable courses that are intended to bridge the gap between fieldwork and the demands of the students' virtual age. Therefore, introducing AI learning tools might be a very important key in this respect if the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research might provide the necessary infrastructure by purchasing AI tools and applications and investing in training human assets to develop the ESP teachers' and learners' computing skills and enhance the teaching and learning practices.

The evidence from this study suggests that AI technologies are likely to be a useful tool to get access to texts specific to the students' discourse community. It might also provide an opportunity to personalize textbooks, generate terminology and grammar tasks, use a variety of interactive learning teaching resources, and provide corrective feedback. In this respect, AI can be used as a supportive tool to save teachers' efforts and assist and enhance their role but never diminish their responsibilities as ESP practitioners.

This current investigation was limited in terms of the small size of the sample population, the choice of a questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument, and the time constraint to reach the entire population. As a result, further studies may include a large number of ESP learners and teachers to expand the scope of this study and use additional research tools such as interviews and classroom observation to better scrutinize the role of AI in developing teaching techniques, strategies, practices, and enhancing learners' 21st-century skills.

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Acknowledgment: The author declares no conflicts of interests to disclose.

Editor's note: The manuscript was submitted on Oct 3, 2023 and was accepted for publication on 3 December 2023.

Social identity in the belligerent context

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Abstract

This article aims to explain how social identity is affected by unlimited access to scientific information and media through the internet in contemporary society. It also highlights the impact of the pandemic and the post-pandemic scenario, which has been worsened by the aggressive stance of the Russian Federation in Ukraine (as of February 24, 2022). These challenges will have a significant and long-lasting effect on society and its social identity.

Keywords: *social philosophy, human being, identity, renew, belligerent context.*

The concept of identity is a topic explored in various social sciences, focusing on diversity. At its core, the question of “Who am I?” is central to this exploration. Knowing someone’s name, where they come from, what they do, and their unique traits is essential for forming connections with them. Identity is shaped by both social and cultural factors, as well as the places where people live. Individual identity is a part of collective identity, and society provides security and a sense of belonging for its members. As we move further into the 21st century, ensuring the preservation of human identity and society is crucial for maintaining security and stability on a global scale.

It is widely recognized that the term “identity” was first introduced in philosophy by Parmenides, who lived in the 5th century BC. His statement “being is, non-being is not” is interpreted as meaning that the identity of an empirical being remains the same despite changes. This idea is now widely studied in the social and human sciences, particularly by existentialists.

The nominalist perspective, which emerged from Heraclitus’s ideas, opposes the current perspective. Heraclitus famously stated, “You cannot bathe twice in the same river,” and is also credited with the phrase “Everything flows” (*panta rhei*). This concept suggests that everything is constantly changing, and the identity of

any empirical being is dependent on the era and perspective from which it is discussed. Dubar argues that, from this viewpoint, the categories used to describe ever-changing empirical beings are simply names or words dependent on the language used. These categories serve as historically variable ways of identification within a specific context (Dubar, 2003).

Concerning Descartes's view, he locates the self at the apparent origin of thought: "I think, therefore I am." Hegel claims that "identity results from the mutual knowledge of the self and the other; it is the product of a conflictual process in which individual interactions, objective social practices, and subjective representations are constructed" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 85). At the same time, J-P Sartre and M. Heidegger believe that people are self-created. Ideas about the concept of identity can also be found in Aristotle, J. Locke, S. Schoemaker, or L. Wittgenstein.

In other perspectives, J. D Freeman (1993, p. 18) analyzes the concepts through the stories people tell about themselves as fiction: "That the elusive phenomenon we call "self" can be a fiction is not a very new idea. We find the same approach in D. Hume, F. Nietzsche, B. F. Skinner, and a lot of other authors. More recently, prominent poststructuralists like R. Barthes and M. Foucault have each thought in their own way about the "de substantialized" self, that is, to show why it cannot be seen as a thing, a linked entity, and to study it in the texture of the discourse itself where it is most often believed that it is found" (Freeman, 1993, p. 11).

Not less interesting is M. Schechtman's discussion of the "characterization question" in philosophy. The answer to this question is "the narrative self-constitution perspective." "The person's identity is constituted by the content of his narrative about himself. Individuals constitute themselves as persons by creating the narrative about themselves" (Schechtman, 1996, p. 94). The characterization question "defines a relationship between a person and their particular activities, experiences or characteristics" (Schechtman, 1996, p. 78). The answer to this question is important because "to define one's identity, one must be able to know not only which characteristics are part of its history, but also their role in this history – which characteristics are central and which are incidental" (Schechtman, 1996, p. 77).

Philosophical approaches to identity have been the basis of many developments in psychology or sociology. Thus, the psychological (more precisely, psychodynamic) and sociological approaches contest the essentialist interpretations of the concept (those which affirm, as the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (Marshall, 2003) also specifies, the existence of a core or a unique

essence of identity – the “true self” – which is coherent and remains more or less unchanged throughout life). These approaches treat identity as a process and study it diachronically.

At the same time, in the definition of individual identity, sociology tried to find the answer to the question: who are *we*? Us as a group, a culture, a country, and a society in general. Social identity theory developed from Henri Tajfel’s work on accentuation effects in perception (the 1960s), from his lifelong interest in the social psychology of prejudice, discrimination, intergroup conflict, and social change, and from his desire to create and advance European social psychology.

More than four decades removed from the fall of the Berlin Wall, the distant event is not just a historical one but rather a philosophical metaphor. The instrumental and administrative event is a much more complex one that has been sensitized at all levels, from regional and continental to global. However, the contemporaneity of the event also resizes the entire space of Europe, as well as each subject (society). The size of the event, however, did not exclude the vanities and dissatisfaction of those who were forced to rally to the new realities but not to give up their practices unfavorable to their neighbors.

Many hopes were attached to a unified Europe at the end of the 20th century, especially that the horrors of the two world conflagrations would not be repeated in the 21st century. Hopes to which the reality of more than two decades of this century proves the opposite (Pascaru, 2012). It can be seen that the integration did not diminish the aspirations of some authoritarian regimes that, through the democratic exercise of reaching power, left themselves with revenge claims. The democratic exercise to which so many hopes were linked in societies separated from the totalitarian system is distorted and used by ethnocratic groups to remain at the top of the pyramid (Pascaru, 2012).

Of course, these things happen all over the world, the important being how the regimes in the respective societies for their behavior are treated externally, from bilateral and regional relations to the structures of representative International Organizations. Why? The accumulated experience shows that authoritarian regimes are cemented on the most unbelievable abuses, and they become the norm if the sanctions are not prompt. Thus, transforming the idea of belonging to democratic and general human values into an ideological doctrine was only the beginning for society, including the passive participation of citizens. We are discussing ideological doctrines based on benchmarks that only apparently seem to be valued because the most succinct analysis indicates deviations from the value fund and the system of democratic and general human values (Fukuyama, 2018). Under the conditions of the openings of the Information Age, the danger of

deviations increases because its opportunities are used to manifest forms without content from the actions triggered on all societal levels (Susskind, 2019). Also, the opportunities of the openings are used excessively both to restrict the access to information of the members of the society with a solid propaganda system, as well as involvements in distorting the realities in the societies in the near or far vicinity. It is a kind of imperial neocommunist in the case of the Russian Federation that proliferated after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Empire and was insignificantly condemned by international bodies for violating international law (Pascaru, 2012). The authoritarian regime used this lack of reaction or a delayed one in some way to impose the doctrine of *imperial neo-communism* [authors' note] on former colonies and deprive them of the right to develop independently, even if, in the meantime, they also build their societal identities.

