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UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI  
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**2/2015**

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ISSUE

Volume 60 (LX) 2015  
AUGUST  
2

# STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI PHILOSOPHIA

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**Issue Coordinator: Ion Copoeru**

**Publishing Date: August 2015**

## RESEARCH IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION FROM A PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: *CHANGE IN THE TEACHING PRACTICE OF THE MATHEMATICS TEACHER*

MARIA APARECIDA VIGGIANI BICUDO<sup>1</sup>  
PAULO ISAMO HIRATSUKA<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** The goal of this study was to investigate *change in the teaching practice of the mathematics teacher*, adopting a qualitative research approach from a phenomenological perspective. Our understanding of phenomenological research, and the fundamental ideas underlying it, is presented. The research is described, including the ideographic and nomothetic analyses, and the six invariants, or open categories that emerged. We present our interpretation of one of them, the *possibilities of going through the experience: loosening the ties to the past and an objective look at change*.

**Key words:** *qualitative research, phenomenological research, changes in the model of teaching practice.*

We begin the article by presenting our understanding regarding the meaning of *research*, and explaining the bases that support this understanding, to then focus on the research conducted on change in the teaching practice of the mathematics teacher.

To research is to investigate. It is: circling around an interrogation formulated as a consequence of perplexity in the face of that which exists around us; seeking answers, explanations, interpretations; persisting in the attempt to shed light on dim areas with clear-sightedness; walking the path constructed by the rigor that transcends momentary perceptions, subjective opinions, and categorical statements based on beliefs, ideologies and unquestioned theories. It is seeking the rationale that

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supports the articulation of the discourse, the possible clarity of the language that expresses comprehension. It is seeking meanings in the light of objectivity constructed in the space of inter-subjectivity, made possible by the socio-cultural-economic context. The meaning of research that makes sense in these statements is that which was mentioned innumerable times in the classes, talks, and conferences of Joel Martins.

The master tells us that *doing research* means *having an inquiry and circling around it, in every sense, always seeking its multiple dimensions, and going around again and yet again, in search of more meaning, more dimensions, and still more... The inquiry keeps itself alive, since the comprehension we inquire about never runs out.*

This comprehension leads us to think for a long time, and its meaning began to be perceived, when we focused on the meaning of the word *research*. In Latin, it has roots in the verb *perquiro, is, ere, sivi, situm*, whose translation<sup>3</sup> is presented as: 1. Seek everywhere, search carefully; 2. Inform oneself carefully, investigate well, ask, inquire. In Spanish, the common expression is *investigación*. In Portuguese, *pesquisar*. In French, *recherche*, where *re* means again, and *cherche*, search, look for. Thus, to search or look for something again. In English, the word *research* can be understood as having the same roots as the French word.

Note that the following words are highlighted in these meanings: *circle around, again and again; inquire, seek, search; carefully*. The word *problem* does not appear. Why? What does this mean? These questions invited us to search for the meanings of interrogate, and of problem, seeking to visualize the possible unfoldings that the meanings attributed to them bring to the investigative posture.

Interrogate<sup>4</sup> means to pose questions to someone or to yourself, to question or question yourself, to pose academic questions, and other meanings that are less relevant to this paper. The noun *interrogation* also has meanings related to doubt and uncertainty; it speaks of a question directed to something that one wants to know. It is the product of a doubt, of an uncertainty in relation to what is known, or is taken as a given, as certain. Or, it could be uncertainty in relation to one's everyday experience, when the organization placed, or the judgments held begin to no longer make sense. The germ of the interrogation lies in the discomfort felt. Borheim<sup>5</sup> speaks brilliantly about the passage from naive certainty to the state of doubt as being a crucial moment for the possibility of philosophical thought - *possibility*, since one can become stuck in skepticism, without transcending it, which is what leads one in the direction of comprehending what is doubted, opening up new horizons for interrogation.

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<sup>3</sup> DICIONÁRIO DE LATIM-PORTUGUÊS, segunda edição. Porto: Porto Editora, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> DICIONÁRIO HOUAISS DA LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA. Rio de Janeiro: editora Objetiva, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> BORHEIM, Gerd. Introdução ao Filosofar. Porto Alegre: Globo, 1973.

The path that leads from the *discomfort felt* to the *interrogation* is long. Therefore, it is necessary to stay with it, questioning, seeking to clarify what is perceived as conflicting. One must proceed to studies and analyses of that which one perceives until the interrogation takes form and emerges, amazingly clear.

Then place the interrogation in focus, and seek to comprehend what the interrogation is interrogating. Heidegger, in *Introdução à Metafísica*<sup>6</sup>, writes profoundly about what is interrogated in an interrogation, placing in focus the interrogation *Why is there simply the being, and not before the Nothing?* This **why** questions the basis on which the freedom of the questioned/interrogated, and the manner in which it is interrogated, move.

This is a crucial exercise for the investigator: placing the interrogation in evidence, attentive and in a lucid manner, seeking for what is being asked, for what one wants to know, for what is being interrogated. This is a movement that helps one to foresee the path to be taken in the investigation, i.e., to visualize the procedures appropriate for what is being questioned, and its modalities of contextualization and cultural exposition.

The investigator circles around this interrogation, returning to it time and time again, with new foci, visualizing new dimensions and awaiting new investigations. This process of searching, which, being scientific, calls for rigor, exposes clearings that unveil themselves, are discovered, aspects heretofore obscure of the reality constructed in mundane relations. Underlying this idea, one encounters the conception of *truth* as evidence and as manifestation.

The interrogation is different from the notion of *problem*. This, taken in the context of scientific research, is exposed in such a way that it anticipates a possible solution, albeit not specific or determinate, as it is about to ask logically-connected studies and reasoning that lead to possible answers. It is known that a problem resolved does not mean that it is solved once and for all, since its solutions are alternatives. Underlying the idea of problem is that which is an approximation of reality, which brings with it a conception of truth as accommodation, and as correspondence; accommodation between what is found, through rigorous investigation, and reality, presumed to be objectively given.

The enunciation of a problem defines what is sought. The rationales unleashed follow the rigor present in contemporary theories of logic, in such a way that, together with the truth sought, the criteria for truth are found. Alfred Tarski, for example, upon explaining the meaning of the enunciation, said: *an enunciation is true if it designates a state of something that exists.*

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<sup>6</sup> HEIDEGGER, Martins. *Introdução à Metafísica* (translated by Emmanuel Carneiro Leão). Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1987.



- ***The question of rigor in research***

Rigor, in the realm of the meanings present in our everyday lives, leads to the idea of severity of principles; persistence and determination in carrying out undertakings, in making decisions; exactitude. In the context of research according to positivist philosophy, *rigor* carries with it the meaning of ***exactitude*** and the strict observance of the values of ***neutrality*** and ***objectivity***.

These values – exactitude, neutrality, and objectivity – are at the core of modern scientific thought, which, from an historical point of view, can be understood as originating with Galileo, when he lays the foundations for physics. This science becomes the model for the exact, biological, and human sciences.

Rigor was taken immediately as exactitude, without reflexive analysis of the possible meanings that this word brings with it as part of its tradition. Exactitude was understood as quantification and the calculations that can be performed with it. In response to situations in which quantification and measurement became problematic, because the object of quantification was not defined in an objective manner, showing itself in its concrete reality, modern science developed the notion of *statistic probability*, assuring a probable exactness, still measurable, from which the response obtained would be statistically acceptable within numerically-defined parameters.

The human sciences sought to follow this model. The educational sciences also sought exactitude, neutrality and objectivity. When, in contemporary times, specifically after the 1960's, there is a critique of *scientific rigor*, and the human and educational sciences, and later, of mathematics education, and alternative modes of research are sought, there is a movement to renounce rigor. Those who accept this criticism begin to conduct non-quantitative research, again without questioning *What is this rigor?* What are we talking about when we talk about rigor?

*Rigor* expresses the care one takes when proceeding to seek the interrogated or the solution to the problem posed. This is not a subjective care, loaded with emotional aspects. Rather, it is care that seeks the researcher's constant attention to proceed in a lucid manner, analyzing the steps taken, obtaining clarity regarding his/her why's and how's, about what it means, of the bases of his/her mode of investigation and vision of the mode of knowledge regarding the object in question that is being constructed and upon proceeding in the way that the investigation is being conducted. ***Rigor*** can carry with it different criteria, but there are always criteria that can be explained and justified in the context of the tradition of scientific/philosophical and artistic thinking. These criteria, in turn, are not circumscribed only by the epistemological and methodological realm, but carry visions of the world and of reality, and thus, conceptions of knowledge and truth.

According to this understanding, this has gone unnoticed by many researchers that distance themselves from the positivistic model of doing research and seek other modalities of research, generally of a qualitative nature.

- ***Qualitative research: procedures and the view of the world and of knowledge that underlie them***

Remaining at the level of procedures, the investigation, taken to term by the sciences of the spirit, can assume an historical focus, in the man-world dialectic and its determining aspects, in the linguistic expressions, in the context where the man-world-man and man-man interrelations occur, and in the way in which they occur, seeking appropriate ways to investigate them. This is the case of, for example, content analyses, hermeneutic analyses, ethnographic studies, and studies of symbolic representations, among others. The point of interrogation that is formulated, showing some doubt regarding these modes of investigation, is relative to how the data obtained will be analyzed, applying rigor in the process. Many continue to appeal to the resources offered by statistics, others work with narrative accounts, using them as a basis for important assertions made in the course of the research.

The values considered to be positive by this science are participation, engagement, proceeding from the assumption that history and culture are important.

However, beyond the questions of *how to proceed* and *what to focus on*, there is a basic question that concerns the underlying ontological aspects regarding the way the object of study is conceived of in the sciences of the spirit. It is the question of the subject, and the nexus established between the subject, world, and object.

Object of knowledge? How to understand it? Subject of knowledge? How is it to be understood? Cognitive psychology has made a great effort to understand the cognitive processes through which the subject of knowledge generates knowledge. Sociology, of knowledge in particular, has focused on knowledge as a social, cultural, and historical product. Dialectic historical materialism has shown how the subject of knowledge is determined by the historical context, which is materially constituted by cultural products. This is at the center of the web that involves the question of the nexus of *reality*, or the real, and *the subject*. Are they distinct, separate aspects? In the research carried out in the sciences of the spirit that have gradually come to be called Human Sciences, including the arts and philosophy, the separation between the *subject that is known* and *reality* persists. The bridge uniting them is the concept. With it, it becomes difficult to comprehend the question of history, of life, of the man-world nexus, because the concept is the product of relations established

cognitively, although the processes may be explained taking the socio-cultural context into account. Or, if one looks from another perspective, that of the historical-social context, and admits that this determines cognitive processes; the link between both continues to demand explanation. The knot is in the separation, and thus, in the world view that assumes a separation between man and the world.

Husserl, upon developing phenomenology, understood as a science of rigor<sup>7</sup>, calls into question the constitution of the *I* that thinks, and with this, approaches a dimension of the Hegelian subjective spirit. However, unlike what many contemporary authors affirm, through the processes of reduction that he carries out, in the first reduction, which is of the world, and in the second reduction, which is of the subject<sup>8</sup>, he doesn't fall into the trap of the solipsistic subject or the universal subject, as is the case of the absolute subject of the romantic idealism of Hegel, but rather establishes the immediate man-world link. He seeks the subjective-intersubjective-objective nexus, and elucidates it, in his work, through the conception of the *life-world, perception, expression of what is perceived through the language, empathy, intersubjectivity, community, linguistic structure, tradition, history*.<sup>9</sup>

For Husserl, man and world are intrinsically connected, without conceiving of a separation between them, but rather, seeing a continuous line between subject/world/subject/world... where world is always understood as life-world. In other words, it is always understood as the *where* in which one is with others, all immersed in the historical and cultural context that renews them, and which is concomitantly renewed through what is perceived - the perceived that is expressed by talking, understood by the co-subjects with whom one exists in the world, layered with the linguistic expressions that, in turn, carry with them other historically-structured understandings present in the life-world.<sup>10</sup>

Husserl effects a profound modification in the attitude assumed when one looks upon the world. And, according to our understanding, it is this modification that opens up paths for carrying out non-positivist research that are coherent with the conceptions of the world assumed. It is the differentiation between a *natural attitude* and a *phenomenological attitude*.

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<sup>7</sup> HUSSERL, Edmund. *Phenomenology and Crisis of Philosophy*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965.

<sup>8</sup> BICUDO, Maria Ap. Viggiani. "A contribuição da fenomenologia à educação", in Bicudo, M.ªV. & Cappelletti, I. (Orgs.) São Paulo: Olho D'Água, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> HUSSERL, Edmund. *The Crisis of European Sciences and transcendental phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern on University Press, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> Idem. *Cartesian Meditations: an introduction to phenomenology*. Netherlands: Martinus Nyhoff, 1977.

In the natural attitude, that which becomes the object for the subject, as well as the consciousness that operates the relations of this knowledge, are considered to be objects. This means that the *I* and its subjective experiences are assumed as *things in themselves, as part of the objective world*. In this natural world, things are understood as distinct positive concepts, on principle, of phenomena or manifestations.<sup>11</sup> It is represented by images or signs. The language is taken, in this view, as being objectively given.

In the phenomenological attitude, the thing is not taken as being in itself, since: a) it is not beyond its manifestation, and is therefore relative to perception and dependent on consciousness; b) consciousness is not a thing in itself, but is an absolute whole that comprises everything. As it embraces: in its own movement of extending toward, once it is understood as intentionality whose meaning is to head in a direction, extend, tend toward, open, become attentive.

The meaning commonly attributed to consciousness, in the magnitude of the natural attitude, is that of a thing, recipient, shaper, part of the world. For phenomenology, consciousness is a key concept, and is understood as intentionality, as the movement of extending to something ... and of embracing it in the vision of the attentive look that leads to perception. Phenomenological research investigates the manifestations of the thing as it occurs in the perception of he/she who perceives and explains this feeling (perceiving) through talking and language. Language is understood as expression of the perceived and articulated in intelligibility, organizing the perceived for the subject, so that the meaning is made for him/her, and communicating the perceived meaning to the other co-subjects, partners of a community. The investigation aims for the manifestation of the perceived, which is explained by the language, capable of being comprehended by the co-subject partner of the community, thus constituting a zone of intersubjectivity. From the repetition of the success of communications between subjects, replete with meaning, and through the use of mundane, and hence historical, language, zones of objectivity are constituted; speaking now of objectivity whose origins reside in subjectivity, but that transcended it to the extent that the initial perceptions were expressed.

Qualitative research, conducted according to a phenomenological approach, conceives of the man-world as always connected. There is no man without the world, and not world without man. This is because world is not understood as recipient, but as the *natural medium and the field of all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> MOURA, C.ªR. *Crítica da Razão Fenomenológica*. São Paulo: Nova Stella-EDUSP, 1989.

<sup>12</sup> MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice. *Fenomenologia da Percepção*. Translated by Carlos Alberto Ribeiro de Moura. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1994, p.6.

Upon making the meanings of *my explicit perceptions* explicit, we are lead toward the ontological comprehension of the reality comprehended as *created/constructed*<sup>13</sup>, where participation and engagement are considered as foundations, and where the language is always expression and communication of the perceived, comprehended, and articulated by historically-situated subjects. As reality is created/constructed by subjects engaged and participating in historical contexts and this subject are always in the movement of this creation and of what is already traditionally present in the world, we are then faced with the impossibility of investigation being separate from the world and its movement, from the creating acts and their manifestations. Thus, one must be attentive to the cultural expressions and proceed to the hermeneutic analysis. Language is assumed to be the expression of understandings at the same time it carries with it modes of expression and uses of this that were expressed, revealing meanings present in the tradition of a people, the characteristics of a culture, the history of its trajectory. These aspects should be considered in qualitative investigation that assumes a natural attitude.

This brings us to the question of the need to pay attention to the ontological and epistemological aspects of qualitative research, seeking to go beyond the broad categories present in qualitative methodologies, such as description, intersubjectivity, discourse, language, and history, among others.

- ***Investigation in Mathematics Education: explaining the modes of research upon privileging an interrogation***

The interrogation we privilege in the research under focus is: *what is this, living the experience of change in the teaching practice of mathematics?*; the phenomenon we seek to understand is: *the experience of change in teaching practice*, focalized based on the interpretation of the meanings that were gradually unveiled as we penetrated the different interwoven layers, covering and constituting themselves in a whole that, little by little, began to make sense.

As we, the researchers, were already familiar with the life-world of mathematics teachers, the subjects of the research, who wish to change their teaching practice due to their lack of satisfaction with what they do, we were able to pose some questions to guide our research, as they made sense to us: *How does a teacher choose to change his/her practice? What feelings are present when one goes through*

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<sup>13</sup> BICUDO, Maria Aparecida Viggiani Bicudo. Fenomenologia: Confrontos e Avanços. São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 2000.

*the experience of change? Is the willingness to change sufficient for the change to occur? How does the time lived by the teacher take place when going through the experience of change?*

Upon focusing attentively on the phenomenon under focus, we saw that some teachers, with whom we interact daily as researchers and as teachers, explained conceptions of the teaching of mathematics that differed from those present in the so-called *traditional paradigm*, indicating that they had passed through the experience of change placed in evidence. From these teachers, who were the subjects of our research, we selected seven to interview who we considered significant in terms of our interrogation and its manifestations regarding the questions raised. The interviews conducted were *inter-views*, where the subject-investigator dialogue was established; obtaining the discourse of each subject regarding the experience they had gone through in the practice of change in their way of teaching mathematics. Discourse is understood here as the comprehension, articulated and explained in intelligible language, of what he/she experienced.

These discourses, taken now as texts composed of data from the investigation, were analyzed at two different moments. Initially, an *ideographic analysis* of each deposition was conducted, when *Units of Meaning* were taken, and an explicative hermeneutic was elaborated of what was said in the subject's language, and a transformation of the former, into *Articulated Assertions*. A summary was presented, at the end of each ideographic analysis, of the understanding regarding the discourse articulated by the subject. We then moved on to the second moment of the analysis, concerning the *nomothetic analysis*, which characterizes research that seeks convergences and divergences between discourses. The convergences point to the invariants, which in the phenomenological view, characterize the structure of the phenomenon under investigation.

- ***Presenting the research***

We now present some excerpts from the ideographic analysis of one interview selected<sup>14</sup>, that of subject *E*, the summary of our understanding of the subject's discourse, a list of convergences obtained or of the broad, open categories, and finally, the analysis of these categories, attempting to show clearly the work involved in transcending the particular data, and exemplifying the interpretation carried out regarding one of the structural aspects of the phenomenon.

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<sup>14</sup> Hiratsuka, Paulo Isamo. *A vivência da experiência da mudança da prática de ensino de Matemática*. Rio Claro, UNESP, Tese de Doutorado (orientadora Dra. Maria Aparecida Viggiani Bicudo), 2003.

**Example of the procedure followed for ideographic analysis 1**

<b>Discourse E</b>		
<b>Units of Meaning</b>	<b>Explanation of the Subject's Language</b>	<b>Statements Articulated</b>
After becoming a professor at the university, I had a contact with Professor ... One day, he came to us and made the following proposal: Why don't you guys have a meeting with the calculus teachers to see what they are doing?	Contact: The meanings that appear on the language of the subject are: An action of being in touch with other person. A relationship of influence or of proximity.	E2- As a university professor, the subject began to relate to Professor ..., who proposed to him and some colleagues that they meet with calculus teachers to acquaint themselves with their practices/conceptions.

**Example of the procedure followed for ideographic analysis 2**

<b>Discourse E</b>		
<b>Units of Meaning</b>	<b>Explanation of the Subject's Language</b>	<b>Assertions articulated</b>
Then we organized a meeting to talk about (BATER PAPO) ... calculus on an informal way... I think that this meeting was the "turning point" to me; it was when I began to change the way I use to understand my conceptions about teaching.	"Bater papo" was the expression used by the subject. It has a special meaning in Portuguese from Brazil. It means to talk about some subject matter with other person, just to talk, without an objective purpose. It means: to talk, to exchange ideas. The expression in Portuguese from Brazil means "conversar, papear, bater um papo, levar um papo, trocar uma idéia". To change: it means an act or an effect of changing. a. It is an act by which the proper subject modify itself or it can mean the effect of the subject be modified in some own characteristics; b. It mean transformation of something in other thing. To change in Portuguese from Brazil can mean, also, to move. That means "to put in other place, to organize the space of other way, to remove, to substitute, to modify, to vary, to combine, to transform.	E3 - The subject understands that the meeting, which he helped organize discuss the teaching of calculus, marks the beginning of his experience of change.

The articulated discourse presented below is a product of the analysis of all the Units of Meaning concerning Subject *E*, written in a text that we, the researchers, elaborated according to the meaning that the hermeneutic analysis had for us, in view of the interrogation that guided the whole investigation.

### **Articulated Discourse of Subject *E***

*Subject E graduated from a traditional university where students are expected to work hard within the traditional model of teaching mathematics, which is common in teacher education programs.*

*He understands that his experience of change in his mathematics teaching practice began when he participated in a meeting with teachers that had the objective of discussing the teaching of calculus. When the participants were asked to create a calculus problem, even about a simple subject, it was perceived that the problems presented were identical to those in the textbooks, that is, the teachers lacked creativity. This perception led to reflections about issues related to teaching - the first moment he felt his conceptions had been "touched".*

*Another moment of questioning his conceptions occurred during a Specialization Course, in the city of Guarapuava. When he realized he would be giving a course to teachers from various levels, with diverse educational backgrounds and interests, he adopted an approach, unheard of at the time, using mathematical modeling, which was an incredible experience for him, as he accomplished it by applying great will power, without having planned it in advance.*

*This experience allowed him to understand that working with mathematical modeling made it possible to create problems, and stimulated him to change his way of teaching. He was no longer afraid to face the problems that might arise in the process of change. He understood that one does not change an habitual practice, it being much easier to follow a path to which one is accustomed than another that, despite appearing to be more promising, may present unknown problems.*

*Working with modeling, he saw himself inserted in situations that involved mathematical knowledge, the application of mathematics, and that could be explored didactically. This experience had an important reflection in his professional life, as he then began to work in the field of Pure Mathematics, of Applied Mathematics, and Mathematics Education.*

*Beginning with this experience, he feels that his relationship with mathematics improved, having a better comprehension of its meanings when carrying out activities related to it. He then began to have a conception of mathematics teaching that differed from traditional teaching, and teaching became an activity that gave him great pleasure.*



*He understands that the teaching of mathematics should be an activity that pleases people, since if this occurs, learning will take place; if not, people will reject the teaching. The student will enjoy learning mathematics when he/she works to create the elements of mathematics, and not when a topic is simply transmitted, finished, via mechanized procedures, as in traditional teaching.*

*Thus, for him, the goal of mathematics education is to give pleasure to those who are involved in the teaching and learning of mathematics, pleasure that is not currently perceived in the schools.*

It is important to point out that the construction of the invariants is an exhaustive task, requiring close attention to the rigor of the steps taken in the elaboration of the articulations carried out between the statements. This work is characteristic of phenomenological reduction. Initially, 18 convergences were outlined, which, following one more reductions of the assertions articulated, to which letters and numbers were assigned, representing the subject's deposition and a specific assertion from the deposition, respectively, were articulated to the following *open categories* or the invariants that comprise the invariants of the phenomenon under investigation: *the lived time in the experience of change: the manifestation of the past-present-future; the experience of contradiction between what was expected and what was encountered; from admiration to the resolution to change that reveals the presence of the future; the experience of the I-other relation: from the simple individual to the existential individual; the teacher concerned with the student: the presence of the teacher and the poet; the choice to change: the decision taken by free men; possibilities of the living the experience: loosening the ties with the past and looking objectively at the change.*

We will now present the summarized interpretation of the category, *possibilities of the living the experience: loosening the ties with the past and looking objectively at the change*, as a case to exemplify the above statement.

The subjects of this research, at certain moments in their accounts of their experience of change in the practice of teaching mathematics, make moves to synthesize, addressing the theme of *change* in a directly objective manner, meaning not as an expression of a theoretical construct, but as comprehension of their own experience of change. Subject A, in articulated assertion 1, A1, stated that *change is a trajectory you are following, in which transformations occur little by little*. These subjects comprehend change as a trajectory, as a path to be followed. Upon going through the experience of negating the traditional paradigm of teaching mathematics, they make the decision to change. But the change is slow and demands that they walk the entire path, carrying out activities, taking courses. Change is *lived time*. In articulated assertion G-23, we found the following statement: *the subject did not*

*premeditate his change; rather, the change occurred throughout his existence, beginning with the perceptions and happenings of his life, and the need to overcome difficult moments that presented themselves to him.*

According to our comprehension, change is characterized as a process that is experienced in its meaningful aspects. It is a process of continual learning that involves reflection and criticism of one's own practice, meta-comprehension of the "real" as it is experienced.

To change is to experience the solution to the problem posed by the subjects themselves regarding how to change this practice. According to statements by Watzlawick et al<sup>15</sup> regarding changes of first and second order, we understand that first-order changes are those that modify some practices, while the parameters of the system remain, whereas second-order changes cause a change in the system. The subjects we interviewed claimed as significant for themselves the search for an approach to teaching that differed from the traditional, seeking new teaching practices and different ways of being with their students. Subject B, in articulated assertion 29, states that what he *considers remarkable was the possibility of establishing dialogue between the teacher and the student.* In articulated statement 27, he said that he *strives to integrate mathematics with other disciplines in a single course, seeking to make the student perceive that what is important is human knowledge as a whole, of which mathematics is a part.* The accounts point to a comprehension of mathematics as being part of human culture. The conceptions they express, and the practice that we perceive as being consonant with them, reveal a loosening of ties with the past. It has to do, as we understand it, with going beyond the traditional way of conceiving of mathematics and how it is taught, which took place as they experienced the process of perceiving themselves as dissatisfied, and negated the lived reality, refusing to accept it, formulated the problem, and sought a solution, without be satisfied with first-level changes, overcoming the difficulties, uncertainties, and fears encountered along the way.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Watzlawick, P.; Weakland, J.; Fish, R. *Mudança: princípios de formação e resolução de problemas.* São Paulo, Cultrix, 1997.

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## WHAT IS IT TO BE A PERSON?

MOHAMMAD REZA TAHMASBI<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** I will deal with the synchronic question of persons to clarify the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a person. Having reflexive self-consciousness is both the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a person. I discuss the relationship between having reflexive self-consciousness and the other properties which uniquely belong to persons 'i.e.,' being a moral agent, being a rational agent and having free will. A problem arises when one defines a person based on having reflexive self-consciousness. "Is a sleeping human being still a person?" To resolve the problem, I will appeal to Aristotle's distinction between first and second potentialities.