In the given context, we point out that, in the 21st century, doctrines of this kind can be elaborated not only with the seizure of power by authoritarian regimes but also by organizations with geographical locations and among the most diverse ideas. Moreover, regulatory mechanisms continue to lag behind opening new horizons in EI. It is about the fact that thanks to EI opportunities, the rise of information no longer depends on a certain level of education and one increased responsibility on the user's part (Nichols, 2019). So, together with access to information and irresponsible behavior on the part of the individual or the organization, the group's actions open a real Pandora's box. On the one hand, those whose activities may harm social norms and international law benefit from the democratic principle. On the other hand, the community members are deprived of the right to benefit from that principle because those who harmed it are rarely identified and remain unpunished. Also, the individual, the group, or the organizations become promoters of authoritarian regimes, supporting them in their societies, simultaneously using existing rights for themselves and subversive actions (Fukuyama, 2018).

As an example, the authoritarian regime in the Russian Federation for more than two decades influenced and intimidated the breakaway societies of the former USSR. Societies in which their way to build their own identity has rarely been hijacked, bringing them to the brink of disintegration and division, including with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) tools. During this, the regime in Moscow intervened constantly and brutally, violating international law from the instigation and training of separatist forces in various organizations under the slogan that their rights were being violated, the use of oil and natural gas as a weapon of subjugation to undeclared wars (Pascaru, 2012). The wars in which RF got involved started with the Republic of Moldova (1991-1992), Georgia (1992,

2008), and last but not least, the one of 2014 and February 24, 2022, against Ukraine. These things would have been impossible if RF had not been used externally by the information monopoly and security structures still using Soviet practices. Practice that helped the RF to get the place of the USSR in the UN Security Council, to become a guarantor together with the US for Ukraine that gave up its nuclear weapons in the Budapest Memorandum (1994) (Lazescu, 2022), or the employment of former high-ranking dignitaries in Gazprom's structures, etc. The network evolved thanks to the opening of new horizons. RF tried to open culture centers next to embassies whose activity over time proved to be one of subversive influence in the respective societies since the jeopardy of the electoral ballots, the entry into the database, including the case Cambridge-Analytica (Facebook) META, until the demonstrations of renouncing the sanctions introduced against RF as a result of the aggression against Ukraine (Pascaru, 2012).

Last but not least, in the hybrid war, the Russian Federation against Ukraine uses opportunities in the Informational Era. Opportunities that RF created involved not only Ukrainian society in the belligerent state but also this state, causing considerable disruption in all areas of activity at societal, regional, continental, and global levels. The belligerent state influences the axiological landmarks of identity, changes the behavior of the individual/groups in society, and weakens the value of the identity components. It is about the fact that the belligerent state undermines the security of the society and the individuals / groups that constitute it. Or, if until the open triggering of the military aggression of the FR, the society, including the Ukrainian one, was trying to ensure the security of all the members, including through the system of international law, the hostilities unleashed on 24.02.2022 have put under the sign of uncertainties the assurance of identity security beyond the geographical boundaries of the war.

In that context, it needs to report that the belligerent state has triggered tendencies that undermine social and individual identities. These trends are supported not only by the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political crises that lower the standard of living but also by an increased level of uncertainty in the long run. However, the longevity of the belligerent state is not consumed with the cessation of hostilities, and its consequences will be found over generations, as it was met after the second world conflagration. This is all the more so because the effects of the belligerent state are vertiginously induced in the virtual space by the networks. Also that, Ukraine, as well as the Republic of Moldova, are societies are looking to be independent states in Europe and part of the EU to align themselves with values and identity country and strictly not stay like in past times, part of the

Russian Empire or Russian Federation in the *Russian Cultural World*. However, the security of the societies of the former colonies of the Soviet Empire continues to be vulnerable as long as the FR, which declared itself its successor, has not mastered the lessons of the past regarding the growth and decline of empires and to concern itself with solving internal problems and to focus on the development of cohabiting entities and not to remain in the eternal search for the external enemy. Searches through which they solved their issues by destroying their neighbors (Pascaru, 2012).

Undoubtedly, the end of history declared at the end of the 20th century about time was nothing but a new beginning. Beginning on which he insisted insignificantly and perhaps most seriously that his load, being a lesser known one, required a complex approach. However, that end-beginning of history was anchored in the process of globalization and the establishment of unity in diversity and not in unification and submission. Thus, understanding the philosophy of the concept (Hadot, 2019) of unity in diversity encompasses socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural development to recognize a multicultural reality at the level of society with an assumed cultural identity. However, identity remains fragile and vulnerable because its construction, being an intra-societal one, is not absolved by outside interventions (Pascaru, 2012). We are talking about the intervention of the historical homeland faced by the former colonies of the Soviet Union through the Russian speakers, exponents of the imperial policies of denationalization, and who, over time, also attracted representatives of the younger generations into their orbit. This recruitment of young people, carried out against the background of the multiple crises faced by the new democracies, was transferred to the violation of the rights of national minorities by the majority ethnic groups. Over time, the slogan of the breach of the rights of minorities has revealed its true face and is cloaked in the struggle for the identity of the Russian World.

Unfortunately, the complexity of the identity problem at the level of society becomes a reference in the context of the pandemic effect, but also of the FR's undeclared war on Ukraine. Why? Because beyond the neo-imperial rhetoric of the Kremlin regime, the identity of the society is the forum for communication between the representatives of the identities. Communication constructs reality (Hadot, 2019) in contemporary society, ensuring the rallying of identities to the culturally assumed one but also supporting the perpetuation of the historical-axiological heritage. Contribution in which community values (acceptance, tolerance, and trust) are connected to the general human ones through the cultural space. The cultural space usually transcends the identity boundaries of society.

Still, it does not mean that it must be used as an aggressive weapon to destroy others or an entire society for the simple reason that space promotes the circuit of its values and denounces dangerous deviations from outside. However, after two decades of the 21st century, the need to reevaluate society's identity, particularly the culturally assumed one, is highlighted. Otherwise, attempts like the RF to rush in with the military to dismantle society and then, seeing it stopped, annex the temporarily occupied territories. The remark is that the reassessments will lead to the mobilization of the understanding of identity in contemporary society and the weight of cohabiting identities in protecting peace and overcoming the fear of war, but also condemning the respective way of resolving disputes

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The role of the Academic Society “Dacia” in the organization of reading rooms and reading societies in Bucovina

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Abstract

In Bucovina, academic societies and cultural societies from Cernăuți played an essential role in establishing and supporting with books and newspapers the reading rooms, reading societies and libraries. The following societies were among them: the academic societies “Junimea”, “Orthodox Academy” and “Dacia” and “Society for Romanian culture and literature in Bucovina”, a cultural society established in 1862. Most of the communes from the Bucovina districts (counties) functioned between 1890-1940 as reading offices, reading societies, reading houses or reading societies. “Dacia” academic society, founded in 1905, had an important role in the development of the reading rooms, by supporting with books and newspapers, carrying out cultural activities, cultural parties, conferences, celebrations, exhibitions and other events dedicated to the residents of the villages.

Keywords: *reading rooms, academic societies, “Dacia”, Bucovina, culture, villages, books, newspapers.*

Introduction

Academic societies and cultural societies in Bucovina had an important role in establishing and supporting with books and newspapers the reading rooms, reading societies and libraries in Bucovina. Among them were the following societies: the academic societies “Junimea”, “Orthodox Academy” and “Dacia” and “Society for Romanian culture and literature in Bucovina”. During the Habsburg rule, in the most communes and then counties, worked reading rooms, reading societies, reading houses or reading societies. “To the student societies which, through the rhythmicity of the manifestations, the duration of existence and the cultural tradition they formed and imposed on the consciousness of contemporaries, are the most representative of historical Bucovina” (Olaru, 2002, p. 78). The establishment of the University of Cernăuți in 1875 created a favorable framework for Romanian students from Bucovina to organize themselves in academic societies with a cultural purpose. “The development of culture played a

particularly important role in the process of formation and consolidation of national consciousness among Romanians. The expansion of the educational system, the standardization of the literary language, the arts and modern literature have equally contributed to the removal of barriers between the members of the nation, ensuring the achievement of what can be called “national solidarity”. [...] The national movement campaigned for equality in the rights of the Romanian language with the German one, for a culture in the modern language” (Purici, 1998, p. 14). At the beginning of the 20th century in Cernăuți, two currents of opinion and action circulated in the Bucovina academic environment regarding the carrying of activities organized by students. The so-called “democratic” current in Junimea, considerably strengthened after 1900 by a large influx of peasants’ sons arriving at the university from the high school in Suceava, tended to direct all students towards work and cultural propaganda in the popular masses (Doboș, 1930, p. 20).