**Key words:** *Person, Reflexive self-consciousness, Criterialism, First potentialities, Second potentialities*

### Introduction

In the realm of contemporary philosophy, there have been many debates concerning the problems of personal identity and how persons are related to their bodies. As a matter of fact, there are some important philosophical questions the answers to which depend on our understanding of what it is to be a person. Firstly, if I am a person, then what is the relationship between 'me' as a person and my body? Are persons identical to their bodies? Secondly, there has been a lasting question regarding the problem of personal identity over time. What makes it the case that one is the same person who existed at an earlier time and will exist at a later time? What is it for me as a person to persist from time,  $t_1$ , to time,  $t_2$ , especially if, as it does, my matter is constantly changing through replacement of parts? The question is directly related to questions about the resurrection, which have been at the core of the doctrines of many religions world-wide. If, as those doctrines say, I can survive death, then how can I continue as 'me' rather than someone else after death?

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In short, with regard to persons, we face two main philosophical questions; a synchronic question and a diachronic question. The synchronic question deals with the fundamental question: “What am I?” It is a question about the identity of a person at a time. In virtue of what conditions, is something a person at a given time? But the diachronic question deals with personal identity over time: “In virtue of what conditions is a person  $P_1$ , at  $t_1$ , the same person  $P_2$ , at  $t_2$ ?” Any effort at finding a solution for the problem of personal identity over time must have already dealt with the question: “What makes me the person I am?” Answering the diachronic question is not possible unless we have already dealt with the synchronic question. What is it to be a person? This is the question I intend to deal with in this paper.

According to Brian Garret, the question “What is a person?” can have two different meanings: one is, “What conditions does  $x$  have to satisfy in order to be a person?” Garret calls this question as ‘satisfaction question.’ The other meaning of the question is “Of what kind of stuff are persons composed?” For example, we might think that persons can only be made by organisms. But one may think that persons are made by both organisms and silicon chips. Garret calls the latter question the ‘nature question.’<sup>2</sup> To answer the nature question, we need, first, to answer the satisfaction question. In order to know which kind of things can compose persons, we need to know what the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a person are. In this article, I will deal with the satisfaction question to clarify the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a person.

Firstly, I argue that being a person is not equivalent to being a member of *Homo sapiens*. Being a person and being a member of *Homo sapiens* are two different things. Then to start our investigations about the conditions of personhood, I suggest looking to the characteristics which uniquely belong to persons. Having self-consciousness, being a moral agent, being a rational agent and having free will are those features which are uniquely ascribed to persons. I examine if any of those characteristics can be considered as the core of personhood. I argue that having the reflexive form of self-consciousness is both the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a person. To argue that having reflexive self-consciousness is the core of personhood, I discuss the relationship between having reflexive self-consciousness and the other properties which uniquely belong to persons. Finally, I will propose the definition of a person as an entity who has the reflexive form of self-consciousness. To propose the definition, I will appeal to Aristotle’s distinction between first and second potentialities. This helps me to propose a solution for a very serious problem which occurs when one wants to define a person based on having a form of self-consciousness. “Is a sleeping human being still a person?” We can find a solution for this problem in Aristotle’s distinction between first and second potentialities.

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<sup>2</sup> Brian Garrett, *Personal Identity and Self-Consciousness*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 3.

## What is Personhood?

To start our investigation to find what personhood is, we need to focus on those distinguished features which we normally ascribe to a person. As a starting point, I will consider the properties which come to minds when we talk about persons in everyday life. Obviously, what comes to mind might not be definitive. So, whenever I claim any property as a necessary or sufficient condition for being a person, I will argue why I take the property as a necessary or sufficient condition. But it is noteworthy to mention that, in order to start discussing of personhood, we need to start from the properties with which we are familiar. The thing which qualifies as a person exemplifies some properties by means of which we distinguish it from non-persons. In what follows, I examine if any of the unique properties which we ascribe to persons can be considered as the core of personhood.

Normally, what comes to mind regarding persons is the idea that persons are conscious beings which have properties like self-consciousness, rationality, free will and being a moral agent. First of all, there has been a consensus about the fact that persons are conscious, sentient beings. Only conscious beings can be persons. The aforementioned properties only can be found in conscious beings, but we need to clarify what we mean by 'conscious being.' By a conscious being, I simply mean any entity which is aware of something. To be conscious, is to have awareness of something. It is clear that such a definition implies that the being must be a subject of some or all of the following things: sensations, emotions, experiences, and thoughts. Hence, according to this definition, a broad range of beings qualify as conscious beings. We know that a frog is capable of experiencing pain and a shark is capable of being aware (smell and taste) of even the smallest amount of blood from more than a mile away. So, there are a vast number of living things which can be considered as conscious beings.

In discussing consciousness, we need to consider the recent distinctions made by some philosophers about the notion of consciousness. One of the important distinctions is related to the difference between intransitive and transitive consciousness. Sometimes, 'conscious' is just another word for being awake. For example, when I am in deep sleep—and I am not dreaming—I am not conscious. A being which has intransitive consciousness is simply awake as opposed to asleep, but a being which has transitive consciousness is a being which is capable of being aware of such and such.<sup>3</sup> A conscious being has consciousness in the transitive sense, when it is capable of perceiving of something. As mentioned, by conscious being I mean a being which is capable of being aware of something. For our purposes, the relevant notion of consciousness is transitive consciousness.

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Carruthers, "The Evolution of Consciousness,"  
<http://faculty.philosophy.umd.edu/pcarruthers/Evolution-of-consciousness.htm>.

Although persons are conscious beings, merely being conscious cannot be considered sufficient for being a person. As mentioned, one of the properties which we ascribe to persons is the property of being a moral agent. If we accept that merely being conscious is sufficient for being a person, then we must commit to the conclusion that all sorts of conscious beings are moral agents. While it is possible to argue for the idea that among non-human animals there are some beings that are persons, so moral agents, I do not think that one can argue that all conscious beings including possibly some invertebrates and all vertebrates are moral agents. Therefore, being conscious is only a necessary condition for being a person. To know what the sufficient conditions for being a person are, we need to look to the other properties which in terms of required cognitive abilities are more complex than being merely conscious. These properties are having self-consciousness, being a rational agent, being a moral agent and having free will.

It is a commonly held view that the above-mentioned properties uniquely belong to the members of *Homo sapiens*. This view motivated some scholars to presuppose that to be a person is to be a member of *Homo sapiens*. As I shall discuss shortly, there are some theories which presuppose that 'being a person' is 'being a member of the species, *Homo sapiens*,' but to assert this, we need to provide a convincing argument. 'Being a person' and 'being a member of *Homo sapiens*' are not synonymous. There may be some members of *Homo sapiens* who do not qualify as persons, and vice versa. For example, it is hard to say that a new born infant is able to show all properties which are ascribed to persons. So, it is clear that although we usually take human beings as persons, being a person is not merely being a member of *Homo sapiens*. The term 'person' does not mean exactly the same as the term 'human being.' Moreover, logically speaking, "x can be the same person as y without being the same human being as y."<sup>4</sup> So, being a person is not the same as being a member of *Homo sapiens*. There may be some philosophical or scientific reasons to state that no conscious being can develop into a person except a human being. But no one from the beginning of her investigation, without providing any reason, can reasonably claim that to be a person is to be a member of *Homo sapiens*. Putting aside the presupposition that to be a person is to be a human being, we need a criterion to distinguish persons from non-persons. But before entering into this discussion, I need, first, to discuss the view that we should put aside any effort to find a criterion for distinguishing persons from non-persons. As shall be shown, such a view presupposes the idea that to be a person is to be a member of *Homo sapiens*.

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<sup>4</sup> David Wiggins, "The Person as Object of Science, as Subject of Experience, and as Locus of Values," In *Person and Personality: A Contemporary Inquiry*, ed. Arthur Peacocke and Grant Gillett, 57 (Oxford; New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

The idea that having a special property (or special properties) can be considered as the criterion to distinguish persons from non-persons has been dubbed as ‘criterialism.’ Some have argued against the idea that one (or some) specific properties can be considered as characterising the core of personhood. I do not share this attitude. So, before looking for criteria, I need to show that criterialism is more acceptable than its rival idea, ‘speciesism.’ Speciesism is a label for any theory of persons which commits to the idea that to be a person is to be a member of *Homo sapiens*. In addition to the problem mentioned above, these kinds of theories of personhood face another serious problem. I will outline this problem in discussing one such theory.

An anti-abortionist philosopher Francis J. Beckwith has recently proposed a theory of persons according to which proposing a criterion for knowing what a person is has a serious problem. The problem, he argues, is that the criterion cannot tell us what a non-person is.<sup>5</sup> According to him, what is morally crucial is being a person, and whether something is able to perform the functions associated with being a person at any given time is not morally important. He writes:

A human person does not come into existence when human function arises, but rather, a human person is an entity who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to human functions, whether or not those functions are ever attained.<sup>6</sup>

He argues that, morally and legally speaking, abortion is a form of killing person because a foetus is a person even if its personal functions have not been attained at the time when it is in foetal condition. From the time of conception what comes into existence is a person. He bases his idea on a view proposed by a theologian John Jefferson Davis who says having the properties which normally are ascribed to a person is based on personhood, not vice versa.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, for Beckwith, even a human foetus is a person. In fact, his theory is based on the idea that to be a person is to be a member of *Homo sapiens*, that is, his theory is one of speciesism. As mentioned, speciesism is a theory which from the beginning presupposes that only the members of a special species ‘i.e.,’ *Homo sapiens* can be considered as persons.<sup>8</sup> Although the proponents of speciesism—‘e.g.,’ Beckwith—reject criterialism,

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<sup>5</sup> Francis J. Beckwith, “Abortion, Bioethics, and Personhood: A Philosophical Reflection,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 4, no.1 (2000): 18.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> In the literature of moral philosophy, sometimes speciesism is used to describe the idea according to which only human beings are entitled to the fundamental moral protection. According to this idea, non-human animals, morally speaking, have inferior status and the protection granted to them is minimal. See Paola Cavalieri and Catherine Woollard, *The Animal Question: Why Non-Human Animal Deserve Human Rights*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69-70.



they provide with us a criterion to distinguish persons from non-persons. This criterion is 'to be a member of *Homo sapiens*.' But, the problem with speciesism is that this is an arbitrary criterion. The main problem with speciesism is that it neglects the similarities between human beings and other primates which are our relatives in the evolutionary journey. Why can't a chimpanzee be considered as a person while it has a nervous system which is similar to ours?

According to Beckwith, a person is an entity which has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to the functions of personhood. What is the 'natural inherent capacity?' As we know, biologically speaking, there are considerable resemblances between human beings and chimpanzees and monkeys. Why don't chimpanzees and monkeys have such a capacity? According to him, when a human sperm combines with a human ovum a person comes into existence. But why can't we say that a combined chimpanzee sperm and chimpanzee ovum form a person? As a matter of fact, any theory which simply presupposes that only human beings can be considered as persons faces a problem in explaining why the other primates are not capable of developing into persons. Considering the problems of the theories which entail speciesism, it is now time to provide the criterion of being a person is. By means of discussing the properties which are central to being a person, I will try to clarify what personhood is. I examine whether any one of the properties which are central to personhood might alone be considered as the core of personhood.

In the philosophical literature, some properties have been mentioned as the properties which are central to being a person. For example, Mary Anne Warren notes that persons are closely tied up with six central characteristics. According to Warren, to be a person is to have the following capacities: 1) the capacity of being conscious; 2) the capacity of experiencing emotions; 3) the capacity of communicating (by whatever means); 4) having self-consciousness; 5) having reason which is the capacity to solve problems; 6) being a moral agent.<sup>9</sup> (Warren notes that an entity needs not have all mentioned capacities to be a person, and none of them is absolutely necessary.)<sup>10</sup> Other philosophers including Peter Strawson and Harry G. Frankfurt have provided us with other properties as the properties which are central for being a person. (I shall discuss their views shortly.) As shall be discussed soon, Frankfurt argues that having free will is the central property to being a person. The provided list by Warren includes all properties—except having free will—which are normally ascribed to persons. However, some of the properties which have been suggested by Warren are properties that can be ascribed to many conscious beings.

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<sup>9</sup> Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," In *Ethics in Practice*, ed. Hugh La Follette, 76 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

For example, the property of being conscious is a property which can be ascribed to all conscious beings. The property of being able to communicate, by whatever means, is the property which all conscious beings are capable of having. As mentioned, merely being conscious cannot be considered as the sufficient condition for being a person. This is because there are a broad range of conscious beings which they do not exhibit some characteristics that are crucial to being a person. For example, there are many conscious animals which are not moral agents while being a moral agent is one of the important characteristics of persons. If we take the core of personhood as being conscious, then the definition of person will be too inclusive. I will deal with one such theory shortly, but before discussing this kind of theory, I need to discuss the capacity of feeling emotions.

The capacity of feeling emotions, also, can be ascribed to a broad range of conscious beings. We see some animals that show kinds of behaviours which can be considered as the signs of feeling some emotions 'e.g.,' sadness, anger and joy. Moreover, there have been some scientific studies according to which many nonhuman animals are capable of feeling emotions. For example, it has been said that mammals and some birds feel emotions.<sup>11</sup> So, it is too difficult to state that the capacity of feeling emotions is not shared with many conscious beings. Marc Bekoff—a biologist who has conducted research on the capacity of feeling emotions in animals—writes:

It is bad biology to argue against the existence of animal emotions. Scientific research in evolutionary biology, cognitive ethology, and social neuroscience supports the view that numerous and diverse animals have rich and deep emotional lives.<sup>12</sup>

However, one may argue that nonhuman animals are not capable to feel emotions in the same way as humans. I am not endorsing this view here, but if this is the case, then we need to divide the capacity of feeling emotions into two different kinds: one which is shared by a broad range of conscious beings and one which is uniquely belong to human beings. Even if this is true, the capacity of feeling emotions (in the general sense) should be considered as a shared capacity by a broad range of conscious beings. We have no reason to state that a broad range of conscious beings are not capable of feeling emotions. Now, if one maintains that to be a person is to have the capacity of feeling emotions in the way that humans do, then one commits to the idea of speciesism, which, as argued above, is not acceptable. So, feeling emotions is also a shared characteristic by many conscious beings which normally are not considered as persons. Hence, the capacity of feeling emotions is not the

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<sup>11</sup> Marc Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy-and Why They Matter*, (Navato; California: New World Library, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII.

sufficient condition for being a person. Moreover, the capacity is not the necessary condition for being a person too. It is logically possible to think that there is a person who is unemotional. For example, one of the *Star Trek* characters, Mr Spock lacks the capacity of feeling emotions while he is sentient being, a moral agent and has self-consciousness.<sup>13</sup> Having said that, now it is time to discuss the definition of person proposed in the philosophical literature.

A definition of person will be too inclusive, if according to this definition we can consider some conscious beings as persons while they lack some or all of the properties which uniquely are ascribed to persons. As an example of such a definition, we can mention the definition of person proposed by Peter Strawson in his *Individuals*. He defined personhood based on having both mental and bodily characteristics. According to Strawson, a person is a kind of compound subject which is made by combination of two different subjects: a subject of experience and a subject of corporeal attributes. He writes:

What I mean by the concept of person is the concept of a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation, are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type.<sup>14</sup>

But, Strawson's definition is too broad; there are some conscious beings to which we can ascribe both predicates ascribing state of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal attributes while they lack the property of being a moral agent and the property of self-consciousness (at least we are not sure that they have those properties.) For this reason, Strawson's definition of a person is far too inclusive. In regards to Strawson's definition, Frankfurt writes:

It does violence to our language to endorse the application of the term 'person' to those numerous creatures which do have both psychological and material properties but which are manifestly not persons in any normal sense of the word.<sup>15</sup>

We need to focus on those properties which in terms of required cognitive abilities are more complex than being merely conscious. The following properties must be considered as the central properties to be a person: 1) self-consciousness; 2) being rational agent; 3) being a moral agent; 4) free will. However, we may face another problem when we try to avoid proposing an overly inclusive definition of person. We may propose an overly narrow definition of person. A definition of this type has been proposed by Frankfurt who takes the property of having free will as the property of being a person.

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<sup>13</sup> Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," 77.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Strawson, *Individual: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, (London, Mehtuen, 1955): 101-2.

<sup>15</sup> Harry G. Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and The Concept of Person," *The Journal of Philosophy* 68, no.1 (1971): 5.

Frankfurt, firstly, argues that persons are entities who are able to form ‘second-order desires.’<sup>16</sup> Non-human animals and human beings all have the desires to do or not to do such and such. He has dubbed them as ‘first-order desires.’ To be a person, an animal must also be capable of having a desire about the first-order desires which is formed by a ‘reflective self-evaluation’ of the first-order desire.<sup>17</sup> But in order to have a second-order desire, the animal must want “a certain desire to be his will.”<sup>18</sup> He dubbed this as ‘second order volition.’ According to Frankfurt, it is logically possible that an agent has second-order desires, but it does not have the volitions for fulfilling them. He notes that there is a difference between the two creatures. One that simply wants a certain desire—having a second-order desire of first-order desires—and one that wants the certain desire—the second-order desire—to be effective. Frankfurt calls the former creatures ‘wantons.’ A wanton is a creature that has second-order desire, but it ignores the question what its will is to be.<sup>19</sup> Only the former creatures deserve to be called persons. Therefore, a person is an entity who has second-order volitions.<sup>20</sup> But those creatures which are capable of having second-order volitions are the creatures which are capable of having free will. “It is only because a person has volitions of the second order that he is capable both of enjoying and of lacking freedom of the will.”<sup>21</sup> Hence, the core of personhood for Frankfurt is having free will. What is having freedom of the will? Frankfurt writes:

The statement that a person enjoys freedom of the will means (also roughly) that he is free to want what he wants to want. More precisely, it means that he is free to will what he wants to will, or to have the will he wants.<sup>22</sup>

A drug addict may have a desire to use a drug (first-order desire), but since he has a free will, he can have a second desire to extinguish the desire to use the drug. In contrast to Strawson’s definition, the problem of Frankfurt’s definition is that it is too narrow. Frankfurt’s account of person requires too much. We normally take a three-year-old child as a person while he may lack such a kind of freedom of will.<sup>23</sup> In fact, Frankfurt’s account of freedom of will is an overly strong one. Frankfurt’s sense of free will is stronger than the ordinary sense of the term which comes to our minds when we talk about free will.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>23</sup> David DeGrazia, “On the Question of Personhood beyond Homo Sapiens,” In *In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave*, ed. Peter Singer, 41 (Malden, Ma: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

As Eleonore Stump argues, Frankfurt's sense of free will might be called 'complete freedom of will.' "It encompasses and exceeds the ordinary sense of free will as absence of external obstacles to willing what one wants."<sup>24</sup> The difference between Frankfurt's sense of free will and the ordinary sense of free will can be clarified, if we consider the distinction between two notions: freedom of actions and freedom of will. What we mean by the ordinary sense of free will is actually freedom of actions which is different from Frankfurt's sense of freedom of will. "Freedom of action is the absence of obstacles to doing what one wants to do; freedom of will is the absence of obstacles to willing what one wants to will."<sup>25</sup> An agent enjoys freedom of action, if there are no external and internal obstacles to doing what the agent wants to do, and there are no external obstacles to willing what the agent wants to will. But in order to enjoy freedom of will, in Frankfurt's term, there must be an additional condition. In addition to the above conditions, there must be no internal obstacles to willing what the agent wants to will. To enjoy free will, in his sense, there must be no internal compulsive behaviour.<sup>26</sup> A drug addict might have two first-order desires. He may want to take the drug and at the same time he may want to avoid the drug. Then, he forms a second-order desire to want to be driven by the desire to avoid the drug. So, he wants the desire to avoid the drug to be effective in action. But, finally, he will be driven by the desire to take the drug. The behaviour internally is compulsive. As Robert Kane notes, in this example, in Frankfurt's sense, the addict lacks freedom of will "because he cannot secure the conformity of his will [first-order desires] to his second-order volitions. He does not have 'the will he wants to have.'"<sup>27</sup> But, the addict has a free will in the ordinary sense of free will. He has the freedom of action in the sense discussed above. Therefore, having free will—in Frankfurt's sense—cannot be considered as a necessary condition for being a person, though it might be a sufficient condition. If we define personhood as having free will in the above sense, then our definition will be too exclusive.

In order to know what a person is, I suggest looking again to the properties that are uniquely ascribed to persons—'i.e.,' self-consciousness, being a rational agent and being a moral agent, and having free will in the ordinary sense. Which one can be considered as the core of personhood? Historically speaking, self-consciousness is the property which has been considered as constitutive of being a person. This idea has been derived from Locke's definition of persons. In contemporary philosophy, the

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<sup>24</sup> Eleonore Stump, "Sanctification, Hardening of the Heart, and Frankfurt's concept of Free will," *The Journal of Philosophy* 85, no. 8 (1998): 398.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 399.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 62.

idea has some notable defenders including Peter Singer. In a famous passage of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke defined person as an entity which is aware of itself as itself. Locke writes:

A thinking, intelligent being that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it.<sup>28</sup>

Following Locke, some contemporary philosophers believe that the core of personhood is self-consciousness. Michael Tooley and Brian Garrett think that self-consciousness is the core of personhood.<sup>29</sup> Peter Singer is also a defender of this view. Singer states that Locke based the definition on two characteristics; self-consciousness and rationality. According to Singer, a person is an entity which has self-consciousness and rationality such that the other capacities which are ascribed to persons follow from these two main capacities.<sup>30</sup> Singer notes that an entity has self-consciousness provided that it is aware of itself as a distinct entity with a past and a future.<sup>31</sup> In what follows, I will argue that self-consciousness is what grounds of being a person.

In order to show that having self-consciousness is the core of being a person, we need to understand the relationship between having self-consciousness and having the other three aforementioned required properties 'i.e.,' being a rational agent and being a moral agent, and having free will in the ordinary sense. I argue that having self-consciousness is both the necessary and sufficient conditions for having the other three features which are central to being a person. To argue for this claim, firstly, I discuss a characteristic which lies at the heart of having the three mentioned properties. Then, I will clarify what I mean by the term 'self-consciousness.' This is because there are some ambiguities around the term self-consciousness in philosophical and scientific literatures. Then, I will argue that if any conscious being has a special form of self-consciousness, it has the mentioned characteristic which is central to have the other three properties. Therefore, having a special form of self-consciousness can be considered as both the sufficient and necessary conditions for being a person. First, we need to understand what moral agency, rational agency and having free will are.

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<sup>28</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 448-9.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Tooley, *Abortion and Infanticide*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983), 64; cf. Garrett, *Personal Identity and Self-Consciousness*, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 74.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

### Moral Agency, Rational Agency and Having Free Will in the Ordinary Sense

First of all, we need to clarify what being an agent is. If we define agency as doing things, then it follows that any kind of organism is an agent because all organisms do metabolic processes. Clearly, when we discuss moral agency and rational agency, we do not have such an idea of agency in our minds. A minimal account of agency is based on the ability to do actions. An action is a thing which—when performed—is adequately explainable only in terms of beliefs, desires and intentions of the doer.<sup>32</sup> Hence, an agent is a conscious being which is able to perform actions—things that can be explained in terms of beliefs, desires and intentions of the conscious being. In fact, this is a minimal account of agency. Such definition entails that in addition to human beings there are nonhuman animals which qualify as agents. The purposive behaviour of animals can be considered as action performed by an agent. For example, the behaviour of a beaver to make a dam can be explained in terms of its intentions. So, a beaver is an agent. Although there are a number of conscious beings which can be considered as agents, rational agency and moral agency requires much more than this minimal account. It is not the case that all agents can be considered as rational agents or moral agents.

Rational agency is typically defined based on decision making. Rationality can be understood on the ground of having all those capacities which contribute to reasonable decision-making. The capacity for being a rational agent is the capacity to make reasonable decisions about what to do.<sup>33</sup> In order to make a reasonable decision, one must have some desires and preferences and to rank the desires and preferences. A rational agent is an agent that has some desires to choose. A rational agent is an agent that is able to form second-order desires, because to be in a position to make a reasonable decision, one must be able to choose one of its desires, so it must form a desire regarding its first-order desires. The ability to form second-order desires is both the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a rational agent. First, if an agent is not able to form a second-order desire, it is not in a position to choose one of its first-order desires as a desire to satisfy. Also, the ability to form second-order desire is the sufficient condition for being a rational agent. If an agent has a second-order desire of its first-order desires, it is able to evaluate and rank its desires. If an agent has various first-order desires, and it is able to form a second-order desire of its first-order desires, then it will attempt to evaluate and rank the first-order desire because a desire is something that, by its very nature, “has an inclination to satisfy; otherwise, it would not be a desire.”<sup>34</sup> Such a conscious being tries to rank its desires

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<sup>32</sup> Lynne Rudder Baker, *Naturalism and the First-person Perspective*, (Oxford, U.K.; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 187-8.

<sup>33</sup> David Hodgson, *Rationality + Consciousness = Free will*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 26.

<sup>34</sup> Lynne Rudder Baker, *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, (United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 158.

in order to be able to satisfy one of them. Various desires normally conflict with each other. If the conscious being avoids ranking the desires, then, *per impossibile*, any attempt at satisfaction is committed to satisfying conflicting desires. Since a desire is a thing which has an inclination for satisfaction, an agent which has various conflicting first-order desires and is able to form a second-order desire, will attempt to rank the desires.<sup>35</sup>

Now, the question is by means of which ability is a conscious being able to form second-order desires? As discussed above, Frankfurt argues that any being which has the capacity of reflective self-evaluation has the capacity of forming second-order desires.<sup>36</sup> At the core of the capacity to form second-order desires—being a rational agent—is the ability to ‘reflect.’ Reflection, in Lockean sense, is an operation—an act—of the mind by means of which the mind takes notice of its own mental operation in itself.<sup>37</sup> By reflection a conscious being is able to conceive of itself as the subject of the desires and ask itself if the decision is suitable based on its preferences or not. If a conscious being is able to reflect on itself as the bearer of first-order desires and as the bearer of some preferences, it is able to form a desire of its first-order desires. Therefore, the ability to reflect lies at the heart of rational agency.

In regards to having free will, firstly, I wish to recall what was said above about the ordinary sense of free will. The ordinary sense of free will is, in fact, freedom of action. A conscious being has freedom of action if it is able to choose an action amongst various actions in the absence of obstacles to doing what it wants to do. As discussed above, to be free from internally compulsive behaviours is not a necessary condition for freedom of action (or freedom of will in the ordinary sense), though it is necessary for freedom of will in the complete sense (or Frankfurt’s sense of free will.) The ability to form second-order desires is both necessary and sufficient for having freedom of actions. Any conscious being which is able to form second-order desires is in a position to make a decision to choose an action among various alternatives.<sup>38</sup> It is necessary because if a conscious being

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>36</sup> Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of Person,” 7.

<sup>37</sup> Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 124.

<sup>38</sup> One might think that the definition of free will as the ability to choose a course of action among various actions is consistent with goal-directed behaviors which can be seen in some animals. Normally, we do not consider the animals that are able to do goal-directed behaviors as the conscious beings that enjoy freedom of will. I believe that considering the condition that the conscious being must be able to form second-order desire (the ability to reflect) helps us to rule out goal-directed behaviors as the behaviors which require free will. The ability to reflect is not required for goal-directed behaviors. A conscious being which is capable of goal-directed behaviors is an agent in the minimal sense, though not a rational agent.



has no second-order desire, then it is not able to evaluate the first-order desire to make the decision to act based on its preferences. Also, it is sufficient because, as argued in regards to rational agency, if a conscious being is able to form second-order desires by ranking its first-order desire, then it will do so since a desire to do an action by its very nature is a thing that begs satisfaction. So, again, the act of reflection which follows the ability to form second-order desires is both necessary and sufficient for freedom of action (free will in the ordinary sense). In other words, any conscious being which is a rational agent has freedom of action.