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The initiative to support the villages by getting involved in cultural activity was appropriated by some of the students who were members of the “Junimea” Society. They resigned from this society and founded another one. Their desire was to establish a new society, “Dacia”, which will give them the opportunity to develop their aspirations. “Our society was founded on May 21st, 1905, by the university students: Balan, Doboș, Ivanovici, Logigan, Marian, Marcu, with the support of: Bârtoi Ghiță, Cezar Scalat, Aurel Halip, Alexandru Jîjîie, G-ghe Tofan and Florea Florescu (Doboș, 1930, p. 20).”

On the 4th of May 1905, the “Constitutive Assembly of DACIA” (Negură, 1988, p. 3) took place with 6 members who laid the foundations of the society, and then the number of members reached 12, according to the writings of Ion Negură. The student society had as its main objective “Spreading culture among the people, without neglecting other student’s duties”, (Negură, 1988, p. 3) a fact that was valued during its operation, especially through the involvement of students in supporting village communities with cultural, social and economic projects. This cultural program was put into practice by the academic society through free courses for illiterates and book lovers, popular banks were established, a collection titled “Popular Library” was edited and reading rooms were organized and developed and established the first archery societies in the villages (Negură, 1988, p. 36).

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The beginning was made with the establishment of “Reading rooms” in villages, a kind of popular casinos. But these, in order to live usefully, needed newspapers, suitable books, conferences and above all social-cultural propaganda. The founders, several priests and teachers, who had the courage to face the wrath of the master, made beautiful beginnings at the urging of the tireless theological student and editor Atanasie Gherman. (Doboş, 1930, p. 15)

Therefore, reading rooms and reading societies in Bucovina were supported by the “Society for Romanian Culture and Literature in Bucovina” and the Academic Society “Junimea” in Cernăuți, then after the appearance of the academic society “Dacia” in 1905 it was noticed a general involvement on the part of students, active members in the action of developing reading cabinets in rural communities. The Romanian students, enrolled in the academic society, were from the villages, [...] virgins from the people, who set out to spread the most useful teachings among the households from the villages and from under the cities of our fairs” (Foaia poporului, 1909, p. 3). Encouraged by the theological student Atanasie Gherman, some of the priests and teachers joined the activity of promoting and organizing the reading cabinets and registered as members of the society. This action of equipping reading rooms and libraries with books and newspapers was not an easy one, but the students from “Dacia” managed to fulfill the objectives specified in the company’s program. “Right from the moment of its establishment, the academic society attended all the social-cultural enterprises of the Cabinets, taking a close interest in the situation of these societies” (Doboş, 1930, p. 61) During this period, the reading rooms requested books and newspapers, to support its members. The difficult situation of the cabinets, noted by the “Dacia” Society, led them to request help from “Casa Şcoalelor” society in Bucharest and “Steaua” Library (Doboş, 1930, p. 61). In this context, the academic society made a call at the beginning of August 1905 to all the cabinets in Bucovina to have a clear picture of the situation, trying to solve the requirements for books and newspapers.

On August 6th, 1905, Dacia addressed the following call to all Reading rooms: “The total lack of books written for the understanding of the people greatly hinders the progress of the reading rooms in the country. The “Dacia” academic society, wanting to remove this lack, addressed the competent places and received several hundreds of popular books, which it will distribute to the Reading rooms. Reading rooms, who want these books for free, are asked to send us a small report, which contains: the committee, the number of members, the state of the library and the Reading rooms’s assets, as well as 20 money in postage stamps for sending the books’’. Daily management of the Dacia Academic Society. Cernăuți, Stones Street, No. 28 (Doboş, 1930, p. 61)

In the call launched by “Dacia” to the reading cabinets, a report was requested on the state of the book collection in the library, the number of members, information about the management committee and the wealth it had under it.

With this information, a real x-ray of the organization of the cabinets in the communes of Bucovina could be made. Eager to increase the number of books, newspapers and magazines in the cabinet libraries, in order to support those interested in books and reading, the “Dacia” Society in order to be able to cope with all these requests, [...] created a section: “People’s Library”, which would administer this cultural material” (Doboş, 1930, p. 62). The activity of equipping the reading rooms with publications continued until around the First World War, reaching “30,000 copies” (Doboş, 1930, p. 62). Delighted and satisfied with the help received from the “Dacia” Society, the reading rooms in Bucovina brought public thanks, or through letters, and in some localities, the society was honored with the status of honorary member of the cabinet. “The leadership of the Frația cabinet in Braşca wrote on August 20th, 1905: “The Dacia academic society has kindly enriched our society’s library with 20 very instructive and useful booklets for the people” (Doboş, 1930, p. 61). The “Albina” reading room from Costâna thanked for the “14 booklets” received, the “Buciumul” cabinet from Stulpicani wrote: “Small gifts are great treasures for us” (Doboş, 1930, p. 61) and “The undersigned reading society “Unirea” from Capul Codrului feels pleasantly obliged to bring the tireless academic society “Dacia” the most cordial thanks for the support provided” (Doboş, 1930, p. 61).

“Dacia” society offered free of charge the “Poporul” publication to the Reading cabinet in Bălăceana and sent books for the library to the archers in Bădeuți. “The brave society Dacia”, a handful of young people inspired for great things, thirsty for progress and guided by the principle of seeing their nation in bloom, also volunteered to donate to the Reading cabinet, “The Handsome Guide from Tişauti” many books” (Doboş, 1930, p. 63). In addition to the book donations from the “Dacia” Society, it also got involved in the cultural life of the villages by participating in the popular celebrations and parties organized by the reading rooms with “theatrical performances”. In this sense, “Drăgoi” cabinet from Drăgoieşti organized a party “[...] on July 23rd, 1905, when the secretary of Dacia, Dimitrie Logigan, with a band made up of several young teachers played a play to the full satisfaction for many spectators” (Doboş, 1930, p. 64).

Theatrical performances also continued in other localities in the area of Bucovina, forming a continued cultural tradition, [...] especially after the war, when under the leadership of Ştefan Pavelescu, Dacia troupe roamed under the

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patronage of General Mircescu, the commander of the VIIIth division, the alienated regions of Bucovina and northern Bassarabia” (Doboş, 1930, pp. 64-65). Respecting its statute and the programme presented at its establishment, “Dacia” Society emphasized its objective of supporting the reading rooms, nothing that “Another side of cultural propaganda is the content: historic, moral, social and economic. They were held by the Dacians on various occasions in Cabinets and Arcăşii and at courses for craftsmen.” (Doboş, 1930, p. 65).

At the end of 1905, the first conference of “Dacia” Society took place within the “Sprijinitorul” Cabinet in Ilişeşti, with the theme “anti-alcohol propaganda” (Doboş, 1930, p. 65), and in the following years these meetings continued with the participation of students, members of the organization. “Later, Gh. Tofan and V. Marcu, then all the young people, who wandered through Dacia, for the last few years they roamed the villages threatened by denationalization holding conferences on the history of the nation accompanied by projects with the schiopticon, commissioned by Dacia for this purpose” (Doboş, 1930, p. 65). The activity of those from “Dacia” expanded and, “In addition to supporting the cultural activities of the village reading rooms and the national houses, free courses were organized for Romanian craftsmen and a legal assistance service” (Diacon, 2002, p. 418). These free courses were for craftsmen and workers from Cernăuţi and the surrounding area and were held in the Greek Orthodox Primary School in Cernăuţi, thus contributing to the professional training and literacy of the illiterate, but also supporting education in the Romanian language through the aid provided students with low material incomes. In 1906, the “Dacia” Society appealed to the rural population to participate in the great exhibition in Bucharest.

To be able to participate in this exhibition, the president of the society, Filaret Doboş, asked for help from some societies from Bucovina and Romania, and Professor Nicolae Iorga from the kingdom sent him a letter, asking him to support the departure by train to Bucharest and accommodation for those who were to arrive at the exhibition.

Seeing now in your exhibition an eminent school for the peasant from Bucovina, overwhelmed by needs and even denationalized by the rush of foreigners, we decided to arrange in September a large expedition of the peasantry from Bucovina to Bucharest. We do this in agreement with all the real workers for the peasant cause in our country [...]. As you, Mr. Professor, you are a convinced defender of the peasant cause and a man of merit and move to Râmâni, we ask you to support our enterprise through newspapers and interventions.

*Yours devoted,
Filaret Doboş,*

Student in letters, president of "Dacia". (Doboş, 1930, p. 76)

"We invite all the peasantry, all the peasant societies in the country: the village banks, the reading rooms, the archers and the agricultural meetings, to leave in the month of *Septemvrie*, before the harvest with us in Bucharest." "Dacia" Society participated with 2,000 peasants in this large-scale action, and "Dacia Excursion was for the Bucovina peasants a living school on the material, cultural and military powers of the Free Kingdom" (Doboş, 1930, p. 93).

The activity of the students from "Dacia" has diversified through involvement in the editing of brochures and calendars and the publication of articles in the publications: "Junimea literară" and "Voința Poporului" and "To provide Cabinets, Archăşii and Popular Banks with a shelter safe and therefore the existence. Dacia supports the idea of raising National Houses in the villages with the competition of intellectuals raised from each village". (Doboş, 1930, p. 63).

The First World War left traces in the functioning of the society, it was closed, and the library, archive and furniture were moved out of the way of destruction. Gradually, after the war, the society was reopened and reorganized, and "Immediately after the Unification, the idea of uniting all the Romanian students' societies in Cernăuți in a single Center emerged, so an idea strongly supported by the political factors of the time in the press". (Doboş, 1930, p. 98) The society was established again in 1919, at first with a small number of members and few material resources, then a choir, an orchestra. A theater troupe was established with the participation of the members and the activity expanded. "In the second year after its establishment, it now had trucks or a special wagons at its disposal for cultural propaganda in these parts of the country, which were available every Sunday and holiday to transport members to different localities" (Doboş, 1930, p. 100). Filaret Doboş made a presentation of the society's activity and after 1919, the society participated in numerous cultural events in the villages of Bucovina and Basarabia, but also organized activities at its own reading room in Cernăuți. On July 18, 1919, "Dacia" encouraged "[...] all its members, who spend their holidays in the country, as well as all friends, acquaintances and well-wishers of the society to collect folklore material in order to publish a brochure for popular libraries". (Doboş, 1930, p. 105).

In 1921, the Society participated at the celebration organized by the "Mahala Reading House" (Doboş, 1930, p. 108) and in the following years, the Society's involvement in cultural activities in the community was visible, according to documentary research. On April 28th, 1922, the "Literary meeting" took place in the society's reading room. The emeritus member T. Balan holds a conference on

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the Revolution of 1848 in the Romanian countries” (Doboș, 1930, p. 108) and the society, until the end of the year made book donations to some reading rooms and established popular libraries. The reading room in Frasin received 40 books, Călineștii lui Cuparencu benefited from a donation of 70 volumes, and Cacica received 40 volumes (Doboș, 1930, p. 110). On July 15th, 1923, “Dacia” Society organized a folk party in Măzănești, Suceava County, and “Arcășia” from Drăgoiești also participated in this celebration. “On this occasion, in Măzănăiești, Dacia established the reading room “Vasile Găina”, in memory of the worthy university professor of this name from this commune. “Dacia” donated over a hundred books to the reading room, thus laying the foundations of a public library”. (Doboș, 1938, p. 110). That year, the society participated in numerous parties, celebrations and other cultural events in the localities of Bucovina (Câmpulung, Valea Seacă, Costâna, Buda, Roșa, Vatra Dornei, Cernăuți and others) (Doboș, 1938, p. 111). In September, “Dacia” gives an artistic contest at the folk celebration organized by the reading room “Mihaiu Viteazul” in Boian, Cernăuți County. Two plays were performed. Conference about the benefits of education” (Doboș, 1938, p. 111), and in the town of Arbore he responded to the invitation, made by the office “Luca Arbore” and the society “Trezvia” and “[...] Dacia organized a big party with theater and other artistic productions. A conference for the people was also held” (Doboș, 1938, p. 111). The cabinet’s activity continued in the following years, supporting the readers in cultural development by participating in the organized parties. In 1924 they got involved “in arranging a popular party with theater, recitations and dance” (Doboș, 1938, p. 113) alongside “Ștefan cel Mare” reading room from Dărmanesti.

Within the “Dacia” Society, there was a library and a reading room that supported the members with books and newspapers. At the beginning of the activity, “166 works in 419 volumes and brochures entered the library, partly by donation, partly by purchase (Doboș, 1930, p. 32). During 1906-1907, the society’s library made available to the members publications for information, the book fund developing through donations and purchases made by the society. “Among the donors are: The Committee of Bucovina Romanians for the general Romanian exhibition in Bucharest, the editorial office of the newspaper “Voința Națională” in Bucharest, soc. Acad. “Romania Jună” from Vienna, “Casa scoalelor” from Bucharest, honored soc. “Steaua” [...]” (Doboș, 1930, p. 38) and private individuals, including: Dr. I. G. Sbiera, Teodor Bălan, Ion Grămada, Liviu Marian, Isidor Ieșan and others. During this period, “715 works were borrowed in 766. Apart from these, the society also possesses a public library, which was well

researched, especially by craftsmen from the suburbs, borrowing books at over 150” (Doboş, 1930, p. 38). In 1930, the Society had a library with a fund of 4347 volumes worth 300,000, structured by domains as follows: 2410 Romanian literary books, 700 scientific books, 820 books in German, 117 books in French and 300 related magazines (Doboş, 1930, p. 134).

The society’s reading room carried out its activity, coming to the aid of students and craftsmen from the area of Cernăuți and its surroundings. “There were 13 literary and scientific magazines and 23 political newspapers available to the members in the reading room, some of which were purchased at public expense, some of which were received free of charge” (Doboş, 1930, p. 134). “Dacia” society also supported the establishment of archery societies in the villages of Bucovina, and to implement the objectives proposed for the development of these archers, the realization of “firefighter exercises was encouraged; gymnastic and athletic exercises; the organization of pompous processions, gymnastic, musical productions, reading rooms and public libraries; the maintenance of didactic courses and useful conferences” (Diacon, 2002, p. 421). “Conceived as national propaganda societies among the youth of the state, archers carried out, with the support of other cultural societies, actions that contributed to the development of national consciousness, to the emancipation of the Romanian peasantry on cultural, socio-economic and political level” (Diacon, 2002, p. 423). They collaborated with the reading offices, organizing activities, sometimes they held meetings in the office headquarters in the locality and supplemented the activities of the offices through their involvement.