With regard to moral agency, we need to distinguish between 'being a moral agent,' and 'being a moral subject.' A moral subject is an entity that has entitled to be treated in a certain way, that is, it is entitled to moral protection. A moral agent is a conscious being that is responsible for its actions. Hence, an entity might be a moral subject without being a moral agent.<sup>39</sup> For the purpose of this discussion, we shall focus on the concept of moral agency. A moral agent is an agent that is able to make decisions based on its preferences (a system of moral values), and is able to take responsibility for the actions it performs.<sup>40</sup> (However, we sometimes blame a person for his carelessness. In the case of negligence, one has a responsibility in regards to the actions which must have been done by him, yet neglected. In this case, 'refraining' or 'forgetting' can be considered as the actions of which the conscious being is responsible.) The definition shows that only rational agents are capable to be moral agents. To be a moral agent, the agent must be able of decision-making based on its preferences and values. This entails that moral agency requires rational agency. But in addition to being a rational agent, the agent must be able to take responsibility in regards to the actions it has performed. Again, the ability to reflect is at the core of moral agency. As argued, the ability to reflect is both necessary and sufficient for being a rational agent. The ability to reflect is both the necessary and sufficient for the ability to take responsibility for actions.

It is necessary because if the agent is not able to take notice of the operation of its mind, it is not able to appreciate the fact that it has performed some special actions. No conscious being is able to know that it (itself) has performed some actions unless it is able to conceive of itself as the subject of those actions. By means of the act of reflection a conscious being will be able to conceive of itself as the bearer of actions. Also, reflection is a sufficient condition for being a moral agent. If a conscious being is able to reflect, it is able to view itself as the agent that has performed the actions. So, it is in a position to be questioned and be called responsible about the actions done.

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<sup>39</sup> Shaun Gallagher, "Moral Agency, Self-consciousness and Practical Wisdom," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 14, no. 5-6 (2007): 200.

<sup>40</sup> Baker, *Naturalism and the First-person Perspective*, 192.

However, one might argue that if determinism is right, then the agent is not responsible for its actions, even if it is able to view itself as the subject of an action and is able to recognise that it (itself) has performed the action. Determinism in this case means that the laws of nature together with the antecedent conditions completely determine my future decision to act. Here we need to clarify the term ‘moral responsibility.’ An agent is morally responsible if and only if it is able to evaluate the actions it has performed on the basis of a system of moral values. People are able to judge their own actions and to state whether an action is wrong or right. Whether or not I enjoy free will, other people and I can evaluate my actions based on a system of values. An agent is morally responsible for its actions if the agent is ready to endorse the desire upon which he had performed the action. Whether or not the agent has control over the factors that form its desires, it is able to endorse or refuse to endorse those desires. Even if determinism is right, the action I perform is my action which is done based on a second-order desire of my first-order desire. If I am ready to endorse my second-order desire, I am responsible for the action, even if I had no control on factors which contribute to form the second-order desire.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, if an agent is able to view itself, its actions, and its desires, then it is able to take responsibility of its actions. The ability to reflect is necessary and sufficient for being a moral agent.

To sum up; the ability to reflect is at the core of having free will (in the ordinary sense), being a rational agent and being a moral agent. Now the question is, ‘Is having the property of self-consciousness the core of personhood?’ To argue for the claim that having self-consciousness is the core of personhood, first, we need to clarify what we mean by the term ‘self-consciousness.’ This is because there is some ambiguity regarding the term ‘self-consciousness.’ The main issue centres on the concept of self-consciousness in the philosophical and scientific literature. In fact, there is a huge body of literature discussing the concept of self-consciousness in both major traditions of contemporary philosophy—logical analysis and phenomenology. Moreover, psychology and neuroscience literature is also filled with conflicting definitions of self-consciousness. The ambiguity which frequently arises is related to the idea that self-consciousness has different levels or different types. One reasonable question would be “Which form (or level) of self-consciousness is required to be a person?” If there are various forms of self-consciousness, then which one can be considered as the core of personhood? In order to answer these questions, we need to clarify the exact characteristic of self-consciousness which is sufficient for being a person.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 205.

## The Reflexive Form of Self-consciousness is the Core of Personhood

Having self-consciousness is to have an inner awareness of myself. In order to have the property of self-consciousness, a conscious being must have inner awareness of itself. Having inner awareness of itself, however, is to be aware of itself in a special way 'i.e.,' an immediate way. To have the property of self-consciousness, the conscious being must have immediate direct access to itself. The difference between immediate and mediate access can be understood based on the difference between a first-person perspective and a third person perspective. (By a 'perspective,' I mean a point of view.) For example, if I have a pain in my leg, I don't need to rely on observation to know that I am in pain. I just know it. But someone else can know that I am in pain by relying on an observation or by being informed by me. Similarly, to know some information about myself, I can use a third person perspective. For example, I can know my date of birth by hearing it from others. Having self-consciousness is a matter of knowing myself from the first-person perspective. By having a first-person perspective of itself, a conscious being is able to refer to itself as a particular self such that the apprehension of itself is a part of the content of its thought without appealing to any name, description or third-personal referential device to identify which being is being referred to. Knowledge acquired by self-consciousness cannot be replaced by the knowledge acquired through any other device.

But what if there are various forms of self-consciousness? If there are various forms of self-consciousness, then can we state that possession of each one is sufficient to be a person? Or can only one form of self-consciousness be considered as the core of personhood. The idea that there are various forms of self-consciousness has some proponents among phenomenologists.<sup>42</sup> The distinction between various forms of self-consciousness overlaps recent analytic and continental philosophies.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For the phenomenologists there is a minimal form of self-consciousness which is always a constant feature of any conscious experience. This is the form of self-consciousness which has been labelled pre-reflective self-consciousness. Dan Zahavi calls this form of self-consciousness the quality of *mineness*. See Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Self-hood*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), 16. In addition to pre-reflective self-consciousness, there is another form of self-consciousness exemplified in the moment in which one attentively reflects on oneself as the bearer of his experiences. This form has been dubbed reflective self-consciousness by the phenomenologists. See Dan Zahavi, "First-person thought and embodied self-awareness: Some reflection on the relation between recent analytical philosophy and phenomenology," *Phenomenology and The Cognitive Science* 1(2002): 17.

<sup>43</sup> Flanagan has distinguished between low-level self-consciousness involved in "experiencing my experience as mine" and a strong notion of self-consciousness which is the product of thinking on my own self. See Owen Flanagan, *Consciousness Reconsidered*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 194. José Luis Bermúdez has argued that there are various forms of self-consciousness including pre-linguistic self-consciousness, and linguistic self-consciousness. See José Luis Bermúdez, *The Paradox of Self-consciousness*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000). Alvin Goldman also notes that when a human being is thinking about some thing *x* there is a form of self-consciousness which is non-reflective. See Alvin I. Goldman, *A Theory of Human Action*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 96.

Here, I merely want to make two points. Firstly, we know that human beings are able to be conscious of themselves attentively. Sometimes I think of myself such that I take notice of myself as myself and I am attentively aware of my beliefs and my deeds. However, according to some philosophers, this is not the only form of self-consciousness we find in conscious beings. It has been said that there is at least one other form of self-consciousness which is a non-attentive or a basic form of self-consciousness. Although I agree with this idea that there is a non-attentive form of self-consciousness, here, I do not intend to discuss this basic form of self-consciousness.<sup>44</sup> This is because the issue which is at stake here is which form of self-consciousness is the core of personhood. Only a form of self-consciousness acquired based on reflection can be considered as the core of personhood. Whether or not the basic form of self-consciousness (or, as phenomenologists say, pre-reflective self-consciousness) exists it is the intrinsic quality of a subject's consciousness of itself without needing reflection while attentive self-consciousness is the product of a subject's reflection on one's own mind. For the purpose of this discussion, I call the form of self-consciousness which is the core of personhood 'reflexive self-consciousness.'<sup>45</sup>

Reflexive self-consciousness is having the ability to conceive of oneself as oneself through the act of reflection. A conscious being which has reflexive self-consciousness is a being which is conscious of itself as the owner of its experiences.<sup>46</sup> Having reflexive self-consciousness is to have a perspective from which the conscious being can think of itself as an individual subject of experience and as a separated subject from any other subject of experience. To have such ability the conscious being must be able to conceive of itself as the owner of its thoughts. A being which has the property of reflexive self-consciousness must not only be able to recognize itself within the world from a first-person point of view, but it must also be able to conceive of itself as itself without any mediator 'i.e.,' a name, a description, or a third person

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<sup>44</sup> To argue for the veracity of this idea, I use John Perry's idea of 'unarticulated constituents.' Based on the idea of unarticulated constituent, Perry explains the most basic kind of self-consciousness in which there is no concept of self. When I see a cup of coffee in front of me, I reach out and pick it up. During this time, I do not think of myself. Although I have no representation of myself explicitly, I can manage the activity. There is no need to have a self-referring constituent in my belief (propositional content). But there is a kind of knowledge of me in this kind of self-consciousness. See John Perry and Simon Blackburn, "Thought Without Representation," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 60 (1986): 138-151.

<sup>45</sup> To call the form of self-consciousness which is both necessary and sufficient for being a person, I have chosen the term 'reflexive self-consciousness,' used by E.J. Lowe. This is a proper term for the purpose of our discussion because, as argued, being a person depends on having the ability to reflect. For Lowe's discussion, see E.J. Lowe, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 264.

<sup>46</sup> Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 14.

demonstrative. It must not only be able to express its thoughts by the use of 'I', but it must also be able to conceive of itself as the bearer of its thoughts.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the fact that it must be able to think of its subjective point of view as its own, it must have the ability to think of other organisms (other owners of subjective points of view) as having different subjective points of view from its own.<sup>48</sup>

The idea of reflexive form of self-consciousness has been famously pointed out by William James where he talks about two discriminated aspects of a subject that is conscious of itself. According to James, when I am conscious of myself I am conscious of, at the same time, something which is partly knower and partly known, partly subject and partly object. These are two discriminated aspects which can be labelled as 'I' and 'me'.<sup>49</sup> By having reflexive self-consciousness the conscious being is aware of itself such that it is exposed to itself, that is, it is able to view itself.<sup>50</sup> If a conscious being is able to view itself attentively such that the conscious being is exposed to itself it has reflexive self-consciousness. At the core of reflexive self-consciousness is the ability to reflect. A conscious being which is able to reflect on its own mind is the conscious being which is able to perform the act of conceiving of itself as itself, and is able to view itself as the bearer of its own desires and as the agent of its own actions. Any conscious being which has self-consciousness through the act of reflection has the reflexive form of self-consciousness.

As argued above, a conscious being which is able to reflect on its mind has those properties which are central to being a person; having freedom of action, being a rational agent, and being a moral agent. The reflexive form of self-consciousness—the act of conceiving oneself as oneself through reflection—is at the core of those three properties. Thus, any conscious being which has reflexive self-consciousness has all four properties which are uniquely ascribed to persons. It has self-consciousness and freedom of action. It is a moral and a rational agent.

If a conscious being has a form of self-consciousness which has not been acquired through the act of reflection, then the form of self-consciousness is not sufficient for having the three aforementioned properties. By merely having a low-level of self-consciousness the conscious being is not aware of its own perspective as its own. For this reason the properties which are normally ascribed to persons cannot be realized by merely having a non-reflexive form of self-consciousness. For example, in order to be a moral agent the conscious being needs to be aware of its actions

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<sup>47</sup> Baker, *Persons and Bodies*, 64.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>49</sup> William James, *Psychology*, (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1982), 176.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Lewis, *Shame: The Exposed Self*, (New York, Toronto: The Free Press, Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1992), 36.

(what it has done and what it intends to do) and of itself as the subject of the actions. If I have damaged a car in an accident of which I am guilty, I, as a person, am expected to accept the responsibility for what I have done. But in order to do so, I need first to be aware that I (myself) have caused the accident. To make such a judgment, I need to be aware of myself as a separate subject of actions and experiences from every other subject of actions and experiences in the world (for example, the one whose car has been damaged by me). I need to be viewed by myself and this can only be possible by having reflexive self-consciousness. Having a lower level form of self-consciousness does not provide me with the ability to view myself.

Thus, to be a person is to have the reflexive form of self-consciousness. Now it is time to turn back to the question posed at the beginning of this paper: "What is the definition of a person?"

### **The Definition of a Person**

So far, it has been suggested that the property of reflexive self-consciousness defines what it is to be a person. But before settling on the definition one final point must be considered. It is not the case that persons always, at all times, exhibit reflexive self-consciousness. For example, sleeping and comatose persons do not exhibit reflexive self-consciousness. If we take having reflexive self-consciousness as the core of personhood, then is it the case that when a human being is asleep, she is not a person? Will she be a person again, when she wakes up? We can find a solution for this problem in Aristotle's distinction between first and second potentialities. In *De Anima* Aristotle discusses two different notions of potentiality. Aristotle writes:

We must now distinguish not only between what is potential and what is actual but also different senses in which things can be said to be potential...We can speak of something as 'a knower' either (a) as when we say that man is a knower, meaning that man falls within the class of beings that know or have knowledge, or (b) as when we are speaking of a man who possesses a knowledge of grammar; each of these is so called as having in him a certain potentiality, but there is a difference between their respective potentialities, the one (a) being a potential knower, because his kind or matter is such and such, the other (b), because he can in the absence of any external counteracting cause realize his knowledge in actual knowing at will.<sup>51</sup>

Let's clarify the two distinct notions of potentiality by way of an example. A human being is capable of speaking English in two senses. First, he does not know English, but he is capable of learning to speak English. This is one potentiality. During

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<sup>51</sup> Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, trans., W.D. Ross, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908-52), 417a 20-30.

the time he is learning how to speak English, he actualizes this potentiality, so this is the first actuality. Now imagine that a man who has learned how to speak English is listening to his friend who speaks English. During the time the man is silent, he does not actualize speaking English, though he is capable of speaking English in a different sense with the first potentiality. He knows English and he is able to actualize speaking English whenever he wants. He has already learned English language, though at this very moment he does not speak English. This is a second case of potentiality.

Now consider a conscious being which has not acquired reflexive self-consciousness. This is a conscious being which cannot be considered as a person. If it has the first potentiality to acquire reflexive self-consciousness, it will actualize reflexive self-consciousness in the sense of first actuality, then it will qualify as a person. Imagine that it has acquired reflexive self-consciousness. When it is asleep, it does not actualize reflexive self-consciousness, but it does not follow that it is in the same situation of a conscious being which has not acquired reflexive self-consciousness yet. Once it wakes up, it can realize reflexive self-consciousness. So, this is not the case that when it is asleep he lacks personhood. Based on the notion of second potentiality, we can suggest the definition of person as follows.

An entity,  $x$ , is a person if and only if, at any time it exists, either it has actual reflexive self-consciousness or it could realize actual reflexive self-consciousness.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

What I have tried to show is that having reflexive self-consciousness can be considered as a foundation for the other properties which are uniquely ascribed to persons. No conscious being can be a moral agent and can be a rational agent without having reflexive self-consciousness. Having reflexive self-consciousness is both necessary and sufficient for being a person. The direct consequence of the above definition of person is a rejection of speciesism and its arbitrary definition of persons. According to the proposed definition, it is not the case that only human beings can be considered as persons. If any other conscious being has the reflexive form of self-consciousness, it qualifies as a person. So, the definition provides room for accepting the idea that there are non-human persons. To be a person is to have the property of reflexive self-consciousness. Any conscious being that has actual reflexive self-consciousness or it could realize actual reflexive self-consciousness can be considered as a person.

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<sup>52</sup> There is a difference between the following statements: 1)  $\forall t \diamond$ , for an entity,  $x$ , to realize self-consciousness; 2)  $\diamond \forall t$  an entity,  $x$ , realizes self-consciousness. Clearly, by the expression 'at any time it exists,' I mean the former statement.

## Acknowledgement

I want to express my extreme gratitude to Associate Professor Deborah Brown and Dr. Dominic Hyde of the University of Queensland who read the paper with great care and made extremely useful comments on the manuscript.

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## ABDUCTIVE IMAGE FORMATION

GÁL LÁSZLÓ<sup>1</sup>, GÁL GABRIELLA<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** Our study, according to its title, will consist of four parts. Initially, we want to elucidate the concept of abduction and the characteristics of abductive reasoning. Then we will turn our attention to visual abduction, proceeding from its logical and psychological discussion in the literature. Finally, we will deal with the question whether building design proceeds abductively. If we will assume that it does, then we will argue for this point. Our argument will be based on a specific example, supplied by the design of an archaeological museum by Gál Gabriella. By way of a conclusion, we will present our logical and philosophical interpretations.

**Keywords:** *abduction, visual abduction, visual coherence, abductive image formation in architecture*

### The concept of abduction

The concept of abduction was introduced by the American pragmatist philosopher and logician C. S. Peirce. Although the concept looks back at a history of more than one hundred years, it has not enjoyed too much popularity, especially not in Europe, where its initial scope was limited almost exclusively to the analysis of scientific explanations.

The concept of abduction was put in a new light most notably by the research on artificial intelligence and soft computing, emerging in the 1980s, in which it emphatically proved its usefulness. This is the way in which fields of inquiry like the philosophy of science, medical diagnosis, historical explanation, criminal investigation etc. have come into contact with the concept of abduction. So much so that Lorenzo Magnani used “abductive cognition” as a title for his book published in 2009<sup>3</sup>, which also signals the broadening interpretation of the

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<sup>3</sup> Magnani, Lorenzo (2009) *Abductive Cognition. The Epistemological and Eco-Cognitive Dimensions of Hypothetical Reasoning*, Springer Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg.

concept of abduction. In addition to the area of scientific explanation, abduction has begun to appear in the most varied roles, from the study of sensation and perception to nonverbal creative solutions. Magnani summarizes these developments as follows: “Abduction is a popular term in many fields of AI, such as diagnosis, planning, natural language processing, motivation analysis, logic programming, and probability theory. Moreover, abduction is important in the interplay between AI and philosophy, cognitive science, historical, temporal, and narrative reasoning, decision-making, legal reasoning, and emotional cognition.”<sup>4</sup>

But let us begin at the beginning. What did Peirce mean by the concept of abduction? According to Peirce, abduction is a distinct form of reasoning, which differs both from deduction and from induction as known so far. Its distinctive quality is revealed by the following quote, which has become so well-known that it even appears as a motto in the literature.

*„The surprising fact, C, is observed.  
But if A were true, C would be a matter of course.  
Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true.”* [CP, 5.189]<sup>5</sup>

The structure of this reasoning may be represented formally as follows:

$$\begin{array}{l} C \\ \hline A \rightarrow C \\ A \end{array}$$

In this representation, A and C stand for statements, and  $\rightarrow$  is the general symbol of material implication. However, on the basis of the aforementioned observations, it would have to acquire a different interpretation. In the field of informal logic, this form of reasoning is invalid, because the truth of the conclusion establishes the truth of the antecedent. In informal logic, this fallacy is called *fallacy of affirming the consequent*, and it can be avoided by establishing the truth of the consequent on the truth of the antecedent:

$$\begin{array}{l} A \\ \hline A \rightarrow C \\ C^6 \end{array}$$


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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Peirce, C. S: *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Volumes 1–6 edited by C. Hartshorne, P. Weiss. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 1931–1935; and volumes 7–8 edited by A.W. Burks. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 1958.

<sup>6</sup> Gál László (2007) *Hagyományos logika*. Egyetemi Műhely Kiadó, Bolyai Társaság, Kolozsvár, p. 100-103.

This form of reasoning is valid within deductive logic, and it has such a prominent role that it has a name: *modus ponens*. Furthermore, we can notice that the *modus ponens* is linear and reasons in a forward direction (viz., it is deductive, because the conclusion follows the premises). In contrast, within abductive reasoning the premises follow the conclusion, because of which the argument is retroductive. As a result of abduction we arrive at hypotheses (formulation of hypotheses) among which we have to choose in order to find an explanation.

The basic features of Peircean abduction can be summarized in the following keywords:

- *promising hypothesis*: essentially, the definitive characteristic of abduction consists in the formulation of hypotheses on the basis of an observation;
- *explanatory*: the hypothesis is explanatory if it takes into account the facts, because the unexpected fact has to be based on other facts or on our former knowledge in order for us to find an explanation for it;
- *testable*: it is in accord with the testability of the hypotheses, or, in other words, it can be repeated;
- *economic*: the hypotheses have to be *countable*, and we have to be able to *choose* among them the best one *on the basis of clearly established criteria* (the best explanation). Here, a subjective factor also plays its role, associating the abductive reasoning with the reasoner, the agent of abduction, or the abductor.

### The concept of intuitive abduction

In order to clarify the above discussion, we will cite here one of the examples of A. Aliseda, who uses it repeatedly in her book on abductive reasoning: „Common Sense: Explaining observations with simple facts. All you know is that the lawn gets wet either when it rains, or when the sprinklers are on. You wake up in the morning and notice that the lawn is wet. Therefore you hypothesize that it rained during the night or that the sprinklers had been on.”<sup>7</sup>

We will turn here, again, to the formal reconstruction of reasoning, due to its certified clear and unequivocal character.

The lawn is wet (observation). C

The lawn gets wet either when it rains or when the sprinklers are on.  $(A \vee B) \rightarrow C$

It has rained, or the sprinklers had been on.  $A \vee B$

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<sup>7</sup> Aliseda, A. (2006) *Abductive Reasoning. Logical Investigations into Discovery and Explanation*, Springer, Dordrecht, The Netherlands. p. 29.

Proceeding from the observation of the wetness of the lawn, you reason back to what you already know and are convinced of, i.e. that it has rained, or that the sprinklers had been on. In other words, you have advanced an *abductive explanation* on the basis of what you know and are convinced of (background knowledge).

As already mentioned, this form of reasoning is not valid from a strictly logical point of view. Regarding the example of Aliseda, it would be valid if it would have been made in the form of a *modus ponens* argument, as follows:

Valid argument (*modus ponens*):

If it has rained or the sprinklers had been on, the lawn is wet.  $(A \vee B) \rightarrow C$

It has rained or the sprinklers had been on.  $A \vee B$

The lawn is wet. C

Here, the truth of the statement that it has rained or the sprinklers had been on establishes the fact of the lawn's wetness, and not vice versa, if we construct a hypothesis about the rain or the sprinklers based on the wetness of the lawn. The opposite character of these two forms of reasoning should be sufficiently clear.

Having said that, the question is that even if the logical basis for abductive reasoning is an invalid *modus ponens*, should we view abductive reasoning as completely useless and dismiss it. The answer, of course, is a definitive no. This is what Peirce has discovered, and also the motive for the rise of abduction in different fields, from the end of the 20th century on, such as in the field of the philosophy of science, medicine, criminology, archaeology, mathematics, and the study of artificial intelligence. The central concept of the latter field of studies is "search", which immediately establishes the connection with abduction.

### **Deduction, induction, abduction**

Let us summarize the characteristics of abduction as a form of reasoning as opposed to deduction and induction. These characteristics appear in a scattered fashion throughout Aliseda's book.

**Deduction** proceeds from the facts, the premises, to the conclusion. The conclusion follows *necessarily* from the premises. One of the conditions for the validity of deductive reasoning is that true premises must necessarily have a true conclusion, which is to say that this form of reasoning is *monotonic*. Accordingly, deduction as a form of reasoning is truth preserving, meaning that it transfers the truth-value of its premises to its conclusion. According to Peirce, deduction *proves that something must be*. Beliefs have no role to play in this matter.

As against this, **abduction** proceeds from the obvious fact to the hypotheses. Thus, in a certain sense, it is *hypothesis formulation*. What is primarily at stake here is *not the truth*, but explanation. Accordingly, abduction is not truth preserving, and it also cannot be monotonic. If abduction leads to explanations, the consequence is that it will come into contact with the beliefs attached to the explanations with which it is in accord or discord. From this point of view, it is *falsifiable*. As Aliseda writes about abductive explanations: „The trend in logic based approaches to abduction in AI interprets abduction as *backwards deduction plus additional conditions*.”<sup>8</sup> Or, the additional conditions mean precisely the conditions of conformity with the beliefs. According to Peirce, abduction suggests that *something may be*, as opposed to *deduction* which, as we said before, proves that something must be.

In the case of **induction**, general statements (conclusions) are inferred from *patterns*, i.e. groups of facts. The conclusions are posterior to the premises and pertain to the future. Therefore, inductive conclusions are *predictions*, as opposed to abductive retroductions. Within abductive reasoning, not patterns, but one-off observations are what matters, proceeding from which we try to advance hypotheses, while discounting all other observations. Inductive conclusions have certain probability degree, which means that they relate to the truth, as it is the case with deductions. As a consequence, inductions are as well *falsifiable*. Nevertheless, conclusions arrived at inductively always contain an element of giving up the whole truth which can be reached by deduction. In other words, neither induction nor abduction is monotonic. As opposed to abductive explanations, background theories matter far less or not at all in inductive procedures. According to Peirce, induction shows that something *actually is operative*.

### The logic of abduction

Taking into account the difference between abduction as a process and a product, when ascertaining the logic of abductive reasoning, we view abduction basically as a process. Aliseda expresses this in the following way: “As for the *logical form* of abduction – referring to the inference corresponding to the abductive process that takes a background theory ( $\Theta$ ) and a given observation ( $\varphi$ ) as inputs, and produces an abductive explanation ( $\alpha$ ) as its output – we have found that at a very general level, it may be viewed as a threefold relation:

$$\Theta, \varphi \Rightarrow \alpha”.^9$$

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 46.

The elements of this logical relation can be comprehended almost intuitively, the only problem is what the sign  $\Rightarrow$  means. There are several possibilities for interpretation. Here are some alternatives to consider. It can be interpreted as classical derivability ( $\mid\text{---}$ ) or semantic entailment ( $\mid=$ ) which can be analyzed, to a certain extent, within the well-known classical logical frameworks, in the sense that these can be interpreted in terms of truth values. However, this approach is limited by the fact that it does away with the specific character of abductive reasoning as well as with its innovative contribution brought about primarily by AI research beginning with the 1980s.

However, the possibilities for interpretation do not end here. Aliseda also mentions among them the interpretation as probable inference ( $\Theta, \alpha \Rightarrow \text{probable } \varphi$ ), in the case of which we may observe that the abductive explanation ( $\alpha$ ) renders the ( $\varphi$ ) observation probable – of course, at a different level. This interpretation differs from the preceding two in that the inference moves from the background theory through the abductive explanation to the facts. In other words, after it is stated, the abductive explanation considers as its objective the factual confirmation of these. Due to this character, it is no longer retroductive, but a forward inference, similar to deduction. Consequently, the widespread interpretation of AI specialists, according to which *abduction is backwards deduction plus additional conditions*, is specified in this form. However, at the same time, if we think about it more closely, they return to the safety and the truth of “good old” deduction. Is this perhaps a case of dealing with the question of time? The treatment of time in deductive inferences is linear and progresses unequivocally from the past through the present to the future, since the conclusion always follows the premises. The process of abductive reasoning should point in the opposite direction, in which the fact, or observation, is followed by the search for premises and the choice between them. The question which follows is how the creation of computers and their subsequent development can render manageable the backward flowing time with software tools in which time flows forward. In fact, the following two interpretations aim at clarifying this issue.