After the union of Bucovina with Romania, “Dacia” Society continued with the organization of celebrations and conferences in the society’s reading rooms, but also in the localities of the territory. Between the years 1924 and 1930, numerous conferences and literary sessions addressed to members, students, but also supporters were held in the cabinet belonging to the “Dacia” Society with a varied and interesting theme, and in this sense, we mention here only a part of these speeches: “The Hurmuzăchesti Family supported by the emeritus member Teodor Bălan, “The role of students in social life” presented by the honorary member Traian Brăileanu, “The columnist type; Mihaiu Teliman, Bucovina’s columnist, presented by the emeritus member Vasile Paşchivski, Prof. Huţan spoke about “Interesting types from the animal kingdom”, student D. Sofroniuc presented “Historical moments from the life of our nation”. (The sociologist Traian Brăiloiu completed the series of conferences with a sociological theme, and in 1930, the president of “Dacia” society, Ion Negură, made a presentation with the title “History of our society”. “Dacia” society continued the series of cultural

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activities in the following years and “carried on with the same youthful vigor until 1938, the society acting together with the other associations as a dynamic factor of the national-cultural life in the northeastern corner of the country”. (Negură, 1988)

Conclusions

The student societies contributed to the establishment of reading rooms in the communes of Bucovina and “Priests and teachers on the one hand, students and politicians on the other, competed in the action of establishing reading rooms. This is the only way to explain the fact that in less than 20 years all of Romanian Bucovina was covered with reading rooms” (Loghin, 1943, p. 206). In 1938, the government decided to close all students’ societies, and “On October 24th, 1938, all students’ societies in Romania were dissolved, their place being taken by a single official student organization, which, however, did not enjoy any audience from the students” (Loghin, 1943, p. 206). The abolition of student associations in Bucovina in particular and in Romania in general, led to the cessation of cultural activities in the territory and a huge void on the map of academic societies with a pronounced cultural character. Therefore, “Student societies by their status, the rhythmicity of supported manifestations, the duration of their existence and the cultural tradition they formed and imposed on the consciousness of contemporaries are the most representative associations with a cultural character in Bucovina”. (Dugan-Opaïț, 2015, p. XXIV) and “Dacia” society through its cultural, material and spiritual actions, it was among the societies that contributed to the development of reading rooms in Bucovina.

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A canonical analysis on the organization of monastic life in the Romanian Orthodox Church, in the period 1859-1866

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Abstract

The study presents a synthetic canonical analysis on the organization of monastic life in the Romanian Orthodox Church, in the period 1859-1866. The reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza was a period of crisis of Romanian monasticism. “With the middle of the 19th century, our monastic life enters a period of crisis and the dominance of the secular spirit. It is true, in the meantime, some attempts were made to get out of the impasse, but the fruits did not always correspond to the efforts” (Viața monahală în ultimii 10 ani: 510). The crisis does not originate in church regulations. The crisis was fueled by the modernist reforms that Alexandru Ioan Cuza initiated. Actually, the period between the election of the Moldavian colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza as ruler of both principalities, on January 5, 1859 in Moldova and on January 24, 1859 in Wallachia and the moment on February 11, 1866, when Cuza is forced to abdicate, is a time of extensive civil reforms, which did not bypass the Church and, therefore, monastic life. The regulations of the Cuza regime impose the State as absolute authority regarding the organization of monasticism, especially regarding economic and administrative aspects. The consequences of the regulations from 1859-1866 will affect Romanian monasticism until the 1930s.

The main factor that determined such a reaction from the civil authorities during the Cuza period was the historical context, which highlights a series of problems with sometimes legal content, regarding the functions and rights of some Greek monks and hierarchs in Romanian monasteries.

Keywords: *Romanian Orthodox Church, canonical analysis, monastic life.*

Introduction

After the period of the ecumenical councils, the nomocanonical tradition spread and was taken up and applied in numerous ecclesial communities. Referring exclusively to the Romanian space, we can affirm that, at least until the beginning of the modern period, through rules and other legal collections, the entire nomocanonical tradition related to monastic life was transmitted, a fact that justifies the reality that, until 1859, monastic life in the Romanian Orthodox Church was carried out in accordance with the canonical and nomocanonical rules known throughout the Orthodox East.

In the period up to 1859, we find numerous testimonies that affirm the faithfulness of Romanian monasticism to the orthodox canonical principles regarding monastic life. As an example, I recall that in the 18th century, part of the reforms of the ruler Constantin Mavrocordat looked at monasticism. The most important document in this regard was the *Settlement for Wallachia* (February 7, 1740). In the content of *Article I*, the ruler regulated that all monasteries in Wallachia, without exception, be exempted from paying taxes and duties. The second article of *Mavrocordat's Constitution* refers to the situation of the clergy in the monasteries.

From the contents of these articles we find some information about the historical and legal-fiscal order. We are interested, however, in the fact that the ruler places special emphasis on the preservation and good administration of the monastic patrimony, especially in the conditions where, as we observed above, they were exempted from the payment of taxes. In this sense, the name of the savings was recognized, which contributed to the preservation and correct administration of the patrimony of a monastery, both in terms of results and in terms of expenses. The purpose of such a regulation is twofold, as it appears from the text of the law itself: on the one hand, the aim is to increase the revenues of the monasteries; on the other hand, the ruler's objective was to discourage those monks who, pursuing their own material interests, affected the well-being of the monastery. Entrusting the administration of monastic patrimony to persons with responsibilities in this regard is not a new aspect from a canonical point of view.

In the second half of the 18th century, Alexandru Ipsilanti, through a charter (*Hrisov*) given in 1776, referred to the monasteries in Wallachia. The normative act was promulgated by the ruler with the aim of "*putting order in the monasteries in the country*". Regarding the monasteries, the charter (*Hrisovul*) ordered the election and obligations of the treasurer, the administration of the monastery's patrimony, the appointment of the abbot, the rules imposed on the monk upon entering the monastery.

At the end of the document, it is specified who exactly had the duty to respect the rules decided by the ruler of Ipsilanti:

...these rules will apply to all monasteries. He also thinks of those to whom [monasteries] are worshiped ... mountains. He consulted Metropolitan Grigorie and the writings of a Basil, Teodor Studitul, Ephrem the Syrian. (Danielescu, 2011, pp. 87-89)

Because of these last clarifications, in which reference is made to the sources that were the basis for the elaboration of the charter (*Hrisovul*), we note the

influence that the patristic tradition church had in the elaboration of the normative act that was the subject of the presentation above.

It is not by chance that I mentioned these two normative documents. They indicate that the monastic life in the Romanian Orthodox Church was carried out respecting the canonical principles imposed by the canons and the nomocanonical or rule law, especially that, towards the end of the 18th century, through the efforts of the Pious Nicodemus Aghioritus and the hieromonk Agapios Laonardos, the *Pidalion*, also entitled *Rudder of the ship of the Church*, which included the entire canonical *corpus* of the Orthodox Church, according to the original Greek text, had been popularized and circulated in Romanian space as well (Ioan I. ICĂ jr., p. 229)

The fact that, in the ecclesiastical space, with regard to monastic life, the canonical ordinances were taken into account is also demonstrated by the *The Testament of Saint Pious George (Testamentul Sfântului Cuvios Gheorghe)* (1730-1806), abbot of the Cernica and Căldărușani Monasteries. The *The Testament of Saint Pious George (Testamentul Sfântului Cuvios Gheorghe)* is important both for its extent (Danielescu, 2011, pp. 106-134) and for the rules it contains. We consider it an important source of church legislation from the beginning of the 19th century, because it also refers to some important legal aspects. Thus, the author of the will finds it appropriate to appoint and leave, after his death, a responsible steward in the monastery.

We note, once again, from this text of the testament, the important role that the treasurer had within the monastery, as well as the fact that, regardless of the organization, the monastery remained in obedience to the local hierarch and the metropolitan of Wallachia, as the first hierarch of the Church Orthodox from Wallachia.

The will does not refer to any civil law or any State authority but is based exclusively on the church's canonical tradition (as can be seen from its contents). For the most part, in addition to the administrative aspects that I mentioned above, the document contains many ordinances with a liturgical and typical regime. Nevertheless, it remains a reference document of the Phanariot era, less for its content and more for the fact that, in the context of such a complex period in the history of Wallachia, it determined some legal effects. This aspect constitutes an additional testimony to note the influence that the canonical tradition, so cultivated by the rules of those times, had in the Phanariot era, especially in terms of preserving the autonomy of the Church.

Bearing witness to these few civil and ecclesiastical texts with normative value presented above, we are convinced by the fact that the application of canonical and nomocanonical principles was also applied in the period 1859-1866, even if in this period of only seven years we do not have a set of ecclesiastical regulations regarding Romanian monasticism.

The reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza – a period of crisis of Romanian monasticism.

With the middle of the 19th century, our monastic life enters a period of crisis and the dominance of the secular spirit. It is true, in the meantime, some attempts were made to get out of the impasse, but the fruits did not always correspond to the efforts. (Viața monahală în ultimii 10 ani, 1958, p. 510)

The crisis does not originate in church regulations. The crisis was fueled by the modernist reforms that Alexandru Ioan Cuza initiated. Actually, the period between the election of the Moldavian colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza as ruler of both principalities, on January 5, 1859 in Moldova and on January 24, 1859 in Wallachia and the moment on February 11, 1866, when Cuza is forced to abdicate, is a time of extensive civil reforms, which did not bypass the Church and, therefore, monastic life.

From an ecclesiastical point of view, however, during this period there were no reforms regarding monastic life, a fact that encourages the idea that monasticism in the Romanian space conformed to known canonical rigors.

From the contents of the research works we learn that, during this period, some bishops were interested in the culturalization of the monks. Thus, as bishop of Buzău, Dionisie Romano opened, in 1861, the monastic school at the Nifon hermitage (Buzău), where the abbots sent brothers and young monks, responding warmly to the call made by the bishop. In the same year, at his own expense, he founded, in the Rătești-Buzău hermitage and then at the Cotești-Râmnicul Sărat monastery, the school for the enlightenment of monks and girls from neighboring villages. At the urging of the bishop, the abbots and abbesses each set up a small school in their monasteries for the education of both the young and the elderly. Also during this period, schools appeared sporadically at the Putna Monastery, Slatina, etc.

Regarding Transylvania, for this period, we have the testimony of Onisifor Ghibu, who says that:

...in the entire metropolis we have only one monastery, at Hodoș-Bodrog, near Arad, with about five monks. According to the organic statute, the monastery, on the one hand, has the qualities of an ecclesiastical commune, on the other hand, it is

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coordinated by a deanery and, as such, is directly subject to the diocesan authorities. The monastery is led by the monastic synod, which consists of the hieromonks and hierodeacons of the monastery. Of these, the former have a decisive will, the latter a consultative one. The president of the synod is an abbot. The hegumen is chosen by the synod, under the leadership of the bishop, and the bishop strengthens and ordains him. (Ghibu, 1915, p. 46)

Legal provisions regarding the organization of monastic life, in the Romanian Orthodox Church, in the period 1859-1866

In matters of monastic life, the period 1859-1866, known in Romanian history as the period of Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reign, is characterized from a legal point of view by the reforms carried out by the executor of the Union of 1859. These reforms cannot be viewed separately from the political and social context of the time:

...another open wound in the body of the Orthodox Church in the Romanian Principalities was represented by the monasteries dedicated to the Holy Places and administered by Greek monks, who took their income abroad, often even for their own benefit. This issue was resolved only during the time of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the first ruler of Romania. (Cotan, 2021, p. 116)

It is understood that the position of ruler Cuza towards Romanian monasticism, in the period 1859-1866, does not concern the background of monastic life, based on canonical and nomocanonical principles, but rather a series of practices carried out by foreign monks or bishops (usually of Greek origin), practices that were seen as harmful to the country. This perspective regarding the situation of Romanian monasteries until Cuza's reforms is often indicated in specialized studies. Thus, in a study from 1902, reference is made to both consecrated Romanian monastic places that depended on monasteries and hermitages in the East, as well as non-consecrated ones. The wills that the donors made stipulated that the monasteries and acaretries on their estates were to be kept in good condition, that poor girls should be married from their wealth, that help should be given to the needy, the infirm, the travelers, and only if there was something extra outside of these benefactions, to be sent as aid to the holy places.

The Greek abbots sought to destroy these wills, most documents of this kind were burned, as did Nectarius, the last Greek metropolitan. In this state were the monasteries from the 15th century, until after 1822. It is also remembered that after Tudor Vladimirescu's Revolution, calling themselves earthly lords in the Principality, they sought to cleanse the holy places of worship of Greek gangrene. Thus, all the Greek priests were kicked out and replaced by Romanian ones. Most of the non-consecrated monasteries had epitropos and received from the Phanariot

lords charters and renewals of charters for various privileges, and the consecrated ones had founders. In the 19th century, during the reign of Alexandru Moruzi, abbots were appointed to unconsecrated monasteries, by the lord, on the recommendation of the bishop or the metropolitan. Later, this recommendation became dispensable for the gentleman (Stănescu, 1970, pp. 82-86).

For his part, the historian Ștefan Berechet mentions a letter that was published in the former magazine of the Theological Academy in Saint Petersburg, *Hristianscoe citenie*. This letter appeared in the magazine mentioned above, in the article entitled “Letters of ecclesiastical and lay persons to Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow”. The article reproduces the letter of Nicolae Roznovanu to Filaret of Moscow. From this letter we learn that the issuer wanted to get the throne of Moldavia with Russian help. The author of the letter presents to the Metropolitan of Moscow the abuses committed by the government in the period 1860-1864, with the help of the Metropolitan of Moldova, Sofronie, namely: the expulsion of Greek monks, the cessation of the Holy Liturgy in Greek, the introduction of the study of Latin and French in schools, measures that he qualifies as anti-Orthodox (Berechet, 1925, pp. 75-78).

Cuza “...comes with radical reforms in the ecclesiastical field as well. Following the coup d'état of May 2, 1864, he ruled the country on the basis of the plebiscite Statute, which ensures extensive rights, assisted by a State Council” (Mateiu, 1922, pp. 131-132). Before proceeding to the actual presentation of the text of some normative acts incident to monasticism, in the period 1859-1866, I consider it important to specify that Alexandru Ioan Cuza in 1859 took the assets of several Chinovian monasteries – Agapia, Adam, Neamț, Secu, Vărătic and Vorona. These monasteries had their assets taken, their workshops were abolished, their cattle, beehives and other assets were sold, their documents and things related to the church administration of their assets were taken away, they were instituted in addition to each abbot an administrative committee, and their properties were placed under the administration of the Ministry of Religion.

As a result of this measure, Metropolitan Sofronie of Moldova protested. On August 16, 1860, the monasteries of Doljești, Zagavia and 31 other hermitages were abolished – their churches being transformed into churches of myrrh, hospices for beggars, settlements for invalids, etc. And this measure sparked the protests of Metropolitan Sofronie Miclescu. After returning from a visit to Constantinople, ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza delivered a speech in front of the other state authorities, in which he showed that Metropolitan Sofronie Miclescu opposed progress, urged the people to anarchy and abused spiritual power. We also learn from this speech that Sofronie opposed the dismissal of the abbot of the Neamț

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Monastery. The Metropolitan of Moldova was forced to withdraw, after which he reconciled with the state authorities. In 1861 Sofronie died, being buried at the Neamț Monastery. On December 15, 1859, the Cuza government abolished catechetical schools. These schools were merged with the primary schools.

In 1860, the University of Iași was established, within which a Faculty of Theology also functioned. It operated until 1864, when it was abolished due to lack of funds. Alexandru Ioan Cuza decided that the Seminaries should come under the administration of the Ministry of Cults, and a regulation for the Seminaries was also issued. In 1864, the Law of Instruction was given, a normative act that provided for the unification of seminary education in Romania and the equalization of programs. Another measure of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, taken in 1863, was for the divine service to be performed only in the Romanian language. The only churches where divine service was allowed in Greek were: Saint John the Great Monastery in Bucharest (monastery that was demolished in 1893), Dancul Monastery in Iasi and the Church of the Holy Archangels (cathedral) in Brăila (where the service was held mixed).

The law of the secularization of monastic assets given by the Cuza regime was prepared through several measures: the inventory of the odors of the churches of the consecrated monasteries, the establishment of the revenues of the consecrated monasteries, etc. On December 13, 1863, the Government presented the bill for the secularization of monastic assets to the Chamber, a bill that was voted on unanimously. The law was promulgated on December 17, 1863, and aroused enthusiasm among the population.