The mechanism of logical programming comes closest to AI developments. In this case, the scheme of interpretation is the following:  $\Theta, \alpha \Rightarrow \text{prolong } \varphi$ . Among others, there is the dynamic interpretation ( $\Theta, \alpha \Rightarrow \text{dynamic } \varphi$ ) in which the interpretation in terms of truth values is replaced by the information change potentials which characterize the doxastic states of agents.

As a conclusion to these attempts at interpretation Aliseda finally states: “Our point here is that abduction is not one specific non-standard logical inference mechanism, but rather a way of using any one of these.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

We may have reached a point in time where we must either find correction methods for situations when the so far proposed and certified logical systems break down, or elaborate a logic on completely different grounds and assumptions.

### **A broader approach to abduction: abductive cognition**

Aliseda's account on abduction focuses primarily and almost exclusively on its connections with the development of scientific explanations and with existing theories. Her account relies on the study of artificial intelligence and on elements of the existing logical systems. As a consequence, the most important contribution of her account relies in bringing the study of abductive inference to the field of decision making and in creating the analytical method for its implementation. However, these contributions still remain within the field of scientific explanations.

As opposed to this approach, as we have already mentioned, the book of Lorenzo Magnani, published in 2009, interprets abduction in a significantly broader manner, and therefore, from his point of view, abductive explanation and the logic associated with it are merely a detail.

Magnani differentiates many forms of abduction. According to him, the first necessary differentiation is between *theoretical abduction* and *non-explanatory abduction*. The two types of theoretical abduction are sentential and model-based abduction. This is an important extension to Aliseda's and even Peirce's concept of abduction, which is limited to the field of theoretical abduction. Yet again, theoretical explanatory abduction is extended with the form of non-sentential, i.e. model-based abduction. The construction of this can be either creative or selective. It is selective if the explanation is chosen from existing background theories and creative if we make up the explanation.

The concept of *extra-theoretical abduction* is new within the literature. Specifically, this concept refers to transformations made through manipulative abduction. The leading motto of this is "thinking through doing". This form of abduction can also be creative or selective. However, viewed in this manner, the concept of abduction covers the human condition as a whole and extends to the totality of cognition. This is the origin of the concept of *abductive cognition* introduced by Magnani. "The main thesis is that abduction is a *basic* kind of human cognition, not only helpful in delineating the first principles of a new theory of science, but also extremely useful in the unification of interdisciplinary perspectives, which would otherwise remain fragmented and dispersed, and thus devoid of the necessary philosophical analysis. In sum, the present book aims at having a strong



interdisciplinary nature, encompassing mathematical and logical cases, biological and neurological aspects and analysis of the epistemological impact of the problems caused by the «mathematical physics» of abduction.”<sup>11</sup>

Abductive logic maintains its connection to classical linear and monotonic logic, without being reducible to it. The multi-millennial history of European logic is a history of coping with inconsistencies and paradoxes. The names of Bertrand Russell and Kurt Gödel may serve as an example for this interpretation, and one could also refer already to Aristotle or even to ancient Greek philosophy as a whole. Magnani comments on this in the following way: “Moreover, the study of diagnostic, visual, spatial, analogical, and temporal reasoning has demonstrated that there are many ways of performing intelligent and creative reasoning that cannot be described with only the help of classical logic. Abduction is also useful in describing the different roles played by the various kinds of medical reasoning, from the point of view both of human agents and of computational programs that perform medical tasks such as diagnosis. However, non-standard logic has shown how we can provide rigorous formal models of many kinds of abductive reasoning such as the ones involved in defeasible and uncertain inferences. Contradictions and inconsistencies are fundamental in abductive reasoning, and abductive reasoning is appropriate for «governing» inconsistencies.”<sup>12</sup>

Let us now turn to the case of visual abduction, to which Magnani’s book contains several references. His most important source is P. Thagard. How does he address this question?

### Visual abduction

In the case of visual abduction the well-known form of abductive reasoning is used, its peculiarity being that the material is supplied by visual information. The father of abductive reasoning, C. S. Peirce was the one who invented *existential diagrams* which can serve as an instrument for the treatment of visual abductive inferences. Peirce’s intention can be summarized as follows: “The major reason for this assessment was made clear from start to finish since Peirce repeatedly stated that his purpose in constructing EG was to build an engine of analysis. As he developed the graphs and applied them to various problems, it was always their experimental possibilities and analytic power that chiefly pleased him.”<sup>13\*</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Magnani, *op. cit.*, p. x.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Roberts, Don D. (1973) *The Existential Graphs of Charles S. Peirce*, The Hague, Mouton, p. 127-128.

\* For their detailed discussion, see: Gál László, Gál Gabriella: Képi következtetés – műépítészeti esettanulmány, in Egyed Péter, Gál László (szerk.) (2011) *Fogalom és kép 2.*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană/Kolozsvári Egyetemi Kiadó, p. 115-142.

However, Peirce did not establish any relationship between existential diagrams and abduction. This is also illustrated by the following quote: "...we know of no text in which he discusses abduction as diagrammatic or iconic. But there are instances of abductive thinking that are most plausibly interpreted as pictorial."<sup>14</sup> This means that we cannot find within his work any solution for the treatment of visual abduction.

Such a solution is attempted in the study of P. Thagard and C. Shelly, cited above. The pretext of the study is based on a paleoanthropological issue. It concerns a skullcap found in the 1950s (Sk54), for which R. A. Dart (1953) advanced an explanation. The skullcap of the australopithecine had been found in a cave at Swartkrans in South Africa. The skullcap had two notches on its left side, which, according to Dart, had been driven into the skull by weapons, probably two arrows. Accordingly, Dart came up with the hypothesis that the hominid had been the victim of murder for cannibalism. Dart's explanation has become known as the "killer ape" hypothesis.

The skullcap has been re-examined by C. K. Brain in 1970. The hypothesis he advanced was completely different. He also took into account the objects found in the cave, among which there were many leopard fossils. The canine teeth from the leopard skull found in the same cave were about the right size and the right distance apart to correspond with the notches on the skull. Furthermore, the place is still frequented by leopards. On these grounds, he advanced a hypothesis according to which the hominid has not, in fact, been the victim of cannibalism, but probably carries on its skull the wounds made by the bite of a leopard. Brain's leopard hypothesis was *simpler and more plausible* than the explanation favoured by Dart.

Both explanatory hypotheses satisfy the conditions of abductive reasoning: they are retroductive, plausible, testable, but economic. It is clear that both hypotheses use visual material in order to advance their explanations. Because the explanations refer to past events, we could call them accounts of *paleoanthropological investigation*. They are situated somewhere on the borderline between criminal investigation and jurisdiction. However, the constructive character is missing, due to which the hypotheses are the result of creative and not selective abduction.

By reason of their being non-sentential, visual abductions, they do not fall under the criterion of truth, which only pertains to sentences. Therefore, Thagard and Shelly cannot choose between the two rival explanatory hypotheses on the basis of truth values. Their choice relies on the criterion of coherence and not on the criterion of truth. According to them, the leopard hypothesis is more coherent (fitting

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<sup>14</sup> Thagard, P., Shelly C.P. (1997) Abductive Reasoning: Logic, Visual Thinking and Coherence, in M.-K. Dalla Chiara et al. (eds.), *Logic and scientific methods*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, p. 418.

together) than the “killer ape” explanation. This coherence pertains to the setting of the cave, the size and the distance between the leopard’s canine teeth and to the leopard skull found at the same site.

### **Coherence or truth**

The choice between the hypotheses formulated as a result of abductive hypothesizing is made not on the basis of commitment to the truth, but on the basis of *coherence* (fitting together). This is what happens with any form of abducted hypotheses. Thus, whether abduction is sentential or non-sentential, explanatory or ordinary, visual or not, the commitment to the explanation pertaining to the facts is determined retroductively through coherence.

As a result, we necessarily need a more precise concept of *coherence* (fitting together). A more nuanced and precise sense of this concept can be found in another study of P. Thagard: “Coherence can be understood in terms of maximal satisfaction of multiple constraints, in a manner informally summarized as follows:

1. Elements are representations such as concepts, propositions, parts of images, goals, actions, and so on.

2. Elements can cohere (fit together), or incohere (resist fitting together). Coherence relations include explanation, deduction, facilitation, association, and so on. Incoherence relations include inconsistency, incompatibility, and negative associations.

3. If two elements cohere, there is a positive constraint between them. If two elements incohere, there is a negative constraint between them.

4. Elements are to be divided into ones that are accepted and ones that are rejected.

5. A positive constraint between two elements can be satisfied either by accepting both of the elements or by rejecting both of the elements.

6. A negative constraint between two elements can be satisfied only by accepting one element and rejecting the other.

7. The coherence problem consists of dividing a set of elements into accepted and rejected sets in a way that satisfies the most constraints.”<sup>15</sup>

It is worthwhile to follow Thagard’s conception of coherence further. This question asks that we also cite the formal definition of coherence: “More formally, we can define a *coherence problem* as follows. Let E be a finite set of elements of {e<sub>i</sub>} and

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Thagard, Karsten Verbeurgh (1998) Coherence as Constraint Satisfaction, Cognitive Science, 22, 1, 2-3.

C be a set of constraints on E understood as a set  $\{(e_i, e_j)\}$  of pairs of elements of E. C divides into C+, the positive constraints on E, and C-, the negative constraints on E. With each constraint is associated a number w, which is the weight (strength) of the constraint. The problem is to partition E into two sets, A and R (A and R are disjoint subsets of E, where A is), in a way that maximizes compliance with the following two *coherence conditions*:

1. if  $(e_i, e_j)$  is in C+, then  $e_i$  is in A if and only if  $e_j$  is in A.
2. if  $(e_i, e_j)$  is in C-, then  $e_i$  is in A if and only if  $e_j$  is in R.

Let W be the weight of the partition, that is, the sum of the weights of the satisfied constraints. The coherence problem is then to partition E into A and R in a way that maximizes W."<sup>16</sup>

The above formal definition of coherence is important because it offers the possibility of an algorithmic treatment which can then be used for the computerized treatment of coherence and the generation of solution alternatives.

In our opinion, visual coherence plays a deciding role in visual abductive image formation and, therefore, in the process of building design as well as in securing the commitment to one of the proposed designs.

### **Visuospatial reasoning**

Barbara Tversky, Professor at Stanford University, has addressed the issue of visuospatial reasoning in several studies through the years. From her many, frequently tentative, statements we are interested in her opinions on the work of architects: "Initial design sketches are meant to be ambiguous from several reasons. In early stages of design, designers often do not want to commit to the details of solutions, only the general outline, leaving open many possibilities; gradually, they will fill in the details. Perhaps more important, skilled designers are able to get new ideas by reexamining their own sketches, by having a conversation with their sketches, bouncing ideas off them (e.g. Goldshmidt, 1994; Schon, 1983; Suwa and Tversky, 1997; Suwa, Tversky, Gero, and Purcell, 2001). They may construct sketches with one set of ideas, but on later reexamination, they see new configurations and relations that generate new design ideas. The productive cycle between reexamining and reinterpreting is revealed in the protocol of one expert architect."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Tversky, Barbara (2005) Visuospatial Reasoning, in K. Holyoak, R. Morrison (eds.) *Handbook of Reasoning*, Cambridge, Cambridge U. P., p. 209-249.

According to the process described here, from the initially vague and undetailed design sketch, through several reinterpretations made with necessary openness and the adding of new ideas, an acceptable design plan is developed, which then has to be worked out in its details.

What interests us here is whether the process described above is abductive. In other words: is architectural imaging abductive? The initial design sketch is a vague idea, which has been worked out creatively. Further analyses and re-examinations, as well as the alterations of the design that they lead to, still represent acts of creativity, which are oriented forward in time. However, the subsequent refinements and detailing refer back to the initial vague design sketch. Now, this already introduces an abductive element, which refers backward. As opposed to the paleoanthropological investigation, discussed above, which turned out to be a case of visual abduction (backward visual inference), visual design in architecture – essentially, architectural imaging – starts with a creative forward inference, which is followed by abductive backward inferences. These lead to a visual image, the final architectural plan, which possibly gets to be built. Of course, all this is done virtually, since it is much easier and economical to experiment with images and merely to assess the possible costs rather than to experiment with the concrete buildings. This freedom is made possible by the human mind.

### **Visual abduction in architecture**

In this part of our study, we will examine, with the aid of a specific example, the characteristics of abductive reasoning emphasized in the preceding part, which are typical for abductive reasoning generally as well as for visual abduction specifically. Our basic aim is to determine in what ways the steps of the architectural design process also contain abductive elements.

The material for our analysis is provided by the design process of Gál Gabriella. Her assignment was to design an archaeological museum for a specific site and architectural context in Cluj-Napoca. The name of the design plan was “archaeological museum of Cluj-Napoca”, which also reveals the basic function to be fulfilled by the building, or possibly buildings.

### **The archaeological museum of Cluj-Napoca**

The first step of the design plan was the assessment of the site and its architectural context. This included taking numerous photographs from which we have selected three.



**Fig. 1.** Mihail Kogălniceanu Street view from the back of the Reformed church, facing the fortress wall

The street is narrow and architecturally somewhat plain. However, the renovated portion of the fortress wall at the end of the street establishes a connection with the medieval architecture of the city, laying a bridge towards the past.



**Fig. 2.** Mihail Kogălniceanu Street view from the fortress wall, facing the Reformed church

The second photograph (Fig. 2) shows again the architectural plainness of the street from the opposite direction. Here, the Reformed church from the other end of the street offers yet again the possibility of establishing the connection with the medieval architecture of Cluj-Napoca.



**Fig. 3.** The surroundings of the site

This photograph (Fig. 3) presents the surroundings of the site. For better orientation, the photograph shows the renovated Tailors' Bastion in continuation of the fortress wall shown on Fig. 1. The two-story building shown on the left houses a lyceum.

These actual photographs of the site reveal the possibilities for the placement of the future building. The digital processing of the ground-space also informs the architect about the possible dimensions of the buildings which can be placed here and the possible form in which they can fulfil their function.

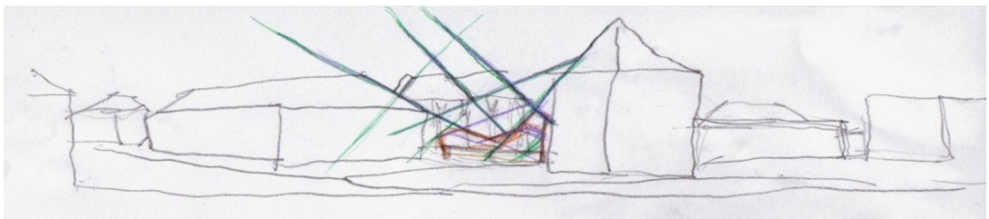
The first digital image was created in many steps. Its potential for further use has vastly increased along with the number of design variations which could be made, helping Gál Gabriella to work up the final optimal design.



**Fig. 4.** The digital image of the complete site

The ground plan of the Reformed church seen on the three preceding photographs is shown on the left side of Fig. 4. In front of the church one can see the ground plan of the ruins from the church yard. The right side of the picture shows the renovated portion of the fortress wall, from above as well. The design sketches presented here are not precisely defined proposals, but signify the space where the archaeological museum will be built, i.e. these are the potential building sites. However, the previous three photographs show that some existing buildings will have to be torn down.

After the assessment of the site, Gál Gabriella drafted several sketches. These are freehand drawings.



**Sketch 1. Fig. 1.**



The first sketch examines the roof angles, determined by the angles of the neighbouring buildings, in this case the Tailors' Bastion and the one-storied building on left, which will be kept. According to this sketch, the height relations between the future museum and the existing buildings around it are incorrect, and the new design is not in harmony with the neighbouring buildings.



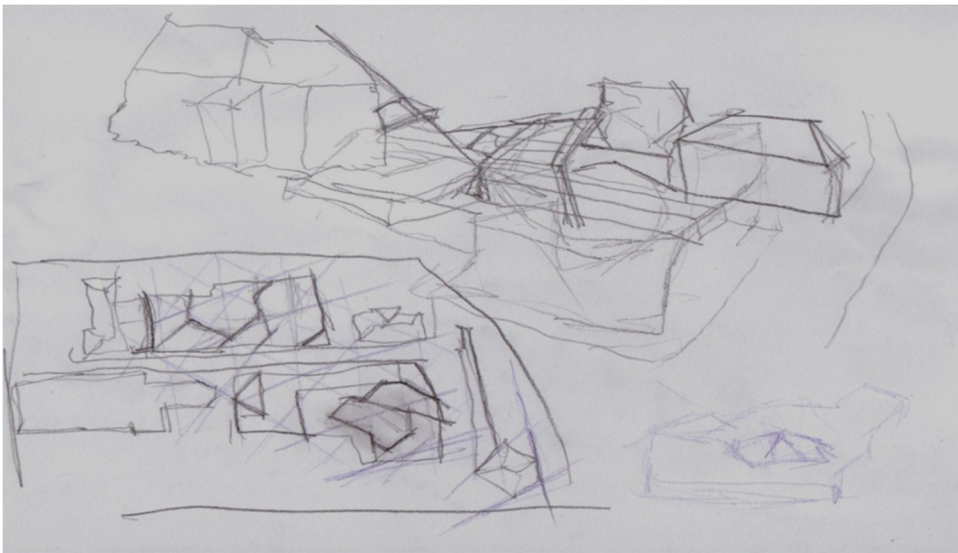
**Sketch 1. Fig. 2.**

According to this sketch, the Reformed church on the left and the Tailors' Bastion on the right, which serve as a point of reference, demand the heightening of the building. The shape of the building is also more clarified in its design, and its contours get more defined.



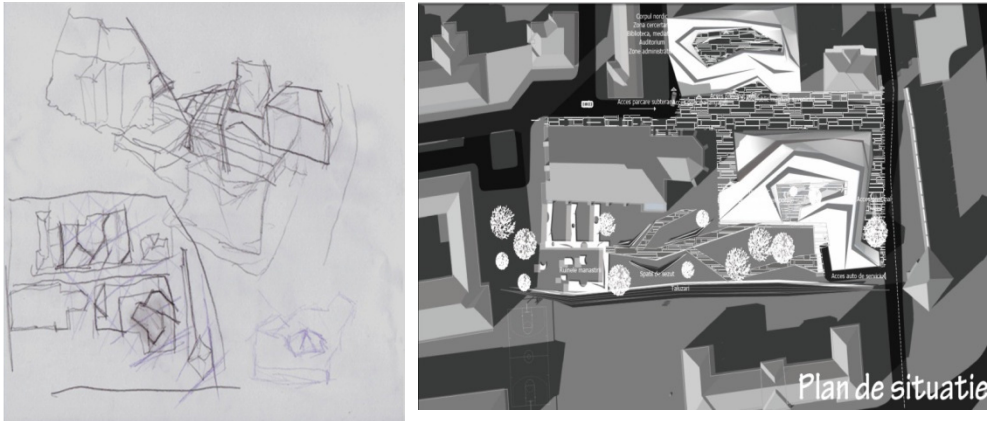
**Sketch 1. Fig. 3.**

According to this sketch, which is the reverse of the preceding one, the part of the new building near the bastion is taller than the end near the church, which means that the height relationship to the church emphasizes the prior building. At the same time, the bastion's volume as a whole takes up less space, and it contains a fewer number of architectural elements, retaining its uniqueness precisely due to its "solitary" character.



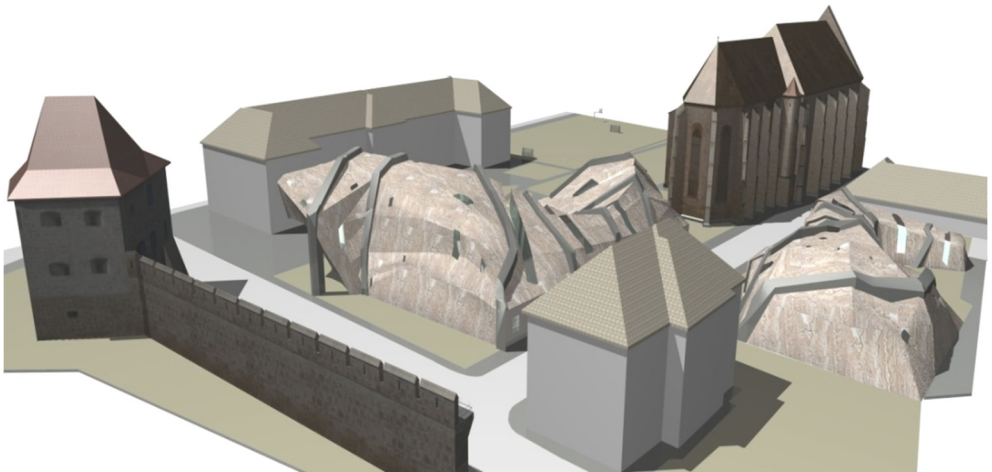
**Sketch 2. Fig. 1.**

The above sketch extends once more the angle of the church roof down to ground level, but it is not clear with what aim. However, the sketch from below has vital significance for the prospective architectural design. The benchmarks are clearly distinguishable: the church on the left, the remains of the bastion wall at the end of the fortress wall on the right. The building site occupies both sides of the street, and this time it also becomes clear that we are dealing with two buildings, one in continuation of the church building, the other in front of it. Now we can realise that, in fact, there are two design projects. From the very start, the sketches take into consideration two alternatives among which a decision can be made.



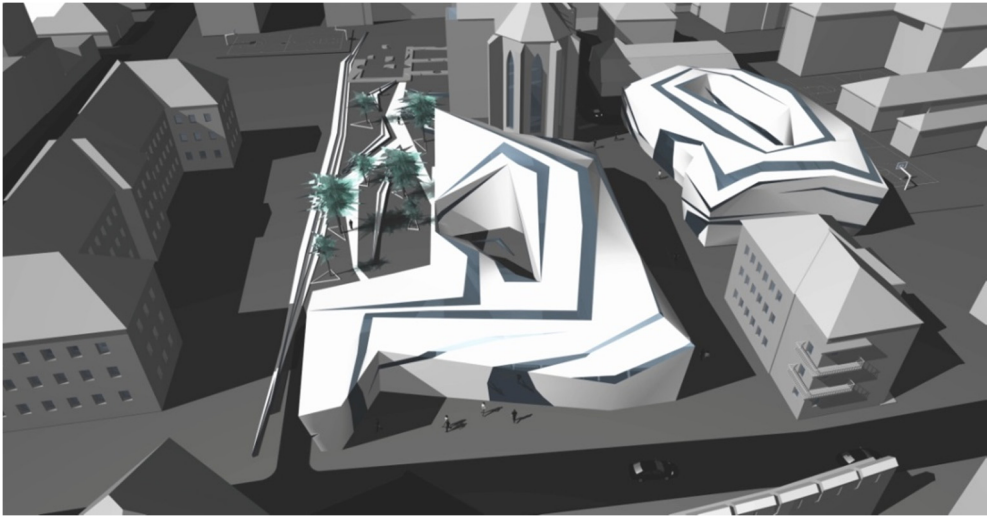
**Fig. 5.** Comparison between the assessment of the site and the building design sketch

On Fig. 5 we have juxtaposed Sketch 2 and Fig. 4. The latter clearly contains the sketch of the second design plan. One can notice that the drawing from below on Sketch 2 shows those possibilities of insertion into the ground plan which are then digitally reworked. The image on the right is computer made, by reason of which its quality is much higher, the ground plans are much better defined and the views from above as well as the proportions between the buildings are more clearly distinguishable.



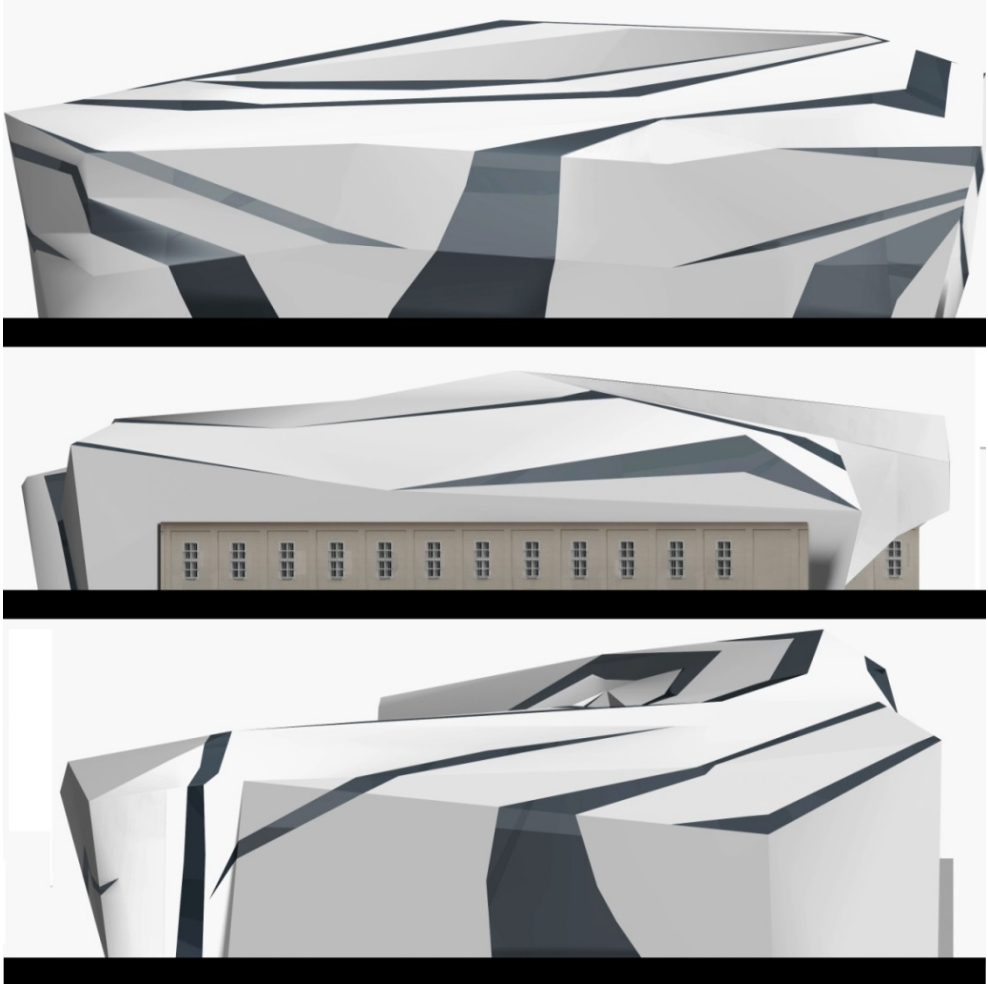
**Fig. 6.** The rejected design plan

Fig. 6 shows the first design plan. The basic idea of the designer, from which she started, was the *worm*. However, this design plan was rejected on the grounds that it did not fit into the architectural site. The architecture of these buildings does not harmonize with the historical architecture of the surrounding buildings, although the same cannot be said for their material. So, the consonance is only partial. This was the reason for which Gál Gabriella came up with the second architectural plan.