In early 1864, the government wanted to introduce the Gregorian calendar. Under the presidency of Metropolitan Nifon, the Council for the Calendar – made up of hierarchs – met to debate whether the calendar represented a dogmatic or a scientific problem. On January 18, the Calendar Council rejected the idea of introducing the new calendar. Anyway, this idea of introducing the Gregorian calendar generated wide protests in the country. On March 27, 1864, the Law on Burials was issued. A little later, the Communal Law was passed, by which the Church was deprived of the right to draw up civil status documents; this law also stipulated that divorces would only take place in civil courts.

On December 6, 1864, the Organic Decree for wearing the monastic scheme was given, which contains regulations regarding entry into monasticism. Also, on December 6, 1864, a decree was issued regarding the establishment of a central synodal authority. The decree also provided for the non-dependence of the Church on any foreign authority. Also, in 1864, the law was passed for the appointment of

metropolitans and diocesan bishops in Romania. This law generated the struggle for canonicity. Alexandru Ioan Cuza defended his reforms and the autocephaly of the Romanian Church, entering into conflict with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Romanian monasticism during the Cuza regime

During this period, Romanian monasticism was subjected to extensive reforms, the purpose of which was, according to the thinking of the time, the “*improvement*” of monastic life.

In chronological order, the main normative acts regarding monastic life adopted by the civil authorities in the period 1859-1866 are the following:

Legea pentru secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (*The law for the secularization of monastic assets*) (1863) (Costescu, p. 595) According to the normative act, “*all the assets of the monasteries in Romania are and remain assets of the State*” (art. 1). However, the legislator does not distinguish between consecrated and non-consecrated monasteries, nor does it make additional specifications regarding the categories of assets concerned, which is why including “*the income of these assets was included among the ordinary revenues of the State budget*” (art. 2). In the content of art. 3, the normative act regulated the allocation of aid to the holy places to which some earthly monasteries were dedicated:

A sum is allocated to the holy places to which some of the earthly monasteries were dedicated, and this is only under the title of aid, in accordance with the intention of their dedication. This amount will be limited to a maximum of eighty-two (no. 82) million lei, the rate from Constantinople, once and for all, including the 31, i.e. thirty-one million, which the holy places owe to Romania, according to previous stipulations.

Art. 4 establishes:

The religious communities of the lower places will be obliged to give annual accounts about the use of the income above the said capital.

In the text of Art. 5 stated that the only reason for which the religious communities were allowed to use the income obtained was for the maintenance of the church and its annexed establishments.

According to Art. 6, the Government

took back, from the Greek abbots, the ornaments, books and sacred vessels, with which the piety of our ancestors had endowed these settlements, as well as the documents that were entrusted to the said abbots, and this according to the inventories found in the country’s archives.

Art. 7 and Art. 8 regulated the construction, in Constantinople, of a school and a hospital for Christians of all rites. The last article established the

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responsibility of the Government “*taking the necessary measures to guarantee the capital of 51 million, as well as regarding the use of the income of this capital*” (art. 9). The normative act has been criticized on many occasions for its provisions.

In this regard, I recall the study ***, *Secularizarea averilor monastirești. Biserica și Școala (Secularization of monastic assets. Church and School)*, II (1891, no. 10, pp. 255-270). According to the study, among Romanians, donations to the Church were higher than among other nations. Our ancestors did not build schools, but churches. Although the assets of the Church have always been respected, the time also came when some who moved away from the ancient virtues, wanted to transfer these assets to state property, without understanding that they would be used in favor of those in need. Instead of proceeding to the secularization of these assets, it would have been better to impose a control over them, so that there are no abuses. If the assets were transferred to the state patrimony and a better use than the Church would have been found, the right of the donor would have been attacked.

The state did not need these fortunes, because the expenses could be covered by public donations. The church money is to be used for non-Christian purposes, such as the support of other religions, the payment of foreign language teachers for Dobrogean schools. The secularization of wealth leads to their misuse due to the ignorance of ministries to identify the needs of churches, estates and the poor. Then it is not possible to know exactly what a certain ministry does with the respective assets.

After secularization, the bishops must wait for the acceptance of the civil power, if someone wants to donate to the church. Instead, if a monastery or church was asked to be restored, the ministry replied that it had no money.

After secularization, sometimes even the bishops damaged the Church. The biggest harm done by secularization was that it discourages people from making such donations. A damage to the state was the loss of the monastic domains in Bessarabia. Through this study from 1891, it is stated that it would be good to return the assets of the church and to put control over them. The estates of the monasteries should be exploited, and the fruits should be used for the maintenance of the edifice, and the surplus should be used for the maintenance of churches, schools, hospitals. Charitable settlements made willingly are more carefully supervised and it is easier to observe the needs of everyone. Selling state estates means depriving future generations of the benefits that our ancestors left us. The

material thus highlights that the initiative to secularize monastic assets was not exactly the most inspired reform.

Codul civil (The Civil Code) (1864) (Hamangiu, 1903, pp. 123-411) regulated that legal persons or moral persons enjoyed rights and freedoms only if they were recognized by the State, by law (art. 2 and art. 811).

Decretul organic nr. 1703 din 3 decembrie 1864 pentru înființarea unei autorități sinodale centrale pentru afacerile Bisericii Române (Organic decree no. 1703 of December 3, 1864 for the establishment of a central synodal authority for the affairs of the Romanian Church) (Bujoreanu, 1873, pp. 1789-1791), in art. 18, lit. e), stipulated that among the Central Synod's powers was the authorization of applications for entry into monasticism.

Also in 1864, was adopted the *Regulamentul pentru alegerea membrilor sinodului general al Bisericii Române (Regulation for the election of members of the general synod of the Romanian Church)* (Bujoreanu, 1873, pp. 1791-1792). In art. 1 established that “members of the General Synod are electors ... c) superiors of monasteries”. In art. 5 stated:

Two months before the day of the elections, the lists of priests and superiors of electing monasteries are drawn up by the deacons. The lists drawn up by the deacons are sent to the Ministry of Justice, Cults and Public Instruction, which publishes them through the Monitor.

So, the superiors of the monasteries had the right to vote regarding the election of the bishops.

Decretul organic nr. 1678 pentru reglementarea schimei monahale (Legea călugăriei) (Organic decree no. 1678 for the regulation of the monastic scheme (Monk Law)) promulgated on December 6, 1864, establishes the following throughout the 9 articles:

Art. 1. No male individual will be able to become a monk in the future if he does not meet the following characteristics: a. That his piety and monastic vocation be recognized by the general synods through the canonical religious temptation; b. To be at least 60 years old or younger, invalid, incurable person; c. To give up the boarding house he would have from the state.

Art. 2. However, those juniors who, passing the higher semester studies, will have this vocation, and from whom the high clergy will be able to be formed, will be received into the monastic order.

Art. 3. No woman will be able to wear the monastic scheme, who does not meet the following characteristics: a. Not to be married and to be recommended by the General Synods for her piety, religiosity and moral vocation; b. To give up the boarding house he would have from the state; c. To be at least 50 years old.

Art. 4. They can be nuns even without reaching the age from lit. c.

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Art. 3: a. Invalid and incurable women, who have no means of living in the world; b. Women who, out of a humanitarian sense, would decide to devote themselves to hospitals, schools, and any other welfare institutes of the state. However, they cannot be younger than 30 years; c. Women released from a penitentiary, with the recommendation of the General Synod. No monasticism will be done in the future at monasteries and hermitages other than those in Romania, which will be decided by special regulation.

Art. 5. No ecclesiastical authority will be able to give a monastic haircut to any man or woman if it does not present: a. Authorization from the General Synod, and b. Authorization from the Ministry of Cults.

Art. 6. For the maintenance of monks and nuns, the Ministry of Religious Affairs provides annual amounts in the budget based on their number.

Art. 7. These amounts are not personally released to individuals but placed at the common endowment of the monastery; the savings from them belong to the state. A special regulation for the economic administration of quinoa will be drawn up by the Ministry of Religion.

Art. 8. Monks and nuns, who will have dedicated their wealth to the monastery with certain conditions regarding the maintenance of people, will enjoy those conditions in the future as long as they live". Finally, the Decree repeals "all contrary provisions, laws, and regulations. (art. 9).