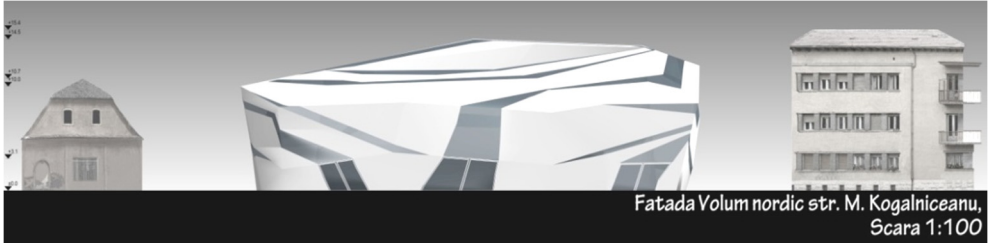
**Fig. 7.** The general image of Plan 2

The basic concept of the second plan was altered. This time, the starting concept was defined as *stones*. The source of inspiration was offered, in this case, by the surrounding buildings, the Reformed church and the fortress wall, as well as by the construction material of the bastion, fashioned stone. However, the construction material for the new buildings was not stone, given the fact that these had to be 21st century buildings. Nonetheless, the view from above offered by Fig. 7 reminds of the concept of stones with their cracks and irregular shapes. The seemingly haphazard cracks serve, in fact, a very precise function: the “cracks” on the roof are a source of natural light, and those on the fronts of the buildings fulfil a double purpose as entrance and light source. The entrances are of an unusual shape and their design may be, therefore, somewhat surprising.



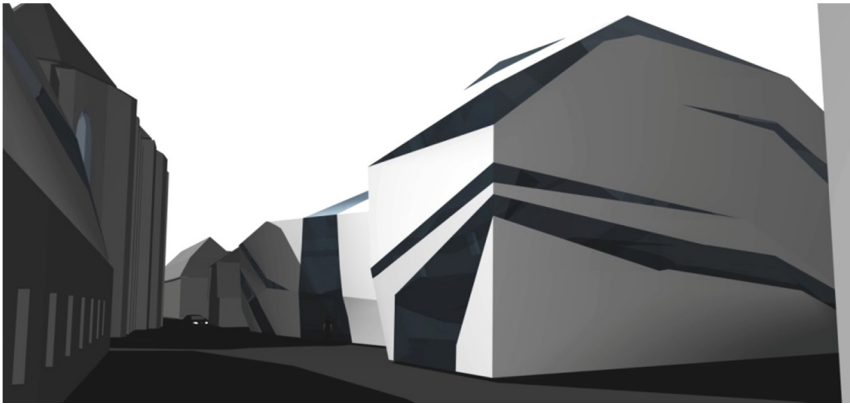
**Fig. 8.** The fronts of the buildings

Fig. 8 shows three of the four fronts of the buildings. The two upper images are in continuation of the church axis. The view of the front facing Mihail Kogălniceanu Street reveals that a portion of the older building is kept and integrated in this new structure. This helps to conserve the original architecture and atmosphere of the street. The image below shows the back of the building from Mihail Kogălniceanu Street opposite of the church.



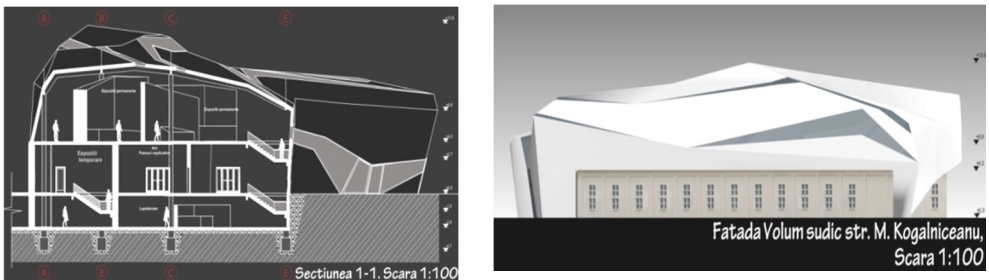
**Fig. 9.** The third front

Fig. 9 offers a view of the front facing Mihail Kogălniceanu Street while also revealing the three entrances of the building.

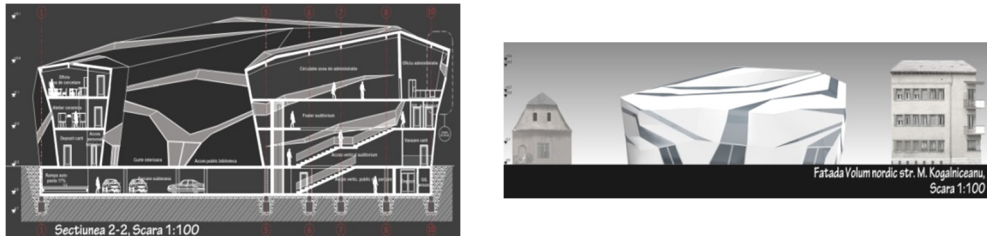


**Fig. 10.** Virtual view of Mihail Kogălniceanu Street (from the Tailors' Bastion)

In the back of the image, on the left side, we see the Reformed church, so the image displays a larger portion of the building on the right. If we compare this with the Mihail Kogălniceanu Street view shown of Fig. 2, the radical change can be at once seen.



**Fig. 11.** The interior structure of the building (in continuation of the church axis)



**Fig. 12.** The interior structure of the building (perpendicular to the church axis)

The two above images illustrate the exterior form of the buildings and their interior structure, furthermore specifying the function of the interior spaces.

### **The steps in the design of the Archaeological Museum of Cluj-Napoca**

Let us now summarize the steps followed by the architecture student Gál Gabriella in the design of the archaeological museum.

As a first step, she was given the name of the project. This then led to the characteristics which define such a building. She had to mentally elaborate an image of the functions to be fulfilled by the museum building. Her approach was mostly intuitive in this cognitive activity.

In the second step, she had to assess the actual building site with the aid of digital photography. This time, she took hundreds of photos and stored them in the computer, which rendered the photos permanently accessible and modifiable. Meanwhile, she was continually preoccupied mentally with the idea of the archaeological museum.

The elaboration of the digital photographs was followed by the computerized assessment of the site, for which she had to rely on special computer software, which was ArchiCAD. This software was especially designed to meet the demands of architects and enables the creation of visual images and forms with mathematical precision and according to an exact scale supplied by the user. Meanwhile, she temporarily renounced computerized processing and had to choose a leading concept for the design process. The further design process was then led by the defining characteristics of this concept. The first leading concept chosen by the designer was the *worm*. She had to lay out the building context of this design and shape the new building accordingly in order to fit it into the setting. The most creative freedom needed for this task was offered by freehand drawing. This is how the freehand sketches got made. During the creation of these sketches, Gál Gabriella proceeded creatively. After the idea of the worm has been introduced, she further specified and outlined it (Sketch 1. Fig. 1-3).

The building design seen on Fig. 5 makes use of all the visual optimization tools provided by ArchiCAD. The virtual design process of the building relies upon selective and creative abduction. Why abduction? Because the primary sketches which determined the design plan were drawn freehand. That is to say, the design plan was obtained through abduction from the preliminary rough freehand sketch, reasoning backward from the leading concept of the “worm”. Because all this was done through the processing of visual information, we could also say that we have a case of *image manipulation* by abduction.

The reason for the refusal of the first building design was that it did not fit into its surroundings. Thus, the basic value the design plan was correlated with was *coherence* (fitting together), which was missed in this case. The reviewers of the plan invoked coherence with reference to the surrounding buildings, also referring to the city as a whole and its architectural possibilities.

The next step was the outlining of the plan for the second building, while the building site remained identical. Due to this circumstance, the facts established during the preceding steps could also be used; however, the new building design also imposed the necessity to come up with a new leading concept more adapted to the architectural surroundings. This time, the chosen leading concept was “stones”.

All the previous steps followed again. A new shape and form had to be designed starting from the computerized assessment of the site. This resulted in a freehand drawing (Sketch 2. Fig. 1) as a start and also represented a creative moment within the design process. After the development of the leading concept, the details of the plan have also been established abductively. These details meant primarily the building shapes outlined more clearly with the computer. The outlines are more detailed than in the first draft due to the fact that the design plan also includes the outlines of the interior spaces of the buildings along with the designations of the functions appertaining to these spaces. Therefore, the abductive backward reasoning does not remain at the level of the shape of the buildings, and abduction reaches a second, deeper level with the design of the building interiors.

How far could this process of detailing go? In principle, it could go on indefinitely. Posing the question this way is all too reminiscent of the question of divisibility in ancient Greek philosophy. However, Democritus’ answer was that divisibility has a limit, which has been known since then as the atom. In contrast, computerized building design cannot deal with this question, and even has to consider it as nonsensical. From this point of view, the reasonable question refers to the way in which the building design can determine the structure of the interior space along with the interior objects and ornaments, and even lighting. In any case, the limit is set only by the border of visibility with the naked eye.



### Is building design abductive?

Returning now to the concept of abduction introduced by Peirce, let us highlight its main characteristics. First of all, Peirce's concept of abduction pertained only to the development of scientific explanations (hypothesizing) and the choice among them, viz. their acceptance. In order to fulfil this function, hypotheses had to be *promising, explanatory, testable, and economic*, i.e. hypotheses have to be *countable*, and we have to be able to *choose* among them the best one (best explanation) *on the basis of clearly established criteria*.

However, our study did not deal with scientific explanations. We have taken into account L. Magnani's widened concept of abduction and P. Thagard's ideas about visual abduction, together with the efforts of B. Tversky to work out a description of the visuospatial reasoning of architects, and formulated our own *hypothesis* on this basis: *as long as the architect designs images of virtual buildings on the computer screen, his or her designing activity can be viewed as a case of abductive reasoning, since this activity is posterior to the freehand drawing of the first sketches*. In fact, during the design process the architect further specifies, revises and embellishes the concept worked out in the design phase of the preliminary sketches and also harmonizes it with the surrounding buildings. Thus, in fact, the architect is reasoning backward.

The designing process of the archaeological museum of Cluj-Napoca had to correspond in some way to the Peircean concept of abductive theoretical hypothesizing in order to be viewed as an abductive activity. Let us examine this issue more closely.

The initial spatial assessment of the buildings, with the aid of photography and computer imaging, proved to be an activity that facilitated the creation of *promising hypothetical visual images*. This was done in the course of processing of the freehand sketches. Both sketches can be viewed as hypotheses for future buildings, although not as explanatory hypotheses but as models that guide the later stages of designing, and they are of a pictorial character. Because two design plans were developed for the same architectural site, these two plans also represent *two building hypotheses*. They proved to be posterior to the processed sketches, and the possibility of *choice* between them was also given. This choice was determined by coherence. As a result of the choice, the detailing of the second design plan went much further, which significantly increased its *testability*. In our case, this means that the designed buildings are *buildable*. Finally, the last Peircean criterion is *economicity*, which can be assessed by finishing and implementing the design plan. This last step was omitted in this case, as in fact no one would take the risk of experimenting with building and rebuilding edifices of such high costs.

## Conclusion

The motivation for writing this study has hopefully become clear from the text. We could add to this that our main objective was to examine whether there is an abductive element in the complex and diversified cognition implied in the design process. In other words, this study is not simply an example meant to illustrate the theory, but an attempt to offer a prospective nonlinear explanation for the way in which the definitive and detailed building plan is elaborated on the basis of a merely “dreamt up and sketched down” architectural design.

(Translated in English by Lóránd Rigán)

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## HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF ART: A NOTE ON INTERDISCIPLINARITY<sup>1</sup>

CRISTIAN HAINIC<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** On the grounds that art cannot be subsumed anymore to the principles that have provided it with a certain sense of unity throughout history and that an ideal notion of art can no longer be defended, this paper investigates the hermeneutic and pragmatic roots of the recent philosophical current of “everyday aesthetics” in order to determine a baseline for the study of art. After pointing out the so-called “destructive” dimension of hermeneutical phenomenology, the paper counters the idealistic approach to art and concludes that art may and should be reintegrated within the lived life of a historically-determined community and cultural context. A key finding of the paper consists in declaring the interdisciplinary potential of the latter idea, which parallels Steve Fuller’s critique of interdisciplinarity as mere departmental flexibility and adaptability.

**Key words & phrases:** *art history; aesthetics; philosophy of art; phenomenology of art; Martin Heidegger; John Dewey; aesthetics of everyday life; Steve Fuller*

### 1. Introduction

A considerable part of present understandings of interdisciplinarity refers to the latter as a reorientation of traditional academic disciplines toward the social needs of certain given communities. While they may erroneously be seen as an attempt to renounce rationality in the favor of practical knowledge, such interdisciplinary approaches actually presuppose some sort of institutional collective effort to solve some problems that could not otherwise be efficiently addressed. The goal of this paper is to take the philosophical subdiscipline of aesthetics as study case and point out how the interdisciplinary notion of adaptability is reflected within one of its later developments, i.e., everyday aesthetics.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/159/1.5/S/136077.

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It is for this reason that I firstly provide an extensive definition of the terms employed and then focus on the contributions that the hermeneutical phenomenology of art, as instantiated in Heidegger's work, has brought to the academic field of aesthetics. The point I make in sections 3 and 4 is that the hermeneutical phenomenology of art may be said to adopt a pragmatic position with regard to its study object (that is, art), especially if we consider the notion of "pragmatic" under the auspices of community involvement, as opposed to a bare refusal of rationality. The main point discussed throughout these two sections is the manner in which a pragmatic understanding of art may focus on aesthetic experience as the vehicle of community involvement. The conclusions drawn indicate that it may, so long as aesthetic experience is, again, detached from its reserved use in the fine or high arts.

## 2. Definitions of terms and concepts

Several key-terms with which I will be operating throughout this paper need to be clearly defined beforehand. At a first glance, it would seem that the terms "art" and "interdisciplinarity" pose less problems than the specificity of the phrase "hermeneutical phenomenology." It is my intention, however, to point out that the situation is in fact the other way around: while the philosophical current of hermeneutical phenomenology is clearly traceable to an authorship and a series of fundamental texts, art deals with a full-blown crisis in what regards art's definition itself. I will attempt to show that this crisis parallels a recent debate in the theory of interdisciplinarity, namely communication between disciplines as specialized approaches to fields of knowledge *versus* the intellectual reorientation of disciplines towards the current state of society, a discussion accounted for with various occasions by Steve Fuller (2000 & 2012).

First of all, however, I should explain what I mean by "hermeneutical phenomenology." I take phenomenology in its Heideggerian meaning, as outlined in *Being and Time*, §7A-§7C and §33. "Phenomenon" here is first of all a counter-concept to "being covered up": all phenomena, Heidegger argues, are prone to being concealed by interpretative layers heaped up throughout the history of thought (Heidegger 1996, 31). It is the task of *logos*, or a certain type of speech, to uncover these phenomena, or – as Heidegger puts it – to conduct a process of *destruction* in what regards their various traditional interpretations. Hence the *logos* of the *phainomenon*, or phenomenology. Now, there are many instances in Heidegger where the reader can witness firsthand the process of destruction being applied to various phenomena. *Die Destruktion* is applied predominantly to the concept of

“man” in its somewhat coined apprehensions as rational being and as “the making in the image and likeness of God,” which eventually led to the idea of “transcendence”, that is, that the essence of the human being is something that overwhelms it (e.g., Heidegger 1996, 45 and Heidegger 1999, 17-27). For the purposes of this lecture, however, I will not refer to Heidegger’s phenomenological approach to the concept of man, but rather to his later phenomenology of art.

In this respect, an exercise that will shed more light on what I take to be phenomenology is to be found in Heidegger’s 1935 essay “The Origin of the Work of Art.” I will briefly summarize the phenomenological exercise in what follows. To see what art is, we should first see “where art undoubtedly prevails in a real way.” (Heidegger 2001, 18) This “place,” where art is as real as it can get and stands before us, is, of course, the work of art. Although it is debatable what is it exactly that makes it a work of art, we can all agree that what strikes us first about a work is what Heidegger calls its “thingly” character (the work’s *Dinghafte*), that is, the fact that it can be referred to as “a thing,” no matter its complexity, positioning in space and time, or consistency. Nevertheless, if we are to look deeper into the matter, we will see that what would appear to stand as a baseline in studying art (the work of art’s thingly character) has also been covered up by various traditional interpretations. A first predominant Western understanding of the thing coincides with Latin grammatical structure, which requires a subject and a predicate in all meaningful statements. This resulted in conceiving all things as comprising a substance and a series of accidents. A second interpretation tells us that a thing is something that can be perceived by the senses, i.e., the unity of multiple sensorial data. Finally, a third interpretation of the thing argues that the latter is some kind of matter that receives a form. Behold, therefore, three interpretative layers which need to be pierced by thought when trying to define art. While details on how these interpretations are rejected and employed by Heidegger are generously offered throughout “The Origin of the Work of Art,” (Heidegger 2001, 22-30) I hope to have clarified the so-called “destructive” dimension of phenomenology, which I will be making use of in the rest of the lecture.

Hermeneutical phenomenology is to be understood here in opposition to Husserl’s idealistic phenomenology. While the hermeneutical dimension of phenomenology is persistent throughout Heidegger’s entire corpus, it was Paul Ricoeur who concisely summarized the opposition between the two types of phenomenology (Ricoeur 1991, 25-52 and Ricoeur 1975, 85-102). In a nutshell, idealistic phenomenology supports that the ground of all intuitive experience is subjective (or immanent), while hermeneutical phenomenology argues that there is an ontological belonging of the subject to the object and vice versa, each participating

in the other's development. Consequently, understanding something is concerned with interpreting and transcending one's self towards it, rather than with direct intuition. Heidegger's use of *Dasein* (or "être-là", or "being-there") implies that human beings exist inasmuch as they relate to the objects and experiences within their world, hence the concept of "being-in-the-world." To exist thus comes to mean "to ek-sist", to be outside one's self, oriented towards life events and experiences.

Having outlined what I mean by hermeneutical phenomenology, there are two other terms that need further clarification: "art" and "interdisciplinarity." In the following, I will deal with art in connection to hermeneutical phenomenology, attempting to show that, by means of its orientation towards everyday life, aesthetics comes to illustrate a disciplinary reorientation similar to the one that Steve Fuller's enlightening comments on interdisciplinarity support. As far as the definition of the latter is concerned, it will suffice for now to define interdisciplinarity as a reorientation of disciplines in their whole towards the social needs of a historically-determined community. This idea will be tackled in the third and final section of the paper.

### **3. Art and everyday life: the pragmatic dimension of Heidegger's hermeneutics**

Because of the intimate relation that hermeneutical phenomenology therefore establishes between humans and their world, it comes as no surprise that Heidegger is considered, alongside John Dewey, one of the founding fathers of the recent philosophical current of "everyday aesthetics" or "aesthetics of everyday life." (e.g., Sartwell 2005, 761-70 and Haapala 2005, 39-55) Before harvesting the common elements of the two philosophers' ideas on art for the purpose of this lecture, I will briefly summarize the context in which every day aesthetics developed.

Over the last decades, artistic practices and art theory have undergone fundamental changes, such that the definition of art itself now appears to be a major and urgent problem within today's aesthetics and philosophy of art. This paradox has many formulations, the best of which I find to be (i) Adorno's idea that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore (2002, 1), (ii) Dewey's statement that "by one of the ironic perversities that often attend the course of affairs, the existence of the works of art upon which formation of an aesthetic theory depends has become an obstruction to theory about them," (1980, 3) and, in a more speculative manner, (iii) Heidegger's idea that the essence of art is an "abyssal" one (1982, 139-56), i.e., it cannot be named. It is also interesting to see how a part of the analytic approaches to art (especially the institutional theory of art, as defended by Danto 1964: 571-84 and Dickie 2001, 3-11) showed that past definitions which have conceived art as imitation,

expression of perfection, expression of inner feelings, and so forth, cannot anymore account for today's artistic phenomena. Many new philosophical currents have sprung to life in an attempt to explain and justify what passes as art in our times: Moulin ascribes the difficulty of defining art to internationalization and globalisation (1997), Michaud attributes this to the "de-aestheticized" experience of art (2003), Belting to the idea that artists tend to shun all art criticism except the one pursued by means of their own work (2007, 120 et sq.), and so forth.

Recent studies (e.g., Mattick 2003, Light & Smith 2005, Saito 2007), however, have indicated that, although contributions such as the ones mentioned above point out clearly that aesthetics cannot anymore be practiced as a branch of modern philosophy which deals with high / fine arts, they nevertheless continue to describe aesthetics as an art-centered activity which deals with experiences beyond the realm of everyday life. This understanding of aesthetics separates art from society in a way that has led many to question the value of art for general well-being, education, citizenship, and a host of other human concerns. What both Dewey's pragmatism and Heidegger's hermeneutics have sought to do in order to resolve the aforementioned paradox is to reunite the work of art and cultural production in general with everyday life. Both have showed that by assigning the label of "fine" or "classical" work to a cultural product, the latter will become isolated from the human conditions under which it has been brought to existence and which it influences in its turn. There are two main reasons for this alienation:

(1) The so-called "museumification" or "classicization" of cultural products, which was dealt with by both art historians such as Sedlmayr and philosophers such as Heidegger or Danto (Sedlmayr 2001, 170; Heidegger 2001, 39; Danto 1986, ch. 4<sup>3</sup>; Hainic 2011: 73-4). What it basically does is to lift the work of art upon a pedestal whose ultimate purpose is to become atemporal and above any life experience;

(2) The transformation of cultural products into international art market commodities, diminishing their role and place in the life of a given community and isolating the artists from the flow of social services, degenerating in aesthetic individualism, eccentricity, and even esotericism (e.g., Dewey 1980, 9).

It was Richard Rorty who pointed out that Heidegger's hermeneutics is pragmatic by means of its effort to overcome the idea of philosopher as a mere "spectator of time and eternity." (2006, 338-9) It was also Rorty who first associated Dewey's work to Heidegger's in this effort (1978, 244 et sq.). Although this point is quite accurate and relevant for the reorientation of philosophy towards everyday life, I support that the similarities between the two philosophers are probably more

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<sup>3</sup> Although a somewhat anti-hermeneutical position, this chapter is equally important for the reorientation of art toward social life.



evident in their philosophy of art, rather than in their common effort to overcome metaphysics, which is tackled by Rorty. Both Heidegger and Dewey extend the scope of aesthetics beyond the realm of art and towards everyday objects and experiences, arguing that any practical activity will have “aesthetic value” as long as it is credited with enough self-sufficiency so as to determine the quality of our lives. Dewey calls this characteristic the “individualizing quality” of objects and experiences (1980, 35), while Heidegger writes that once this “quality” is overlooked, an “assault” upon the respective objects and experiences is installed (2001, 25) – hence a continuous need for the destruction of everyday experience and the objects within it.

The hermeneutical understanding of the experiences upon which the meaning of one’s life is drawn takes place in the process of shunning, or *destructing*, all inherited schemes pertaining to things and events, and allowing their nature unravel itself factually, without any mediation on behalf of reason or representational “thinking.” This does not mean that the Heideggerian and Deweyan roots of everyday aesthetics reject reason as such. Rather, I think their critique is more similar to Baudrillard’s use of the metaphor of the map in *Simulacra and Simulation*. For an even more adequate illustration, we may recall those tourists that visit a city, and instead of enjoying its multiple sources of aesthetic experience, they unceasingly measure distances and calculate itineraries on their maps, following their travel guides to the letter. Everyday aesthetic experience has a hermeneutical basis not only inasmuch as it therefore gains an event-like nature, as opposed to a rationally-mediated one, but also because of its inherent *factic* nature, meaning that it requires the existential involvement of the interpreter, who thus becomes “deeply rooted” (Haapala 2005, 50-1) in all experiences he aesthetically encounters.

#### **4. Hermeneutical phenomenology as a basis for the interdisciplinary study of art**

The final point I would like to make concerns the symmetry between the inclusion of everyday life in the study of art and the reorientation of interdisciplinarity towards disciplinary relevance for society. I will first of all explain the second idea. Steve Fuller (2012) argues that disciplinary success is largely a function of institutionalization: “Basically any discipline can succeed if its members are provided with adequate resources to solve their own problems, which are in turn more generally recognized as problems worth solving.” He explains that Thomas Kuhn’s account of discipline-formation is justified only up to a certain point: “scientists” appear first of all as the people that strive to seize knowledge production from politicians, religious fanatics, and all other people that make it impossible to study

“what is true” without taking into account “what is good” and “what is just” at the same time. Therefore, this “autonomization of inquiry” naturally ended up perceiving disciplines as something desirable, mainly because of their: (i) secure borders of inquiry, which were independent of societal demands, (ii) precise standards for inclusion of new members and topics, and (iii) highly efficient “sieve” that would filter everyday concerns and “translate” them into new problems.

In the long run, however, Fuller’s purpose is to show that the creation of “disciplines” is from the beginning misrepresented by Kuhn, as disciplines came about as social movements that aspired to explain all registers of life in its whole, rather than as the domains of reality we now come to associate them with (Fuller 2000, ch. 8). The autonomization of enquiry briefly sketched above naturally led to considering pure cognitive autonomy, independent of the cultural and social context, a highly-reputed value. In their theorizing, disciplines are supposed to have progressively lost contact with lived life, to the point that nowadays “undermining the credibility of your colleagues is always a greater sin than simply doing nothing. In such an academic environment, interdisciplinarity is a highly risky venture for which there is little clear reward.” (Fuller 2012)

In a satirical comment on the imperatives and normativity of modern philosophy, Fuller distinguishes between humans as unique beings with rational capacities and “perhaps even touched with the divine” and human beings as mere *Homo sapiens*, whose capacity of change is inscribed in the variation tolerated by history and society. The latter so-called “naturalized” or “ontologically diminished” position is also, according to Fuller, the one interdisciplinarity should adopt towards disciplines. In this respect, and in the light of the first two parts of this paper, I believe it is fair to conclude that this position also parallels the hermeneutical phenomenology of art and, to some extent, pragmatist aesthetics. The two philosophical currents not only eliminate the “sieve” mentioned above and reunite art with everyday life, but, ultimately, they also “destruct” the ontology of knowledge production as we know it and as criticized by Steve Fuller.

As it is the case with everyday aesthetics, the “destructive” dimension of interdisciplinarity is also obfuscated by the increasingly competitive market and the pressure it places upon universities to offer training and research services simultaneously. As such, tenure itself now becomes a luxury that few institutions can afford. Under these circumstances, interdisciplinarity comes to signify the encouragement of values such as flexibility and adaptiveness to new departments, research projects and so on. Fuller argues that interdisciplinarians “of an earlier era” (e.g., John Mez and Ernst Cassirer) did not have these “values” in mind when accounting for disciplines, but rather a fundamental transformation of intellectual

orientation towards relevancy for society. I hope, in turn, to have sufficiently argued in favor of this alternative approach to interdisciplinarity, stemming from the multifaceted study of art.<sup>4</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Focus on Fuller's approach to interdisciplinary has shown that how the hermeneutical phenomenology of art acts within the field of philosophical aesthetics is the approximate equivalent of how interdisciplinary approaches should act within traditional academic disciplines. With regard to the study of art, hermeneutical phenomenology incorporates (but not necessarily renders as its purpose) practical knowledge by means of an aesthetic experience that may be gained from both daily and exceptional objects and events, as opposed to traditional aesthetics, where the exclusive source of aesthetic experience consisted in the exceptional status of art. Since conducting an interdisciplinary analysis of a phenomenon is, by definition, relative to a historically-determined community's cultural and social specificities, this paper has shown that hermeneutical phenomenology may serve as a basis for the interdisciplinary study of the phenomenon of art.

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<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank Professor Jan Hartman from the Jagiellonian University for discussing this paper with me and providing several enlightening comments that helped improve it.

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## LES EXCENTRICITÉS DE LA RAISON - ESSAI SUR LE GORGIAS -

MARINA-OLTEA PĂUNESCU<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *The Eccentricities of Reason - Essay on the Gorgias.* The figure of Socrates, as it appears in Plato's dialogues, is that of a singular, original character, an eccentric one in the environment of the Athenian *polis*. The eccentricity of the philosopher is also arguable from a spatial point of view, against the attribute of *heterotopy* - Socrates enters the stage more often than not from the outside, that is from an ex-centric place or at any rate marginal in relation to the centre (the house of a main character or the palaestra, the favourite place of the Sophists), but also particularly in terms of a discourse.

In fact, Socrates passes for the partisan of an eccentric logic, which is that of the paradox, off-center from the *doxa*: the totality of what is commonly accepted. If Socrates deliberately chooses paradoxical formulation, this is because in his view, the latter are invested with a non-negligible epistemic role. Hence, with Socrates, the paradox is a formidable instrument of knowledge.

One of the main themes of the *Gorgias* being precisely the knowledge of ethical concepts (*what is just and unjust, good and bad, what is happiness?*) - can argumentative semantics (Anscombe & Ducrot 1983, Ducrot & Carel 1999) offer a standard for the pertinent reading of these concepts?

The paradox of Socrates is equally being the master who questions and teaches at the same time. Therefore, what is the role of questioning in the economy of the dialogue? Given that, Socrates and his interlocutors each believe something. Do these beliefs reveal the *episteme* or the *doxa*? The question is not a trivial one, since it opposes two different ethical profiles: the philosopher and the sophist.

**Keywords:** *ethical concepts, dialogue, doxa, episteme, question, argumentation*

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## 1. Considérations préliminaires

La figure de Socrate, telle qu'elle nous apparaît à travers les dialogues platoniciens, est celle d'un personnage singulier dans le paysage de la *polis* athénienne. La singularité du philosophe se laisse saisir sous plusieurs aspects :

✓ celui de *l'hétérotopie* : au début du dialogue, Socrate entre en scène de l'extérieur, *i.e.* d'un lieu ex-centrique ou en tout cas marginal<sup>2</sup> par rapport au centre<sup>3</sup> – la maison d'un personnage de marque, la palestre ou le gymnase –, lieux d'élection des Sophistes.

UN AMI DE SOCRATE – « D'où viens-tu, Socrate ? » (*Protagoras*, 309a)

SOCRATE – *J'étais seul dans le vestiaire* [...] un instant après entrèrent ces deux hommes, Euthydème et Dionysodore, et avec eux une foule d'autres [...] En m'apercevant de l'entrée *assis tout seul*, Clinias vint droit à moi [...] (*Euthydème*, 273c)

SOCRATE – *Est-ce que nous sommes, comme on dit, arrivés après la fête ? Sommes-nous en retard ?* (*Gorgias*, 447a)

HERMOGENE – *Voilà Socrate*. Veux-tu que nous lui fassions part du sujet de notre entretien ? (*Cratyle*, 383a)

SOCRATE – *J'étais revenu la veille au soir de l'armée de Potidée et, comme j'arrivais après une longue absence*, je pris plaisir à revoir les endroits que j'avais l'habitude de fréquenter, entre autres la palestre de Tauréas [...]. J'entrai et j'y trouvai beaucoup de gens... (*Charmide*, 153a)

SOCRATE – J'allais de l'Académie directement au Lycée *par la route extérieure* qui passe au pied même du rempart. Parvenu à la petite porte où se trouve la source de Panops, je rencontrai là Hippothalès, fils d'Hiéronyme, et Ctésippe de Paeanie, et avec eux un groupe nombreux d'autres jeunes gens. (*Lysis*, 203a)

✓ L'hétérotopie du philosophe est doublée d'une *atopie* : le fait de ne pas être, au milieu des autres, en son lieu et place. « Socrate, perpétuel contradicteur, n'habite pas le lieu commun où tous se retrouvent, au centre de gravité de l'assemblée du peuple, qu'il ne fréquente guère »<sup>4</sup>. « Figure même de l'indétermination », il n'est jamais là où on l'attend, mais toujours *ailleurs*, en décalage, dans un « écart surprenant et déstabilisant [...] » par rapport aux autres<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Comme la prison, par exemple : SOCRATE – Tiens! Bonjour, Criton ! Que fais-tu là, de si bon matin ? Le gardien a donc accepté de te laisser entrer ? (*Criton*, 43a)

<sup>3</sup> Il arrive aussi que l'accès du philosophe au milieu des sophistes soit vécu comme un geste difficile : SOCRATE – Arrivés au vestibule, nous nous sommes arrêtés [...] à peine avons-nous frappé à la porte et nous a-t-il ouvert, qu'en nous apercevant il s'écrie : « Ah ! des sophistes ! mon maître n'a pas le temps » ; et en même temps de ses deux mains il nous ferme la porte au nez avec tout l'entrain dont il est capable. Nous frappons de nouveau. [...] enfin le gaillard nous a ouvert, mais à grand-peine encore (*Protagoras*, 314d).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.jdarriulat.net/Auteurs/Platon/Introduction/PlatonIntro1.html#Text4>, consulté le 14.07.2014.

<sup>5</sup> Lacroix, 2007 : 55.

✓ L'indétermination de l'atopie socratique se laisse également saisir comme exigence d'un *ailleurs*, en tant que tension vers un *lieu autre* : celui des Idées. En ce sens, Socrate est proprement *atopos*, « étranger au monde », car la vérité qu'il recherche *n'est pas* de ce monde.

✓ Enfin, l'atopie de Socrate transparaît à travers sa façon de parler, *via* les attributs de l'étrangeté, de l'insolite, de l'originalité, voire de l'absurdité qui lui sont associés :

« Assurément, tu viens de dire là des choses bien absurdes » (*Le Politique*, 298e)  
 « Tu me sembles maintenant, depuis que tu as commencé à parler, bien plus étrange que quand tu me suivais en silence » (*Alcibiade Majeur*, 106a)  
 Tu tiens là des propos [...] insoutenables, Socrate (*Gorgias*, 467b)  
 Tu nous débités là, Socrate, d'étranges paradoxes. (*Gorgias*, 472c)

En effet, Socrate passe pour l'adepte d'une logique excentrique, qui est justement celle du paradoxe, du décentrement par rapport à la doxa : l'ensemble de ce qui est communément admis – et simultanément par rapport au centre constitué par les normes de la raison (et implicitement, du raisonnement valide)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Le principe d'identité, le principe de non contradiction et le principe du tiers exclu :

*Le principe d'identité* ( $A = A$ ) énonce qu'une chose est ce qu'elle est ou, dans la formulation de Quine (1953) : « Chaque chose est identique à elle-même et à rien d'autre ».

Dans le plan du langage, l'équivalent discursif du principe d'identité est la définition. La définition a la structure d'un énoncé analytique, *i.e.* d'un énoncé non transitif, vrai en vertu de la seule signification des mots qui le composent.

*Célibataire* = « homme non marié ».

*Chien* = « entité animée, animale, omnivore, qui aboie ».

Du point de vue ontologique, l'entité « célibataire », tout comme l'entité « chien », sont identiques à leur propre essence.

En tant que signes, les mots CHIEN et CÉLIBATAIRE possèdent un sens (on *intension*). CHIEN signifie /entité animée/, /animal/, /omnivore/, /qui aboie/. CÉLIBATAIRE signifie /homme/, /non marié/. Les propriétés à gauche du verbe « être » (qui ne fonctionne pas comme un verbe copule, mais doit se lire « est identique à ») nous livrent l'intension ou l'essence conceptuelle du signe. L'identité logique, «  $A = A$  », se trouve donc vérifiée.

Le principe d'identité est une exigence fondamentale du discours rationnel. Si on ne l'admet pas, le sens des concepts peut changer à tout instant, ce qui revient à dire qu'on ne peut rien affirmer qui ne soit contradictoire.

*Le principe de non contradiction* : deux propositions dont l'une est la négation de l'autre ne peuvent être simultanément vraies (mais elles peuvent être simultanément fausses). Un thé ne peut être simultanément chaud et froid, mais il peut être ni chaud, ni froid (autrement dit, tiède).

*Le principe du tiers exclu* : des deux propositions dont l'une est la négation de l'autre, l'une est nécessairement vraie, l'autre, nécessairement fausse (le tiers étant exclu). Socrate est soit grec, soit non grec. On ne peut simultanément affirmer (au sens d'assumer) *p* et *non p*.



## 2. Problématique

**2.1.** Comme tous les dialogues platoniciens, le *Gorgias* possède une dimension sémantique indéniable. Le début du *Gorgias* est, à ce propos, significatif : SOCRATE – Je voudrais savoir de lui (= Gorgias) quelle est la vertu de son art et *en quoi consiste* ce qu’il professe et enseigne ». Autrement formulé : « Qu’est-ce que la rhétorique ? » Ce questionnement n’est pas du tout isolé. Dans le *Lachès*, le problème des interlocuteurs est de savoir si l’escrime rend ou ne rend pas courageux ; l’intervention de Socrate, en même temps qu’elle donne au problème sa dimension philosophique (« Le courage est-il une partie de la vertu ? »), le transforme en problème sémantique : « Quel est le sens du mot *courage* ? » Même formulation du problème à propos de la piété, dans l’*Eutyphron*, de la vertu, dans le *Ménon*, de la sagesse, dans le *Charmide*, etc.

Si les gens ordinaires se servent des mots sans se poser la question de les définir, lorsqu’on est *sophos*, et qu’on possède donc un certain savoir, il s’agit de parler en spécialiste. Contrairement aux sophistes, Socrate avoue ne posséder aucune compétence (aucun savoir) pour n’avoir suivi l’enseignement d’aucun maître ni découvert quoi que ce soit. C’est pourquoi il se met de bon gré à l’école de ceux qui prétendent savoir : les sophistes. Les questions qu’il leur pose visent à débarrasser les mots de la gangue des idées préconçues afin de les rendre à leur dignité première : celle du concept.

« Sur toute question [...] il y a un unique point de départ pour quiconque veut bien en délibérer : c’est de savoir quel est [...] l’objet de la délibération ; sinon, l’échec est inévitable. Or un fait qui échappe à la plupart, c’est qu’ils ne connaissent pas l’essence de chaque chose ; aussi, croyant la connaître, ils négligent de se mettre d’accord au début de la recherche, mais, en avançant, ils en payent le prix, car ils ne s’accordent ni avec eux-mêmes ni avec les autres »<sup>7</sup>.

Pour Socrate, savoir *ce qu’est* une chose (angl. *knowing that*), c’est pouvoir la définir, la maîtriser du point de vue conceptuel. La discussion vise d’emblée le plan des Idées (le monde intelligible), le seul apte à garantir l’accès à une connaissance vraie, authentique. Les interlocuteurs de Socrate valorisent, eux, plutôt les vertus de la connaissance pratique (angl. *knowing how*).

En ce point, l’enjeu sémantique du dialogue est doublé par l’intervention de la perspective éthique : *comment agir* (*i.e.* quels choix opérer ?) à partir de ce que je

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<sup>7</sup> Platon, *Phèdre*, 237b. L’approche philosophique d’un problème consiste d’abord dans l’élucidation des notions impliquées dans sa formulation, notions qui sont généralement représentées par les mots du langage quotidien.

sais ? Dans la vision du philosophe, l'action morale va de pair avec la *connaissance* des concepts éthiques clairs, distincts, stables et surtout non contradictoires.

Un des thèmes majeurs du *Gorgias* étant justement constitué par la définition des concepts éthiques<sup>8</sup> – qu'est-ce que le *juste* et l'*injuste*, le *bien* et le *mal*, qu'est-ce que le *bonheur* ? – la sémantique argumentative (Anscombe & Ducrot 1983, Ducrot & Carel 1999) peut-elle offrir une grille de lecture pertinente de ces concepts ?

**2.2.** Un deuxième axe de lecture est constitué par le sens même des affirmations socratiques. Fidèle à sa réputation de personnage excentrique, Socrate choisit de s'exprimer en paradoxes, qu'il étale devant ses interlocuteurs médusés. Comme son nom l'indique, le paradoxe est un énoncé *anomal*, i.e. *non doxal*, en tant qu'il transgresse les normes de la *doxa*<sup>9</sup>.

Si Socrate choisit délibérément les formulations paradoxales, c'est parce que de son point de vue, ces dernières sont investies d'un rôle épistémique non négligeable. L'énoncé paradoxal opère un décentrement des routines de pensée, une mise en question des croyances partagées. En affirmant le contraire de ce que l'on a l'habitude de croire, Socrate oblige ses interlocuteurs à se prêter à un examen du bien fondé de ce qu'ils affirment croire, examen qui finit souvent par un réaménagement de leurs systèmes de croyances. Le paradoxe est donc, dans la bouche de Socrate, un redoutable instrument de connaissance.

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<sup>8</sup> La philosophie morale distingue entre concepts éthiques *denses* vs *raréfiés* (voir Williams, 1985/1990). Les concepts éthiques possèdent, outre un sens descriptif, un sens évaluatif.

Dans le cas des concepts raréfiés (*bien* vs *mal*), le sens évaluatif prime sur le sens descriptif. Le bien se voit associer des connotations positives, mais on peut douter qu'il ait vraiment un contenu descriptif : on peut définir une action bonne, mais non le *bon* ou le *bien* en soi. Contrairement aux notions de *piété* ou de *courage*, par exemple, dont la densité sémantique permet de reconnaître les entités auxquelles elles s'appliquent, les termes *bien* (*bon*) vs *mal* se caractérisent par un déficit de substance sémantique. Deuxièmement, le sens d'un terme raréfié est conjoncturel (un *bon* soldat est *bon* selon d'autres critères qu'un *bon* chrétien), i.e. variable en fonction du contexte et comme tel, difficilement épuisable dans les limites d'une définition de dictionnaire. Conséquemment, si deux personnes possèdent des critères différents en fonction desquels elles décident si une action est bonne ou mauvaise, leur désaccord sera de nature morale, non linguistique.

Dans le cas des concepts éthiques denses, la dimension évaluative est secondaire par rapport à la signification descriptive. Ainsi, l'évaluation (positive vs négative) associée aux notions de *courage* ou de *piété* dépend du sens de ces mots. Lorsqu'on affirme d'un soldat qu'il est courageux, on le fait en vertu d'un faisceau de propriétés descriptives (ce dernier se conduit d'une certaine façon en certaines circonstances), évaluées de façon positive (le comportement « courageux » est recommandable). Je ne peux donc employer l'adjectif *courageux* que si je connais le sens du mot *courageux*, au risque de commettre une erreur linguistique.

<sup>9</sup> Pour une définition de la *doxa*, v. *infra*, note 11.

**2.3.** Or, cette connaissance ne se manifeste pas de façon assertorique, mais interrogative. Le paradoxe de Socrate est d'être un maître qui interroge, tout en enseignant. Ceci étant, quel est le rôle du questionnement dans l'économie d'ensemble du dialogue ?

**2.4.** Enfin, Socrate et ses interlocuteurs croient chacun quelque chose. Ce « quelque chose » est une proposition tenue pour vraie, plus précisément, la croyance exprimée à travers cette proposition. L'ensemble logiquement consistant des propositions tenues pour vraies<sup>10</sup> – et conséquemment l'ensemble de celles qu'il considère comme étant fausses – constitue l'*univers de croyance* du locuteur ( $\mathcal{U}_L$ ) : ce que ce dernier croit/sait à un certain moment.

Ce savoir relève-t-il de l'*épistémè* ou de la *doxa*<sup>11</sup> ? La question n'est pas triviale, puisqu'elle permet d'opposer deux profils éthiques différents : le sophiste et le philosophe.

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<sup>10</sup> Au niveau du discours, la vérité-correspondance (fondée sur la relation entre les mots et les choses) cède la place à une vérité de consistance : un locuteur ne peut simultanément assumer une proposition (*p*) et sa contradictoire (*non p*).

<sup>11</sup> La *doxa* se définit comme un ensemble de propositions ouvert et fluctuant, éventuellement contradictoire, grâce à sa dépendance contextuelle : lorsque je m'adresse à un enfant, je peux affirmer que la baleine est un poisson, même si je sais pertinemment qu'il s'agit d'un mammifère. La *doxa* est donc constituée par l'ensemble plus ou moins homogène, plus ou moins consistant de ce que le locuteur pense être vrai à tel moment ou dans tel intervalle. Il s'agit de croyances au sens faible (*think*, « penser que », opposé à *believe*, « croire que »), synonymes d'opinions, d'idées reçues, de préjugés ou de stéréotypes de pensée, dont la vérité est acceptée en dehors de tout examen préalable. L'*opinion*, expression de la *doxa*, se définit ainsi par son caractère versatile et conjoncturel.

À l'opposé, la *connaissance* est un corps de savoirs ou de croyances structuré, organisé sous forme de système. Les propositions constitutives de ce système ne peuvent pas être contradictoires. Un locuteur qui sait (au sens où il croit à la vérité d'une certaine proposition) ne saurait assumer simultanément *p* et *non-p*. Le savoir s'identifie donc à travers les attributs logiques de la cohérence et de la consistance.

Les opinions ne deviennent croyances (expressions d'un authentique savoir, d'une connaissance) qu'une fois assumées et reliées par un raisonnement valide. Dans les termes de Socrate, « la connaissance est lien (*logos*) » :

« Les opinions vraies, aussi longtemps qu'elles demeurent en place, sont une belle chose et tous les ouvrages qu'elles produisent sont bons. Mais ces opinions ne consentent pas à rester longtemps en place, plutôt cherchent-elles à s'enfuir de l'âme humaine ; elles ne valent donc pas grand-chose, tant qu'on ne les a pas reliées par un raisonnement qui en donne l'explication. [...] dès que les opinions ont été ainsi reliées, d'abord elles deviennent connaissances, et ensuite, elles restent à leur place. Voilà précisément la raison pour laquelle la connaissance est plus précieuse que l'opinion droite, et sache que la science diffère de l'opinion vraie en ce que la connaissance est lien » (*Ménon*, 97e-79d).

Les croyances ont donc ceci de particulier qu'elles « restent à leur place ». Avoir une croyance, énonçable sous forme d'assertion, c'est être disposé à répondre de façon identique (*i.e.* non contradictoire), tant que la croyance persiste. Ainsi croire que Hannibal a traversé les Alpes, c'est être disposé, entre autres, à répondre « Oui » à chaque fois qu'on nous interroge sur la question.

### 3. Dimensions sémantiques du Gorgias

**3.1.** Dans la perspective de la sémantique argumentative<sup>12</sup>, les séquences : *Cette île est belle* ou *Ce soldat est courageux* n'ont de sens que dans la mesure où l'on comprend leurs suites discursives possibles : *Cette île est belle (A), DONC je vais la visiter (C)* ; *Ce soldat est courageux (A), DONC il ne prendra pas la fuite (C)*. Ces enchaînements seront dits *argumentatifs* dans la mesure où ils supposent la mise en relation d'une suite de deux éléments : un énoncé-argument, A, destiné à faire admettre, ou du moins à montrer le caractère admissible, vraisemblable, légitime, d'un énoncé-conclusion, C.

« Un locuteur fait une argumentation lorsqu'il présente un énoncé E1 (ou un ensemble d'énoncés) comme destiné à en faire admettre un autre (ou un ensemble d'autres) E2. Notre thèse est qu'il y a *dans la langue*<sup>13</sup> des contraintes régissant cette présentation »<sup>14</sup>.

Dans cette perspective, le sens des mots *beau* et *courageux* n'est donc pas descriptif, mais argumentatif, les mots respectifs fonctionnant comme autant d'arguments pour des conclusions possibles. Dans les termes d'Anscombe et Ducrot<sup>15</sup>, il est constitutif du sens d'un énoncé que de *prétendre* orienter l'interlocuteur vers certaines conclusions et de bloquer l'accès à certaines autres. Le sens d'un énoncé ne réside donc pas dans ses conditions de vérité<sup>16</sup>, mais dans *ses suites argumentatives possibles*.

« ... un énoncé est composé de mots auxquels on ne peut assigner aucune valeur intrinsèque stable [...] sa valeur sémantique ne saurait donc résider en lui-même, mais seulement dans les rapports qu'il a avec d'autres énoncés, les énoncés qu'il est destiné à faire admettre, ou ceux qui sont censés capables de le faire admettre »<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Anscombe & Ducrot, 1983.

<sup>13</sup> C'est nous qui soulignons.

<sup>14</sup> Anscombe & Ducrot, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>16</sup> Selon Ducrot (1993 : 236), la relation argumentative est « intrinsèquement liée au discours et impossible à dériver d'une connaissance extralinguistique de ce qui est dit par le discours » ; en d'autres termes, cette relation n'est pas déductible des informations que le discours pourrait apporter. Ainsi une analyse de la signification en termes de conditions de vérité serait incapable d'expliquer pourquoi les deux énoncés :

(i) *Il est huit heures.*

(ii) *Il n'est que huit heures,*

identiques quant à l'information communiquée, n'admettent pas tous les deux les mêmes enchaînements ou, autrement formulé, pourquoi on ne saurait enchaîner au deuxième énoncé toutes les conclusions possibles à partir du premier.

<sup>17</sup> Ducrot, 1982 : 157-158.

Le passage des arguments aux conclusions est validé par des lieux communs ou *topoi* : ensemble de propositions ou de croyances partagées, susceptibles d'assurer les prémisses implicites de toute forme de raisonnement endoxal : « Plus une île est belle, plus on a envie de la visiter » ; « Plus un soldat est courageux, plus il luttera bien ».

Dans la conception des auteurs, il y aurait dans chaque mot/énoncé des allusions aux *topoi*, *i.e.* à l'arrière-fond doxal sur quoi s'appuie le raisonnement du locuteur. C'est ce qui explique, par exemple, l'incongruité des enchaînements suivants : *Cette île est belle, DONC je ne la visiterai pas, Ce soldat est courageux, DONC il prendra la fuite*, ressentis comme *paradoxaux*<sup>18</sup>, alors qu'on ne serait aucunement gêné si le locuteur disait : *Cette île est belle, DONC je la visiterai/POURTANT je ne la visiterai pas*, ou : *Ce soldat est courageux, DONC il ne prendra pas la fuite/POURTANT il a pris la fuite*. En effet, dans notre société, « une belle île nous donne envie de la visiter » (croyance commune, *topos*), tout comme le courage d'un soldat nous garantit qu'il va bien lutter (*idem*).

Dès lors il n'y a qu'un pas à décrire le sens d'un mot/énoncé comme un paquet de *topoi*, valorisés soit dans une forme régulière (enchaînement en *DONC*, conforme à la *doxa*), soit dans une forme exceptive (enchaînement en *POURTANT*, transgressif par rapport à la *doxa*)<sup>19</sup>. Les *topoi* fonctionnent donc comme une sorte de règles ou de normes de bonne formation des séquences discursives, le rôle des connecteurs étant justement de signaler leur utilisation normative (*DONC*) vs exceptive (*POURTANT*).

**3.2.** L'enjeu des dialogues socratiques est soit qu'une thèse paradoxale, assumée par Socrate, finisse par être acceptée par l'interlocuteur, soit qu'une thèse apparemment banale, initialement assumée par le locuteur, ne puisse plus être soutenue sans contradiction par ce dernier.

3.2.1. Si l'on se fie à l'étymologie du terme, le paradoxe désigne une proposition qui est contraire à l'opinion commune (gr. *παράδοξος*, « *paradoxos* ») ou qui heurte le bon sens commun.

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<sup>18</sup> On peut identifier deux types de paradoxes : le premier, par rapport au DICTIONNAIRE (« Il est courageux, DONC il prendra la fuite » entre en contradiction avec la logique de la langue) ; le second, par rapport à l'ENCYCLOPÉDIE (« C'est une belle île, donc je ne la visiterai pas » entre en contradiction avec notre savoir sur le monde : dans notre monde, *BEAU* signifie « visitable » – relativement à une île –, tout comme *COURAGEUX a le sens* de « disposé à lutter » – en référence à un soldat). Pour une définition du paradoxe, v. *infra*, § 3.2.

<sup>19</sup> Les usages transgressifs spécifient une lecture concessive, la concession pouvant être définie comme une attente normative ratée.

3.2.2. Du point de vue de la sémantique argumentative, « un énoncé est linguistiquement paradoxal si son argumentation interne comporte des enchaînements linguistiquement paradoxaux »<sup>20</sup>. À son tour, un enchaînement est linguistiquement paradoxal si, dans le bloc sémantique considéré, la séquence « A DONC B » n'est pas linguistiquement doxale, tandis que « A POURTANT B » est linguistiquement doxale (et vice versa)<sup>21</sup>.

Exemples :

\*C'est un chien, DONC il n'aboie pas (enchaînement linguistiquement paradoxal : la conclusion introduite par « donc » annule un trait constitutif de la définition de *chien* : « entité animée animale qui aboie »)

C'est un chien, POURTANT il n'aboie pas (enchaînement linguistiquement doxal, quoique exceptif par rapport à la doxa : « un chien, ça aboie »)

C'est un chien, DONC il aboie (enchaînement linguistiquement doxal)

\*C'est un chien, POURTANT il aboie (enchaînement linguistiquement paradoxal : \*« un chien, ça n'aboie pas » n'est pas une croyance conforme à la doxa)

Même cas de figure dans les énoncés suivants :

\*Cette valise est légère, DONC Jean ne pourra pas la porter (enchaînement linguistiquement paradoxal : le sens argumentatif intrinsèque de l'adjectif *léger* est tel qu'il oriente vers une conclusion du type « facile à porter »)<sup>22</sup>

Cette valise est légère, POURTANT Jean ne pourra pas la porter (énoncé linguistiquement doxal, quoique exceptif par rapport à la doxa : « on porte facilement une valise légère »)

Cette valise est légère, DONC Jean pourra la porter (énoncé linguistiquement doxal)

\*Cette valise est légère, POURTANT Jean pourra la porter (énoncé linguistiquement paradoxal : \*« on ne porte pas facilement une valise légère » n'est pas une croyance conforme à la doxa)

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<sup>20</sup> Ducrot & Carel, 1999 : 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> Les énoncés linguistiquement ou sémantiquement paradoxaux sont à distinguer des énoncés socialement ou culturellement paradoxaux, comme le suivant : *Cette valise est légère, DONC Jean ne la portera pas*. Contrairement aux énoncés précédents, dans ce cas la conclusion exprimée dans le second segment n'est pas directement opposée à celle qu'implique le sens (les *topoi* intrinsèques) des mots utilisés dans le premier, mais à une combinaison entre ce sens (ces *topoi*) et certaines croyances sociales : ainsi, « une croyance sociale selon laquelle la possibilité de faire quelque chose est une raison de la faire, favorise, si elle est composée avec le *topos* intrinsèque de *léger*, la conclusion que Jean portera la valise, conclusion contraire à celle qui apparaît dans le discours » (Ducrot & Carel, art. cit., p. 8).