Decretul nr. 1619 din 29 noiembrie 1865 (Decree no. 1619 of November 29, 1865) promulgated the Regulamentul interior al Sinodului general al Bisericii Române (Internal Regulations of the General Synod of the Romanian Church) (Bujoreanu, 1873, pp. 1792-1795). In chapter VI (art. 51-55), the Regulation also referred to the competencies of the Synod regarding "monk petitions". In Art. 2 of the Law for the appointment of metropolitans and diocesan bishops in Romania, it was regulated that "metropolitans and bishops are appointed from the Romanian monastic clergy; having the metropolitan at least 40 years old, and the bishops 35 years old, known for their piety, learning and capacity".

Conclusions

The regulation generated an extremely strong reaction in the Church, called the fight for canonicity, for the preservation of the canonical tradition and the Orthodox Christian heritage. The Patriarch of Constantinople himself reacted and sent the ruler a letter. Cuza responded to the Patriarch in a long address in which he sought to justify his church reforms with canonical and historical arguments. The regulations of the Cuza regime impose the State as an absolute authority regarding the organization of monasticism, especially regarding economic and administrative aspects. The consequences of the regulations from 1859-1866 will affect Romanian monasticism until the 1930s.

The main factor that determined such a reaction from the civil authorities during the Cuza period was the historical context, which highlights a series of problems with sometimes legal content regarding the functions and rights of some Greek monks and hierarchs in Romanian monasteries.

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REVIEWS

Alexandru Popescu-Telega in the History of Romanian Hispanistics

Review

Alexandru Popescu-Telega în istoria hispanisticii românești. (2021): Suceava, Editura Universității „Ștefan cel Mare” by Carmen Lenuța Sveduneac

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Carmen Sveduneac’s book is the first monographic work dedicated to the activity of the Romanian philologist Alexandru Popescu-Telega, who can be considered a true pioneer of Hispanic studies in the Romanian cultural area. The result of a long and thorough research, sometimes impeded by the political circumstances that led to the obliteration of the merits of the Romanian philologist, the present work claims its importance precisely from the fact that it represents a recovery, restitution in the field of philological studies of a fundamental personality in the history of cultural studies Hispanics from our country.

Carmen Sveduneac has structured her book in five sections, along with the *Argument*, final *Conclusions*, references, and addenda.

In the first chapter, *Methodological, terminological and biobibliographic considerations*, the author outlines the analytical framework for Popescu-Telega’s philological activity, starting with a brief presentation of the biography of the Romanian philologist, in which she emphasizes the unfortunate circumstances of his ostracism from the Romanian academic environment and from the history Hispanic studies in our country, i.e. the very reasons why his activity is almost unknown to Romanian specialists in Hispanic studies. As shown here, the causes of this process are varied: from the political context (interruption of diplomatic relations with Spain in 1946) to the academic one (elimination of the teaching of the Spanish language, literature, and culture subjects in Romanian universities

between 1948-1957) and the personal one (Popescu-Telega is suspected of espionage and the Security opens a follow-up file on his name). Such biographical elements are crucial for understanding the stages in the activity of the Romanian philologist, but also the reasons why his writings were inaccessible for a long period of time. The author outlines the cultural and scientific context in which Telega began his activity, compiling a table of translations, popularization articles, and studies on Hispanic studies published in our country from the 19th century (the first attempts to translate some works Spanish) until the '70s of the 20th century, when Telega dies. Thus, by referring to the activity of other philologists interested in the field of Hispanic studies, the author aims to establish the place of Alexandru Popescu-Telega among them and the role played by his writings in the dissemination and research of cultural information regarding the Hispanic cultural space in Romania. The second chapter, *The 19th Century. Writings about Spanish literature prior to Alexandru Popescu-Telega* continue the detailed presentation of Hispanic studies prior to Telega's works.

The third chapter of the book, *Alexandru Popescu-Telega in the Hispanic Studies of the 20th Century*, constitutes a detailed presentation of the writings of the Romanian philologist, periodized according to the criteria of the historical context (the interwar period, respectively the postwar period, each with its specific cultural and freedom of expression), in which the author also makes a classification of such writings according to content (translations, popularization works, scientific writings intended for the specialists). From the analysis of such writings, the author finds that Popescu-Telega was concerned not only with Spanish literature, but also with Hispanic linguistics, Iberian folklore or certain cultural, sociological, and historical aspects related to the Spanish people. Through the travel notes and stories, we discover personal facets of the Romanian researcher, passionate about the object of his research and dedicated to the knowledge and interpretation of all the details he discovers in his travels through Spain and in the friendship and work relationships he establishes with famous personalities from the Spanish culture. We appreciate the way in which Sveduneac often appeals to intertextuality, relating Telega's writings to other works with similar themes and constantly highlighting the degree of the emotional involvement on the part of Popescu-Telega in the narration of the cultural facts.

In the presentation of Popescu-Telega's *Grammar*, the author indicates that the copy she was able to consult seems to be "a copy that passed through the hand of censorship, possibly among the few that have been preserved (if not the only one in Romania)," and argues such claims on the basis of the elements highlighted in that copy, which indeed suggests that it is a justified opinion; this relevant

aspect, corroborated with the other information regarding the persecutions suffered by Telega, outline the context in which his work was silenced.

The existence of the fourth chapter, *Alexandru Popescu-Telega's contribution to the popularization of Cervantes in the Romanian literary space*, is motivated, says the author, by the fact that "the Cervantine exegeses constitute a massive part of Alexandru Popescu-Telega's activity, and his doctoral thesis, *Cervantes and Italy*, awakens his interest in Hispanic Studies." Naturally, one of the greatest universal writers of all time could not be absent from the sphere of interest of any specialist in the field of Spanish philology, especially in the pioneering period as such Sveduneac makes a brief presentation of the Romanian writings on the Cervantine work before Telega, but also in his contemporary period, and dedicates a significant part of the chapter to the three monographic works signed by Alexandru Popescu-Telega, *Cervantes* (1924), *Cervantes and Italy* (1931) and *Cervantes. Life and Work* (1944), comparing them with some studies signed by Tudor Vianu and Iorgu Jordan and pointing out the merit of Telega to interpret the work of the Spanish writer through the prism of the peculiarities of his biography.

In the last chapter, entitled *Alexandru Popescu-Telega, the translator*, the researcher focuses on Telega's contributions to the field of translation studies; this term indicates his interests both as a researcher of the translation process and as the author of numerous translations into and from Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Italian. For the first time, Sveduneac achieves to draw a complete inventory of the translations signed by Alexandru Popescu-Telega, retrieving some of them from the publications of the time; she establishes a solid theoretical framework regarding the necessity and opportunity of retranslation, analyzing the evolution of the concept of translation in the modern period and making a critical presentation of the first attempts to translate the novel *Don Quixote* into Romanian.

The comparative research in the fifth part of the last chapter unequivocally demonstrates the skills of the researcher, Carmen Sveduneac, in the field of translation and translation studies. The analysis of the translation solutions in the five investigated texts touches on matters of great finesse and subtlety, the author's pertinent observations being supplemented with some ingenious solutions that she proposes. The approach in this section of the paper is an original and interesting one, being the first comparative and contrastive analysis of the five translations, which the author collates with each other, but also with some French versions, with the intention of establishing the parentage of the translations and the relationships between these, but also the merit of Telega for offering the Romanian public "the first complete qualitative translation."

The present book is a valuable monograph in that it manages to reconstruct the philological activity of the first Romanian Hispanist to outline a chronology of important events in the author's life, despite the efforts of the communist regime to eliminate him from the specific bibliography and to highlight the major role Alexandru Popescu-Telega played in the promotion of the Hispanic culture in Romania and in the study of the Spanish language in our country. The work is coherent, and it is based on a thorough investigation, reflected in a solid critical apparatus and a vast bibliography. This is a necessary book that sheds precious light on the beginnings of Hispanic Studies in Romania.