Au niveau des enchaînements paradoxaux, la conclusion *contredit* les attentes normatives générées par le sens même des mots *chien* et *légère* (que ce sens soit relatif au dictionnaire ou à l'encyclopédie : qu'est-ce qu'un chien, sinon un animal qui aboie ? que signifie *léger*, sinon facile à porter ?).

### 3.3. Venons-en maintenant aux affirmations de Socrate :

SOCRATE : ... je prétends que quiconque est honnête, homme ou femme, est heureux, et quiconque est injuste et méchant, malheureux. (470e) [...] tu es d'avis qu'on peut être heureux quand on fait le mal et qu'on est injuste [...] C'est le premier point sur lequel nous sommes en désaccord. Passons à l'autre : un homme injuste sera-t-il heureux, s'il vient à être puni et châtié ?

POLOS : Pas du tout ; en ce cas, il sera très malheureux.

SOCRATE : Alors, s'il n'est pas puni, il sera heureux, à ton compte ?

POLOS : Assurément.

SOCRATE : Et moi je pense, Polos, que l'homme qui commet une injustice [...] est malheureux en tous les cas, et qu'il est plus malheureux encore s'il n'est point châtié de son injustice, mais qu'il l'est moins, s'il la paye et s'il est puni par les dieux et par les hommes.

POLOS : Tu nous débites là, Socrate, *d'étranges paradoxes*<sup>23</sup>. (472c-473a)

3.3.1. Dans la perspective de Polos, Socrate assume une opinion socialement paradoxale puisqu'elle entre en collision avec la *doxa*, expression du bon sens commun. L'argumentation socratique, d'autre part, tout en se situant apparemment en contradiction avec la *doxa*, est une tentative de restitution du sens même de *ce qui est en question* entre Socrate et ses partenaires de discussion. Or, *ce qui* anime les interlocuteurs n'est rien d'autre que la définition même du bonheur. Que signifie « être heureux »<sup>24</sup> ? Quoique non formulé de façon explicite, tel est l'enjeu du dialogue sémantique auquel Socrate convie ses interlocuteurs. Aux yeux de Socrate, savoir *ce qu'est* le bonheur rend possible de dire *ce qui* l'instancie. Autrement formulé, la *connaissance* de la définition d'un mot est la garantie de son *usage responsable*.

Or, déterminer le sens d'un mot, c'est révéler le raisonnement convoqué pour réfléchir à *la question* dans laquelle il est utilisé. Le sens des concepts éthiques (le bonheur, la justice, le bien) se précise ainsi progressivement au cours du dialogue, là où leur potentiel argumentatif est exhibé, exposé, étalé, à travers les suites discursives

<sup>23</sup> C'est nous qui soulignons.

<sup>24</sup> SOCRATE : ...les objets dont nous contestons ne sont pas de petite conséquence [...] puisqu'en somme il s'agit de *savoir* ou d'*ignorer* qui est heureux et qui ne l'est pas. (472c) C'est nous qui soulignons.

que ces mots rendent possibles. Bref, il s'agit d'un sens compacté, empaqueté, plié dans les mots mêmes qui le charrient, le but du dialogue étant justement de le déplier à travers l'examen des enchaînements argumentatifs que ces mots autorisent.

3.3.2. C'est là, nous semble-t-il, un second but, non moins important, du dialogue sémantique qui oppose Socrate et ses interlocuteurs : déclarer (au sens de « rendre manifeste », « révéler ») les conséquences – sémantiques et éthiques – de ce que les locuteurs disent<sup>25</sup>. Car ce que nous disons nous engage. C'est cet engagement éthique, implicite dans nos jeux de langage, que Socrate se propose d'expliciter, en le portant à la conscience du jeune Polos : SOCRATE – « Ne parle pas ainsi, Polos ! » (ou, dans d'autres traductions : « Fais attention à ce que tu dis, Polos ! »)

De ce point de vue, la responsabilité du locuteur s'articule à travers l'obligation qu'il a de *maîtriser* et *d'assumer* le sens de ce qu'il dit. Or, Socrate et son interlocuteur ne disent pas les mêmes choses, dans la mesure où ils ne partagent pas les mêmes croyances. Dans les termes de la sémantique argumentative, même si les deux locuteurs emploient les mêmes mots, ils ne leur associent pas les mêmes topoï.

**3.4.** Quel est donc l'arrière-plan doxal qui fonde les raisonnements de Socrate et de Polos ?

3.4.1. Que croit Socrate ? SOCRATE – « Je prétends que quiconque est honnête, homme ou femme, est heureux, et quiconque est injuste et méchant, malheureux » (470e). Dans la perspective de Socrate, le bonheur est dans la justice : « Juste, DONC heureux » est un enchaînement S-doxal (où S = Socrate).

3.4.2. Que croit Polos ? SOCRATE – « [...] tu (= Polos) es *d'avis* qu'on peut être heureux quand on fait le mal et qu'on est injuste » (472c). « Injuste, DONC heureux » est à son tour un enchaînement doxal, cette fois-ci dans la perspective de Polos (appelons-le « P-doxal »).

SOCRATE – « ... puisque tu (= Polos) *crois* qu'Archélaos est heureux en dépit de ses crimes. Ne devons-nous pas croire que telle est ta manière de voir ? POLOS – Si, absolument » (472c). Cette fois-ci, la croyance de Polos se laisse capter au moyen d'un enchaînement en POURTANT : « Injuste, POURTANT heureux », dirait Polos dans l'interprétation de Socrate.

Mais est-ce là vraiment la croyance de Polos ? Contrairement à « Injuste, DONC heureux », enchaînement P-doxal, « Injuste, POURTANT heureux » est, *dans la*

<sup>25</sup> GORGIAS : ... où veux-tu en venir ? (451e) ; GORGIAS : À quoi tend ceci, Socrate ? (453b) ; POLOS : Qu'entends-tu par là ? (462c, 463c) ; GORGIAS : Par Zeus, Socrate, moi non plus, je ne comprends pas ton langage. – SOCRATE : Je n'en suis pas surpris ; car je ne me suis pas encore expliqué clairement [...] (463c) ; CALLICLÈS : Où tend ta question, Socrate ? (486e) ; CALLICLÈS : Qu'entends-tu par se commander soi-même ? (491d) ; CALLICLÈS : ... à quoi tend cette question ? (497d) ; CALLICLÈS : Je ne sais ce que tu veux dire, Socrate. (505c)



*perspective de Polos*, un enchaînement *paradoxal*, puisque à côté, en dehors ou tout simplement contraire à la doxa. « Injuste, POURTANT heureux » n'a de sens qu'à partir de l'énoncé normatif correspondant : « Injuste, DONC malheureux » – qui est, lui, un enchaînement S-doxal. En effet, aux yeux de Socrate, l'homme injuste est fondamentalement malheureux. Ce n'est qu'à travers cet arrière-plan doxal que la séquence « Injuste, POURTANT heureux » se justifie du point de vue argumentatif.

Autrement formulé, Socrate interprète la croyance de Polos dans son propre univers de croyance ( $\mathcal{U}_S$ ). Il *concède* l'association de l'injustice et du bonheur tout en signalant son caractère *transgressif*<sup>26</sup> (on pourrait dire tout autant « étrange » ou « étranger »), en ce qu'elle contredit les attentes normatives générées par le sens même de l'adjectif « injuste », tel qu'il se définit *dans l'univers de croyance de Socrate* ( $\mathcal{U}_S$ ). Or, les propositions qui composent  $\mathcal{U}_S$  obéissent à un arrière-plan normatif sans commune mesure avec celui de Polos. Pour Socrate, l'injustice est incompatible avec le bonheur.

**3.5.** Un autre aspect du désaccord opposant Socrate et Polos est relatif à la définition même de l'action morale : SOCRATE – « ... un homme injuste sera-t-il heureux, s'il vient à être puni et châtié ? »

3.5.1. Si l'on se fie au dictionnaire, *punir* signifie 1. « *frapper d'une peine* pour avoir commis un délit ou un crime. 2. *Atteindre d'un mal* constituant une sanction »<sup>27</sup>. On comprend dès lors la réaction de Polos qui associe le bonheur à l'absence de punition, plus précisément, à l'évitement de l'inconfort (« frapper », « atteindre ») généré par son application : comment accepter que celui qui se voit arrêter pour avoir voulu s'emparer de la tyrannie soit plus heureux s'il supporte les conséquences de ses actions (s'il est donc torturé, mutilé, mis en croix et finalement tué) que s'il avait conquis la tyrannie et, maître de la ville, avait passé sa vie à satisfaire ses moindres caprices, craint, envié et admiré par ses concitoyens et par les étrangers ?

Ce qui semble échapper à Polos, c'est la dimension éthique du verbe *punir* (« délit », « crime »), dimension *intrinsèque* à son sémantisme, descriptible à travers un enchaînement du type : « X a mal agi, DONC X subit les conséquences de son action ». Cet enchaînement est linguistiquement doxal, dans la mesure où « Mal agir, DONC pâtir » est inscrit dans la signification même de *punir*. Que signifie *punir*, sinon subir les conséquences d'une action répréhensible ?

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<sup>26</sup> Un enchaînement en POURTANTT, pour autant qu'il reconnaît la légitimité de la norme représentée par l'enchaînement doxal (a DONC b), est transgressif ou exceptif par rapport à la norme, mais sans être paradoxal.

<sup>27</sup> *Le Petit Robert*, 1999. C'est nous qui soulignons.

3.5.2. Envisagée dans une perspective éthique, qui est celle de Socrate, la signification de *punir* s'enrichit de l'enchaînement suivant : « Punir, DONC guérir ». En effet, dans la conception de Socrate, un homme guéri de ses fautes retrouve sa *condition* d'homme moral (= juste), source et garantie du bonheur. L'enchaînement « Puni, DONC heureux », paradoxal<sup>28</sup> dans la perspective de Polos, pour qui l'absence de punition est source de bonheur (« Les impunis sont heureux » – argumente Polos), est tout à fait doxal dans celle de Socrate.

Corrélativement, l'enchaînement « Impuni, DONC heureux », paradoxal dans la perspective de Socrate, pour qui l'absence de punition est source de malheur (« Les impunis sont malheureux – argumente Socrate), est, par contre, tout à fait doxal dans celle de Polos.

3.5.3. Apparemment, l'absence de punition semble compatible avec le bonheur autant qu'avec le malheur. Autrement dit, l'énoncé A (« X est puni/impuni ») oriente vers la conclusion C, autant que vers non-C, *pour autant qu'on ne se situe pas dans les limites du même univers de croyance*. Or, Socrate et son interlocuteur adhèrent à des univers de croyance différents : « Puni, DONC heureux » ( $\mathcal{U}_S$ ) vs « Puni, DONC malheureux » ( $\mathcal{U}_P$ ). Les propositions qui les composent s'annulent mutuellement : l'une est la négation de l'autre, d'où l'impossibilité d'instaurer un dialogue authentique : les interlocuteurs ne se rencontrent nulle part<sup>29</sup>.

3.5.4. Il s'agit, somme toute, de deux conceptions différentes du bonheur<sup>30</sup>. Polos associe bonheur et plaisir : être heureux, c'est pouvoir agir selon son bon plaisir sans aucun souci de la justice. Ainsi le tyran Archélaos est-il un homme puissant et heureux, car il fait tout ce qu'il désire (il tue son oncle, son cousin et son frère) sans aucun remords et surtout sans crainte d'être puni.

<sup>28</sup> L'enchaînement paradoxal remet en question le sens même des mots de la langue, ou bien les propositions constitutives de la doxa. Soit notre exemple d'un paradoxe en donc : « C'est un chien (a), donc il n'aboie pas (non b). Employer cette phrase, c'est, d'une certaine façon, contester le sens du mot « chien ». « Or contester un mot, c'est contester une institution, ce qui est aussi difficile pour l'institution linguistique que pour l'institution sociale : dans les deux cas on doit, tout en étant, par la force des choses, situé à l'intérieur d'un certain cadre, remettre ce cadre en question. Le paradoxe, tel que nous le décrivons, est une tentative pour casser les mots de la tribu » (Ducrot & Carel, art. cit., p. 19).

<sup>29</sup> On pourrait donc croire que « désaccords et conflits opposent d'abord des comportements et des opinions. » En réalité, « ce n'est que dans la mesure où nos croyances et désirs sont articulés à des règles, où ils communiquent avec un arrière-plan normatif ou des potentialités normatives, qu'ils portent en eux la possibilité de conflits, d'incompatibilités ou de contestations » (Cometti, 2011 : 31-32).

<sup>30</sup> Ce qui est intéressant, c'est que les deux locuteurs ne supposent pas qu'impunité et bonheur (Polos), ou impunité et malheur (Socrate) soient deux notions absolues, faisant sens séparément, avant leur mise en discours. Polos affirme que l'impunité est source de bonheur, tout comme Socrate affirme que l'impunité est source de malheur. Les segments syntaxiques contenant les mots en question s'éclairent l'un l'autre : s'ils font sens, c'est ensemble. En fait, les deux locuteurs proposent deux définitions contradictoires du bonheur, à travers le fait de relier bonheur et impunité (Polos) vs bonheur et châtiment (Socrate) à l'intérieur de deux blocs argumentatifs distincts. Le bonheur du deuxième bloc n'est pas identique au bonheur du premier. Les deux locuteurs ne parlent pas de la même « chose ».

Pour Socrate, le bonheur est par excellence un concept éthique. Le bonheur découle de la justice. C'est pourquoi ceux qui agissent injustement sont malheureux. Plus encore, ceux qui échappent au châtement sont plus malheureux encore que ceux qui payent la peine de leurs fautes.

3.5.6. La réaction de Calliclès ne tarde pas à signaler le caractère « déplacé », « excentrique » des opinions défendues par Socrate :

CALLICLÈS : ... Dis-moi, Socrate, faut-il croire que tu parles sérieusement en ce moment, ou que tu badines ? Car, si tu parles sérieusement et si ce que tu dis est vrai, c'est de quoi renverser notre vie sociale, et nous faisons, ce me semble, tout le contraire de ce qu'il faudrait. (481b)

Le discours de Socrate est-il aussi paradoxal qu'il en a l'air ? Si tel est le cas, comment expliquer le ravissement de Polos, qui à la fin de l'entretien change d'opinion et finit par donner raison à Socrate ?

**3.6.** La nécessité de préserver la consistance de son propre univers de croyance, exigence minimale de rationalité, empêche normalement le locuteur d'assumer, dans les limites du même dialogue, *p* et *non-p*. S'il lui arrive de le faire, le résultat en est désastreux : l'interlocuteur de Socrate se situe en contradiction avec soi-même : il est amené à abandonner son propre système de croyance (lequel, contenant des propositions contradictoires est, de ce fait, inconsistant) pour adhérer, de gré ou de force<sup>31</sup>, à celui du conlocuteur (en l'occurrence, Socrate).

3.6.1. Ce qui nous semble intéressant, c'est le parcours argumentatif en vertu duquel s'opère ce changement d'opinion, grâce auquel ce qui fonctionne initialement comme un argument pour le bonheur : le fait d'agir injustement sans être puni, finit par orienter vers la conclusion opposée : l'homme qui mène la vie la plus malheureuse est celui qui, refusant d'expié ses fautes, refuse de guérir son âme.

Dans la perspective de Socrate, expier, c'est pâtir, *i.e.* subir l'action d'un agent qui châtie (le juge). Or, celui qui châtie justement agit justement, tout comme celui qui est puni avec justice pâtit une action juste. Mais ce qui est juste est également beau. Donc si l'action du juge est belle, elle est également bonne, puisqu'elle est utile (*kalokagathôn*). Ce que souffre donc celui qui est puni est bon et utile, vu que le résultat visé est la guérison de son âme.

Pareils aux médecins qui guérissent les maladies du corps, les juges sont appelés à guérir les maladies de l'âme : « c'est qu'en effet la punition assagit et rend plus juste, et que la justice est comme la médecine de la méchanceté » (478c).

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<sup>31</sup> GORGIAS – « Comme tu es violent, Socrate, si tu veux m'écouter, tu laisseras tomber cette discussion ou tu discuteras avec un autre que moi » (505d).

L'homme qui mène la vie la plus malheureuse est donc celui qui refuse de guérir son âme. Celui-là se conduit à peu près comme « un homme qui, atteint des plus graves maladies, se serait arrangé pour ne point rendre compte aux médecins de ses tares physiques et pour échapper à leur traitement, craignant, comme un enfant<sup>32</sup>, qu'on ne lui appliquât le feu et le fer, parce que cela fait mal » (478e).

3.6.2. Ainsi déployé, le sens des affirmations socratiques cesse d'être paradoxal. Croire que celui qui est guéri, est heureux (« Puni/guéri, DONC heureux »), tandis que celui qui est malade, est malheureux (« Impuni/malade, DONC malheureux »), sont deux attitudes conformes à la doxa. Le renversement de perspective opéré par Socrate oblige Polos à renoncer à ses opinions initiales : « Puni/guéri, DONC malheureux » vs « Impuni/malade, DONC heureux » – qui apparaissent, finalement, pour ce qu'elles sont : un ensemble d'affirmations éphémères, amORALES (car dépourvues de sens moral) et paradoxales.

**3.7.** Contrairement à Socrate, le sophiste prétend connaître *a priori*, avant la mise en discours, le sens de *ce qui est en question* (qu'il s'agisse de la rhétorique ou du sens même des concepts éthiques : que signifie être puissant ou heureux ?). Il sait ainsi, à partir des constats purement empiriques, autrement dit, à travers l'évidence de la vie quotidienne, que les tyrans sont non seulement heureux, mais en égale mesure puissants, car ils ont la possibilité de faire tout ce qu'il leur plaît sans crainte d'être punis. Socrate, pour sa part, s'attaque à toute forme de conformisme épistémique établie, obligeant l'interlocuteur à penser par lui-même, en fonction de ce qu'il croit (et non pas en fonction de ce que l'on croit<sup>33</sup>).

Il nous semble ainsi que la force du paradoxe socratique réside justement dans sa capacité d'amener l'interlocuteur à abandonner le confort des opinions toutes faites, à travers lesquelles s'exprime la pensée réglée, standardisée de la *doxa*, pour assumer, en tant qu'individu, la responsabilité d'une pensée autonome, qui se précise progressivement, à travers l'exercice de la confrontation dialogique à autrui.

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<sup>32</sup> La conduite discursive de Polos, qui rechigne à se laisser interroger par Socrate, au risque de découvrir que ce qu'il prétendait savoir, il ne le sait pas, est métonymique de celle d'un enfant qui craint d'abandonner son corps aux soins des médecins par peur de se faire mal. L'emploi du mot « enfant » est là pour signaler l'imaturité du sophiste qui, s'il était cohérent comme individu, ne saurait refuser d'agir en vue de son propre bien. Sur la définition de l'individu comme agent rationnel, voir également *infra*, § 3.7.4.

<sup>33</sup> SOCRATE – Bienheureux Polos, tu essaie de me réfuter avec des preuves d'avocat, comme on prétend le faire dans les tribunaux. Là, en effet, les avocats croient réfuter leur adversaire quand ils produisent à l'appui de leur thèse des témoins nombreux et considérables, et que leur adversaire n'en produit qu'un seul ou pas du tout. [...] Mais moi, quoique seul, je ne me rends pas. [...] Moi, au contraire, si je ne te produis pas toi-même, et toi seul, comme témoin, et si je ne te fais pas tomber d'accord de ce que j'avance, j'estime que je n'ai rien fait qui vaille pour résoudre la question qui nous occupe [...]. (472c)

SOCRATE : Je soutiens que [les orateurs et les tyrans] ne font pas ce qu'ils veulent. [...]

POLOS : Ne viens-tu pas d'accorder tout à l'heure qu'ils font ce qui leur paraît être le meilleur ?

SOCRATE : Je l'accorde encore à présent.

POLOS : Alors, ne font-ils pas ce qu'ils veulent ?

SOCRATE : Je le nie.

POLOS : Quand ils font ce qui leur plaît ?

SOCRATE : Oui.

POLOS : *Tu tiens là des propos [...] insoutenables*<sup>34</sup>, Socrate.

SOCRATE : [...] Si tu es capable de m'interroger, prouve-moi que je me trompe ; sinon, réponds toi-même.

POLOS : Je veux bien te répondre, *afin de savoir enfin ce que tu veux dire*<sup>35</sup>. (466e-467d)

3.7.1. Le danger de la rhétorique, ouvrière de persuasion, c'est qu'elle induit chez le locuteur une croyance sans connaissance, autrement dit, l'illusion de la connaissance. Croyant savoir, mais ne sachant pas, le locuteur arrive facilement à entrer en contradiction avec lui-même. Or dans la conception de Socrate, la contradiction est signe de non savoir. Cette contradiction affecte non seulement le sens de ce que le locuteur *croit dire*, mais risque de contaminer le sens même de ce que Socrate *entend dire*.

Or, que dit Socrate ? Il dit qu'un homme, dans la mesure où il agit en tant qu'agent rationnel, agit en vue du bien<sup>36</sup>. Par conséquent, ce que nous désirons n'est pas l'action en soi<sup>37</sup>, mais le bien en vue duquel on veut l'accomplir. Ainsi donc, si une action se révèle mauvaise, alors même qu'elle nous a semblé bonne (sinon, on n'aurait pas décidé de la faire), il s'ensuit qu'en fait, on ne désirait pas la faire. Est-ce là un piège sémantique ?

3.7.2. Un homme qui tend la main pour attraper la salière, mais se retrouve avec la poivrière, a-t-il obtenu ce qu'il désirait ? On dirait que non, si ce qu'il a désiré c'est l'objet sous la description « salière »<sup>38</sup>, car l'objet obtenu n'est pas l'objet

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<sup>34</sup> C'est nous qui soulignons.

<sup>35</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>36</sup> SOCRATE – Crois-tu que les hommes, toutes les fois qu'ils agissent, veulent ce qu'ils font ou ce en vue de quoi ils le font ? Par exemple, ceux qui avalent une potion commandée par le médecin veulent-ils, à ton avis, ce qu'ils font, avaler une médecine désagréable, ou bien cette autre chose, la santé, en vue de laquelle ils prennent la potion ?

POLOS – Il est évident que c'est la santé qu'ils veulent. (467d)

<sup>37</sup> *I.e.* l'action pour l'amour de l'action : SOCRATE – Nous ne voulons donc pas égorger les gens, les exiler, les dépouiller de leurs biens par un simple caprice. Nous voulons le faire lorsque cela nous est utile [...]. Car c'est le bien, comme tu le declares, que nous voulons (468c).

<sup>38</sup> La notion de « désir sous description » a été introduite dans la philosophie de l'esprit par Anscombe, 1958.

*visé*. Mais on pourrait aussi bien répondre par l'affirmative, pourvu qu'il ait désiré le même objet sous la description « poivrière », cas auquel l'objet *réel* coïncide avec l'objet *visé*<sup>39</sup>.

L'opposition *objet réel vs objet visé*<sup>40</sup> réajuste le sens apparemment paradoxal de l'affirmation de Socrate : le sujet agissant de façon rationnelle ne peut se représenter l'objet de ses désirs (et donc implicitement de ses actions) que sous la description « bon ». Dans certains cas il arrive que l'objet réel de nos désirs soit mauvais – quoiqu'on l'ait perçu, au moment d'agir, comme étant bon. Mais même alors, l'objet visé reste le bien que nous croyons obtenir. L'affirmation « un homme qui fait ce qu'il lui plaît (ce qu'il lui semble être le meilleur) ne fait pas toujours ce qu'il veut » signifie donc : « un homme qui poursuit l'objet réel de ses désirs ne poursuit pas nécessairement son objet visé ». Bref, personne ne fait le mal en connaissance de cause. Le mal procède de l'ignorance<sup>41</sup> :

SOCRATE : ... Je maintiens, moi [...], que les orateurs et les tyrans ont très peu de pouvoir dans les États, comme je le disais tout à l'heure, car ils ne font presque rien de ce qu'ils veulent, quoiqu'ils fassent ce qui leur paraît être le meilleur (ce qu'ils désirent, n.n.).

POLOS : Eh bien, n'est-ce pas être puissant, cela ?

SOCRATE : Non, du moins *d'après ce que dit Polos*<sup>42</sup>. (466e-467b)

3.7.3. Apparemment, Polos ne sait pas ce qu'il dit. Or, que dit Polos ? Il dit que les orateurs, comme les tyrans, comptent parmi les gens les plus puissants de la cité. Dans l'opinion de Polos, être puissant, c'est avoir le pouvoir de faire ce que l'on désire, et c'est dans ce sens que le pouvoir est un grand bien pour celui qui le possède.

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<sup>39</sup> Un exemple similaire serait le suivant : Que veut faire Œdipe ? « Œdipe veut épouser Jocaste (p), donc Œdipe veut épouser sa mère (q). » Ce raisonnement est bien entendu faux, mais uniquement dans la perspective de quelqu'un qui *sait* que Jocaste est la mère d'Œdipe (le raisonnement est d'ailleurs formellement valide strictement dans les limites d'une logique qui exclut toute référence au locuteur). Dans la perspective d'Œdipe, *p* est vraie (Œdipe veut épouser Jocaste), tandis que *q* est fautive (Œdipe ne veut pas épouser sa mère). Autrement formulé, l'objet *réel* du désir d'Œdipe (sa mère) ne coïncide pas avec l'objet *visé* (Jocaste). De cette façon, on n'est plus obligés de prétendre qu'Œdipe veut et ne veut pas une chose (il veut épouser la femme qu'il aime, mais strictement sous la description « la belle reine de Thèbes », et non sous la description « ma mère »).

<sup>40</sup> La distinction appartient à Santas, 1979, *apud* Vlastos, 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Sur le fameux paradoxe socratique selon lequel « personne ne commet le mal en connaissance de cause », cf. aussi *Ménon*, 77d :

SOCRATE : Il est donc évident que ceux-là ne désirent pas le mal, qui l'ignorent, mais qu'ils désirent des choses qu'ils croyaient bonnes et qui sont mauvaises, de sorte que ceux qui ignorent qu'une chose est mauvaise et qui la croient bonne désirent manifestement la bien, n'est-ce pas ? (*Ménon*, 77d)

<sup>42</sup> C'est nous qui soulignons.

POLOS :

Être puissant, c'est faire ce que l'on désire.

Or, les orateurs et les tyrans font ce qu'ils désirent.

Donc, ils sont puissants.

3.7.4. Socrate, au contraire, affirme que les orateurs, tout comme les tyrans, comptent parmi les gens les moins puissants de la cité, parce que même lorsqu'ils font ce qu'ils désirent (ce qui leur paraît être le meilleur), ils ne font presque rien de ce qu'ils veulent. Contrairement à Polos, Socrate entend distinguer entre *désir* et *volonté*<sup>43</sup>.

3.7.4.1. Vouloir faire, c'est agir en connaissance de cause (savoir ce que l'on fait). Or, le savoir est l'apanage de l'homme compétent (dans les dialogues de Platon, il s'agit d'une compétence morale). Dans l'opinion de Socrate, les orateurs agissent sans connaissance (ils ne sont pas compétents dans le domaine moral). Ils n'ont que des opinions, et non des croyances, lesquelles dérivent du savoir, i.e. de la connaissance des principes moraux qui régissent la vie bonne.

3.7.4.2. Pour Polos, le pouvoir a son point de départ dans le désir du sujet. Mais ce sujet qui désire n'est pas encore un véritable agent. La décision d'action n'est rien d'autre, pour le sujet agissant, qu'un moyen de satisfaire son désir. Que dois-je faire pour combler mon désir ? telle est la question que se pose le sujet désirant. Dans l'univers axiologique de Polos, les raisons d'agir sont de nature pratique, instrumentale (sagesse pratique : *phronèsis*). Le sujet agissant est l'instrument de son propre désir.

3.7.4.3. Contrairement au sujet – assujetti à son propre désir –, l'agent – être de raison – se définit par un savoir (une compétence), un pouvoir (fondé sur la compétence) et un vouloir (orienté vers une finalité : le bien). D'après Socrate, la vraie puissance est la capacité de se diriger soi-même, d'agir de façon rationnelle. Or, le sens de nos actions ne se révèle qu'à travers leur insertion dans un horizon proprement téléologique : l'agent rationnel agit en vue d'un certain but. Ce que l'on veut donc, ce n'est pas ce que l'on fait, mais la fin en vue de laquelle on le fait (467d). Cette fin n'est nulle autre que le bien, l'idéal suprême de la vie bonne : « C'est donc en vue du bien qu'on fait tout ce qu'on fait [...] » (468b)

Dans la perspective de Socrate, les ressorts de nos actions sont de nature morale. La question « dois-je agir ainsi ? », une fois posée, manifeste le dépassement de la motivation individuelle, limitée à la sphère du sujet (et à ses propres désirs), à travers l'ouverture éthique vers autrui.

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<sup>43</sup> POLOS : Être puissant, c'est faire ce que l'on désire. vs SOCRATE : Être puissant, c'est faire ce que l'on veut.

## 4. Questions

**4.1.** Contrairement au sophiste, maître de sagesse, donc implicitement possesseur d'un certain savoir, d'une science, Socrate adopte la position d'une ignorance avouée : « je sais que je ne sais pas ». Le questionnement socratique se justifie donc, apparemment, à travers le désir de combler une lacune de savoir, et ce faisant, d'entrer en possession de la sagesse. Cette attitude permet déjà de situer le profil éthique du philosophe en opposition à celui du sophiste : le philosophe recherche la sagesse, tandis que le sophiste prétend la posséder<sup>44</sup>. Ce que le locuteur sait s'exprime à travers un ensemble d'affirmations dont le tout constitue un texte, *i.e.* un ensemble de propositions stables et non contradictoires. La stabilité des opinions est donc signe de savoir<sup>45</sup>.

**4.2.** Selon Fabienne Brugère, « on [ne] doit user du savoir [que] par l'entremise d'une éthique, celle du soupçon ou de la critique »<sup>46</sup>. Il ne reste donc plus à Socrate que d'amener son interlocuteur à entrer, de gré ou de force, dans le jeu de langage qui lui est proposé : *la dialectique* – succession méthodique de questions et de réponses, l'obligeant à expliciter les règles à la base de son raisonnement et ce faisant, lui donner la chance de guérir de son ignorance. Comme toute analyse du langage, la maïeutique socratique est douée de vertus thérapeutiques<sup>47</sup>. Interpeller l'interlocuteur sur les évidences non problématisées qui l'habitent, c'est opposer résistance à la sédimentation d'un savoir constitué de vérités toutes faites, de dogmes soustraites à l'examen de la pensée raisonnante.

**4.3.** C'est en ce point qu'intervient le pouvoir de décentrement du questionnement socratique, obligeant l'interlocuteur à se recentrer sur la connaissance de l'essence (le vrai savoir)<sup>48</sup>, mesure de nos croyances. Selon Socrate, il est moralement et

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<sup>44</sup> Sur l'opposition entre Socrate et les sophistes, v. Păunescu, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Le discours socratique promeut une éthique des opinions qui, en tant qu'elles procèdent d'un savoir, s'enchaînent dans un raisonnement logiquement valide. Le caractère mouvant de l'opinion est semblable aux statues de Dédale qui, « si on ne les attache pas, s'échappent et prennent la fuite, tandis que, si elles sont attachées, elles demeurent en place. [...] En effet les opinions vraies, tant qu'elles demeurent, sont de belles choses et produisent toutes sortes de biens ; mais elles ne consentent pas à rester longtemps ; elles s'enfuient de notre âme, de sorte qu'elles ont peu de valeur, tant qu'on ne les a pas enchaînées par la connaissance raisonnée de leur cause. [...] Les a-t-on enchaînées, elles deviennent d'abord sciences, puis stables ; et voilà pourquoi la science est plus précieuse que l'opinion droite, et elle en diffère par le lien qui la fixe. » (*Ménon*, 97d)

<sup>46</sup> Brugère, 2011 : 80.

<sup>47</sup> SOCRATE : ... N'hésite pas à répondre, Polos : il ne t'en arrivera aucun mal. Livre-toi bravement à la discussion comme à un médecin et réponds par oui ou par non à ma question (*Gorgias*, 475d).

<sup>48</sup> Dans les dialogues aporétiques, à la fin du dialogue, les personnages restent décentrés, sans qu'aucun recentrement ne vienne apaiser l'inconfort d'un esprit désormais privé de repère.



épistémiquement correct d'avancer uniquement des croyances argumentables, en ce qu'elles reposent sur le savoir, qui est la connaissance de ce qui est vrai (l'Idée, l'essence, l'être en soi). L'opinion, en tant que décentrement par rapport à l'essence, n'est au contraire qu'illusion, éparpillement, errance.

Les questions sont donc requises pour échapper au caractère erratique de l'opinion. Comment ? En poursuivant le questionnement jusqu'au moment où une croyance, attachée à d'autres croyances – assumées par un seul et même locuteur –, forment un ensemble consistant, autrement dit, un savoir. Loin d'être de simples articulations structurales du dialogue, les questions possèdent une fonction épistémique non négligeable: elles opèrent comme un instrument de validation du bien fondé des croyances du locuteur<sup>49</sup>.

**4.4.** On peut reprocher aux sophistes leur mauvaise foi, tout comme on peut reprocher à Socrate de *vouloir* les attirer sur un terrain (l'entretien dialectique) où ces derniers n'ont pas envie de se laisser entraîner.

À ce propos, la constance avec laquelle Socrate insiste sur ses bonnes intentions, à savoir celles de saisir correctement la pensée de l'interlocuteur<sup>50</sup>, amène ce dernier à quitter l'état de vigilance intellectuelle nécessaire dans une confrontation de type agonal. Comme l'affirme Andrei Cornea, en acceptant de répondre aux questions de Socrate, l'interlocuteur accepte à son insu tout un contexte interrogatif qu'il ne maîtrise pas, « et qu'à la limite il pourrait assumer, partiellement ou totalement, à condition de le connaître. Le répondant doit subir les conséquences de

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<sup>49</sup> Cet instrument n'est nul autre que le fameux *elenchus* socratique, dont l'effet le plus immédiat est celui d'amener l'interlocuteur à se contredire lui-même. La confusion de l'interlocuteur qui « ne sait pas » ou « ne sais plus » représente une étape essentielle du passage de l'opinion à la croyance.

ALCIBIADE : Mais par les dieux, Socrate, je ne sais plus ce que je dis, mais il me semble avoir un comportement absolument étrange. Car quand tu m'interroges, tantôt je crois dire une chose, tantôt une autre. – SOCRATE : Et ce trouble, mon cher, ignores-tu ce qu'il est ? – ALCIBIADE : Absolument. – SOCRATE : Penses-tu que si quelqu'un te demandait si tu as deux ou trois yeux, deux ou quatre mains ou quelque autre chose de ce genre, tu répondrais tantôt une chose, tantôt une autre ou toujours la même chose ? – ALCIBIADE : Je finis par craindre de me tromper aussi à mon sujet, mais je crois que je répondrais la même chose. – SOCRATE : N'est-ce pas parce que tu le sais ? N'en est-ce pas la raison ? – ALCIBIADE : Oui, je le crois. – SOCRATE : Alors, ces choses à propos desquelles tu fais, malgré toi, des réponses contradictoires, il est évident que tu ne les connais pas (*Alcibiade*, 116e-117a).

<sup>50</sup> SOCRATE – Je me demande si je comprends bien ce que tu entends par ce mot de *rhétorique*. Je le verrai plus clairement tout à l'heure. Réponds-moi : il existe des arts, n'est-ce pas ? (450b) SOCRATE – Que veux-tu donc dire par là ? (452c) SOCRATE – Je soupçonnais bien moi-même, Gorgias, que c'était cette persuasion et ces objets que tu avais en vue. Mais pour que tu ne sois pas surpris si dans un instant je te pose encore une question semblable sur un point qui paraît clair et sur lequel je veux néanmoins t'interroger... (454b)

ce monde assumé de la même façon que le destinataire d'un colis qui, au moment d'en signer le récépissé, est obligé d'en accepter intégralement le contenu, alors même qu'il ne le connaît pas »<sup>51</sup>.

En effet, la question, en tant même qu'elle scande la progression du dialogue, obligeant l'interlocuteur à n'avancer qu'à petits pas, en « connaissance de cause », occulte justement le point d'arrivée, l'horizon qu'elle prétend ouvrir. Arrivé au terme du parcours argumentatif auquel il a été convié par Socrate, l'interlocuteur se voit contraint d'adopter un point de vue (en l'occurrence, celui de Socrate), auquel il n'adhère pas. Serait-ce la contradiction entre l'économie du parcours argumentatif, apparemment contrôlé par l'interlocuteur (auquel Socrate demande de façon systématique son accord) et le terme de ce parcours, où l'interlocuteur est confronté au moment inconfortable de la contradiction avec soi-même<sup>52</sup>, le résultat d'une manipulation ?

**4.5.** Enfin, en acceptant de répondre à ces questions, l'interlocuteur assume un texte (ensemble consistant de propositions) dont le véritable auteur n'est pas lui, mais Socrate. L'herméneutique dialogique cache dans ce cas une forme insidieuse de monologisme<sup>53</sup>, faisant du *Gorgias* un discours de l'autorité épistémique se subordonnant, dans des buts stratégiques, le raisonnement dialectique.

## 5. Pour conclure

ALCIBIADE : ... c'est une chose que j'ai omis de dire en commençant, que ses discours ressemblent exactement à des silènes qui s'ouvrent. (221e) Si en effet l'on se met à écouter les discours de Socrate, on est tenté d'abord de les trouver grotesques : tels sont les mots et les tournures dont il enveloppe sa pensée qu'on dirait la peau d'un injurieux satyre. [...] (222a) mais qu'on ouvre ces discours et qu'on pénètre à l'intérieur, on trouvera d'abord qu'ils renferment un sens que n'ont point tous les autres, ensuite qu'ils sont les plus divins et les plus riches en images de vertu, qu'ils ont la plus grande portée ou plutôt qu'ils embrassent tout ce qu'il convient d'avoir devant les yeux pour devenir honnête homme. (*Le Banquet*, 221e-222a)

<sup>51</sup> Cornea, 2005 : 22 (notre traduction).

<sup>52</sup> Dans la conception de Socrate, un discours cohérent est la garantie d'un univers de croyance consistant. À son tour, la consistance de nos croyances est une garantie de l'action conséquente.

<sup>53</sup> Quatre anomalies peuvent bloquer l'installation d'un dialogue authentique : (i) la mauvaise foi ; (ii) l'absence d'un problème, d'un point de départ véritable ; l'interrogation du sophiste n'est qu'un prétexte à l'étalement d'un savoir déjà constitué. Le sophiste cherche sans désir, d'où la possibilité d'opposer l'*inauthenticité* de la sophistique à l'*authenticité* du questionnement socratique (« je veux savoir ») ; (iii) le savoir absolu vs (iv) le non savoir absolu : le dernier ne permet pas la formulation de la question, alors que le premier lui enlève son sens. Vivant dans l'inflation des « réponses », le sophiste est un être par excellence *non dialogable*.

**5.1.** Socrate, le philosophe athénien qui fait cohabiter les contraires, est comparé par Alcibiade aux statues creuses représentant des silènes. Loin d'être insultante, la comparaison est un subtil éloge. De véritables sapates, ces statues, laides à l'extérieur, sont destinées à renfermer des objets précieux, comme des statues de dieux ou des médicaments.

Le message d'Alcibiade est clair : semblable aux silènes par son apparence physique, Socrate possède une grande richesse intérieure. Il ne faut donc pas se fier aux apparences de la chair, d'autant moins à celles du *logos*. Au lieu de nous limiter à saisir le paradoxe apparent, il faut ouvrir le discours à l'interprétation, afin de saisir le (vrai) sens de ce qui est dit, et ce faisant, d'accepter de vivre notre relation au vrai comme une thérapie censée guérir les infirmités de nos âmes.

Dans l'opinion de Socrate, il est impossible de traiter l'âme comme on traite le corps. L'âme requiert des mots, et malgré les apparences, ce n'est pas au sophiste, mais au philosophe qu'il revient la responsabilité d'élaborer une « théraputique de la parole »<sup>54</sup>. En effet, la rhétorique exerce une conviction qui permet de croire sans savoir (ce qui est le propre de la persuasion), et non la conviction propre à la connaissance<sup>55</sup>. Le discours philosophique, d'autre part, naît du désir authentique de connaître la vérité en faisant appel aux normes de la raison<sup>56</sup>. Or de ce point de vue, Socrate et ses interlocuteurs ne se situent jamais *au même endroit*.

**5.2.** L'*hétérotopie* du philosophe est doublée, comme nous l'avons suggéré, d'une *atopie*, ces deux situations étant argumentables aussi bien en termes de localisation spatiale (le sophiste et le philosophe ne partagent pas les mêmes lieux), mais aussi et surtout en termes discursifs<sup>57</sup>. L'ethos du philosophe (l'image que ce dernier donne de lui-même à travers sa façon de parler) s'oppose à celui du sophiste. Si l'objet de la rhétorique est la parole (les beaux discours), celui de la philosophie est la pensée. Plus précisément, l'objet de la philosophie, telle qu'elle est pratiquée par Socrate, est la mise en forme d'une pensée logiquement consistante.

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<sup>54</sup> Grimaldi, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Platon (via Socrate) affirme la supériorité de la connaissance sur l'opinion, de la réalité sur l'apparence, du vrai sur le vraisemblable, de la dialectique sur la rhétorique.

<sup>56</sup> La persuasion (apanage de la rhétorique) est en philosophie une *vertu collatérale* du désir d'instruire, tandis qu'en rhétorique, l'apprentissage est une *vertu éventuelle* du désir de persuader.

<sup>57</sup> « Selon L. Robin, au sens propre, l'être atopique est "celui qui ne suit pas les sentiers battus et dont l'originalité ingénue (*atopia*) déconcerte" [...]. L'*atopia* est, pour lui, "le caractère qui fait que l'on ne sait où *loger* un pareil être dans les catégories humaines de l'expérience commune" [...]. Ceci étant, "*ἄτοπος*" signifie très directement "sans lieu", "privé de lieu", éventuellement "a-local" ou "insituable" [...]. » (Lacroix, *op. cit.*, p. 55).

**5.3.** Les affirmations du philosophe relèvent de l'*épistémè* (lieu du vrai), tandis que celles du sophiste se conforment à la *doxa* (l'opinion commune, le vraisemblable). Or, le vraisemblable – catégorie relative, relationnelle – réside dans l'association entre une régularité énoncée sous une forme générale (ce qui arrive la plupart du temps<sup>58</sup>), et une expérience (en l'occurrence, celle du locuteur) censée la vérifier. À l'opposé, la vérité poursuivie par Socrate n'est relative ni à l'individu, ni aux circonstances conjoncturelles de l'existence quotidienne, mais revêt le caractère idéal, absolu de ce qui est universellement vrai. Aux yeux de Socrate, la vérité est irréfutable<sup>59</sup>. Si l'opinion peut se modifier au gré des interlocuteurs et des circonstances, les croyances vraies demeurent, elles, invariables.

SOCRATE : Te rends-tu compte, excellent Calliclès, combien sont différents les reproches que tu me fais et ceux que j'ai à t'adresser ? Tu prétends, toi, que je dis toujours les mêmes choses et tu m'en fais un crime ; moi je te reproche, au contraire, de ne jamais dire les mêmes choses sur les mêmes sujets [...]. (491d)

Le caractère versatile de la *doxa*, fondée sur le savoir sur le monde, ne garantit ni la consistance, ni la stabilité de l'univers de croyance du locuteur, qui ne parvient pas à articuler dans un tout cohérent ce qu'il affirme.

**5.4.** À ce propos, l'apparente contradiction du discours socratique, que l'interlocuteur non avisé peut juger grotesque, « comme la peau d'un injurieux silène », s'avère porteuse d'un sens « que n'ont point tous les autres », étant parmi « les plus divins et les plus riches en images de vertu ». Socrate montre en effet que la connaissance (en l'occurrence, celle des concepts éthiques comme le *bien* et le *mal*, le *juste* et l'*injuste*) est la vertu suprême de l'individu agissant. La connaissance est le moteur d'une volonté mise au service de l'action morale. Au pôle opposé, une volonté faible (*akrasia*), entièrement subordonnée aux désirs du sujet, trahit une forme d'ignorance qui explique que celui qui agit soit inapte à saisir pleinement les conséquences de ses actes. Au relativisme épistémologique du sophiste, subordonné à une logique utilitariste, circonstancielle, s'oppose ainsi l'idéalisme épistémologique prôné par Socrate.

Pour Socrate, l'ensemble des vertus éthiques forme une unité essentielle, dans ce sens qu'on ne saurait en posséder une, sans du même coup les posséder toutes. L'homme moral est entièrement bon, et non pas bon sous un aspect ou un autre. L'intelligence des concepts éthiques ne pose donc pas uniquement un

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<sup>58</sup> Aristote, <http://docteurangelique.free.fr>

<sup>59</sup> SOCRATE : Ne dis pas [qu'il est] difficile [à la réfuter], Polos, mais impossible ; car on ne réfute jamais la vérité. (473b)

problème de nature sémantique (quel est le sens des mots *courage*, *bonheur*, *piété*, etc. ?), mais en égale mesure éthique. Même si le courage, le bonheur ou la piété sont des biens pour ceux qui les possèdent, vu qu'ils sont bons en soi, savoir ce qui est bon/bien ne se réduit pas à connaître le sens des mots *bon/bien*, mais à savoir ce que c'est que de *bien agir*.

Ne pouvant être définis en termes de propriétés (puisque dépourvus de dimension descriptive), le *bien* et le *mal* semblent se soustraire à toute délibération. Il n'y a pas un contenu prédéfini sur lequel les interlocuteurs puissent (ou non) s'accorder. La question « Qu'est-ce que le bien ? », en tant même qu'elle porte sur un concept éthique raréfié, demande donc à être reformulée : « Qu'est-ce que c'est que de bien vivre ?/Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'une vie bonne ? » Ce n'est qu'une fois insérée dans ce contexte que l'idée de *bien* reçoit la densité sémantique nécessaire à sa transformation en objet de délibération. Le but final de nos actions étant le bien, sa réalisation suppose la connaissance des concepts moraux : la justice, le courage, la piété, etc. Or, la justice est bonne, le courage est bon, la piété est bonne, etc. Le *bien*, concept éthique raréfié, s'associe le sémantisme des concepts éthiques denses, pour devenir l'objet privilégié de la réflexion morale dans les *Dialogues*.

**5.5.** Finalement, la différence entre le philosophe et le sophiste n'est pas tant relative à la construction de leur discours<sup>60</sup>, qu'à sa portée morale. La pédagogie socratique, aussi paradoxale qu'elle soit, garantit une situation optimale dans le plan de l'éthique, la seule viable pour être heureux et ne pas risquer de perdre son âme.

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<sup>60</sup> Socrate montre bien qu'il existe, en réalité, deux types d'activités : d'une part, celles qui sont des arts parce que leur pratique exige une régulation interne réalisée au moyen des normes et des règles ; d'autre part, les activités dépourvues de détermination interne, en tant que pratiques uniquement relatives au talent et aux aptitudes des sujets. La rhétorique s'inscrit dans cette seconde catégorie.

Néanmoins, dans leur qualité de déductions, rhétorique et dialectique sont exactement les mêmes : dans les deux cas il s'agit d'un même cheminement de la pensée à partir des prémisses vers la conclusion (possible, dans un cas, nécessaire, dans l'autre).

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## MYTHOLOGY AND NATURE IN SCHELLING'S PHILOSOPHY

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**ABSTRACT.** According to a scientist standpoint, mythology holds no value whatsoever. This is nothing but a mass of superstitions: a polymorphic arbitrariness of imagination. On the other hand, in a neo-structuralist reading, the symbolic thesaurus of mythology is pure esthetical arbitrary discourse. Both views are denied in Schelling's philosophy of mythology. His philosophy of nature is a highly speculative attempt to provide a unity that specialized scientific endeavours have long lost. However discarded may this be in the eyes of the scientific establishment it is still very acclaimed by contemporary environmental philosophy or by anti-positivistic contemporary approaches to science. But it is in Schelling's philosophy of mythology that we find a different use and understanding of *nature* which we believe is a very profound although eclipsed or forgotten approach. Schelling argues that mythology is not just an allegorical knowledge of nature. This is something as profoundly embedded in the *original unconscious origins of mankind's self-consciousness as the genesis of language or the genesis of peoples*. These are all original and immemorial constitutive acts in the unfolding of the universal consciousness of mankind. The countless variety of divine images is not to be seen as an infantile *anthropomorphic* description of nature. Quite the contrary: mythology is a *cosmo-morphic* description of the Absolute within the history of the transcendental consciousness. Naive understandings of nature were originally used as elementary building-blocks in the never ending effort of human consciousness to thematise and understand itself and the whole. Even prior to philosophy and science, mythology was the first act of self-consciousness, *Uranfang* that practically constituted humankind. Our purpose is to expose and develop the consequences of this utterly revolutionary reading of nature as a fundamental part of the mythological process.

**Keywords:** *Philosophy of Mythology, German Idealism, Nature, Consciousness, F.W.J. Schelling*

### 1. Mythology between hard science and postmodern relativism

The contingency that is imputed to mythological imagination is held to be totally external to science and if there's any mention of it at all is to reduce it to purely infantile pre-scientific endeavour, with no significant truth-value attached to it.

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On the other hand, in a *neo-structuralist* reading<sup>2</sup>, the symbolic thesaurus of mythology is pure aesthetical discourse and fictional artefact of the imagination. *Anything goes* - since narratives are infinitely interchangeable and there's no truth-value whatsoever. Mythology is one possible game-language or vocabulary, so that we could join or not the game. As such, with no intrinsic substantial meaning they are not likely to hold any ontological relevance.

Both views are denied in Schelling's philosophy of mythology. Mythology is deeply connected to nature, although not subordinated since it is already *spirit*, although not completely self-conscious. Mythology is *spirit mediated by nature*, since most of its symbols are extracted from nature itself. What their actual status is, needs however to be considered. Following the successive development of Schelling's reflection on mythology will provide us the key to put into evidence his evolving conception on the *relation of mythology and nature*. This paper is not, however, about Schelling's philosophy of nature – a complicated and separated issue, worthy of a distinct careful approach. Schelling's vision of nature is only taken into consideration insofar as this is relevant for mythology itself. Some remarks on the status of nature are therefore due before we explore our main subject-topic.

## 2. Short Preliminary Remark of Schelling's Philosophy of Nature

Schelling's philosophy of nature is a highly speculative attempt to provide a *unity* that specialized scientific endeavours have long lost. This concern with nature is controversial, but the study of his work is no easy task. There have arguably been invoked anticipative reflections on polarity, transcending the Newtonian framework, quantum mechanics so that however discarded may it be in the eyes of the contemporary scientific establishment it is still worthy of academic interest.

Some words about his conception of nature will help us better understand why mythology matters for Schelling at least as much as physics or chemistry.

As early as 1797, in his *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*, Schelling writes that "Naturphilosophie ist speculative Physik" (III, 274) – in opposition of course to empirical physics. This is to say that knowledge of nature should proceed from *a priori* construction of the field within which experience takes place. The mass of contingent experience needs to be ordered within the necessity of a system, since nature is itself a system (according to the principle of continuity). This should be not *abstractly* performed, in an external coercive superimposition of a theoretical

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<sup>2</sup> One of the defining features Manfred Frank assigns to neostructuralism is deconstruction and relativization of meaning and: „the confrontation with a hermeneutics based on the preeminence of *meaning*“, Frank, Manfred, *What is Neostructuralism?*, University of Minnesota Press, 1984, pg. 27.

order to brute sensations. *Ideality* must be seized within *reality* itself, as its own inner logic. And reality should not be purely “deduced” but simultaneously discovered through intuition and experience. Accidental experience itself does not suffice however unless it is understood within its necessary connections. Nature is therefore conceived *ideally* – or matter itself has an intelligible texture. The theoretical construction of physics means therefore not to extract reality from concept in a solipsist manner, but to make accidental experiences accord with theoretical necessity without abstract violence, by seizing the necessity of laws within accidental experience itself<sup>3</sup>.

In his *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800) nature should be carefully deduced from the transcendental Ego (following Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*), but the Ego should conversely be deduced from nature. Both ways – *realizing the ideal and idealising the real* should be simultaneously and symmetrically practiced as complementary approaches. Science itself idealizes crude matter absorbing it into representation every time it discovers a new *law* – a new *ideal law* governing apparently contingent material phenomena.

This is where Schelling’s interest with *equivocal* physical phenomena springs from. Electricity, magnetism or light are persistently analysed because they *immediately* reveal an ideal (not-so-material) dimension, that is: precisely because of their *equivocal materiality*. It is difficult to identify electricity with matter itself, even if it can only appear through matter. (It is no wonder, let us note, that Johann Wilhelm Ritter who discovered the ultraviolet radiation was a follower of Schelling).

“The completed theory of nature would be that whereby the whole nature was resolved into intelligence. The dead and unconscious products of nature are merely abortive attempts that she makes to reflect herself; inanimate nature so-called is actually as such an immature intelligence, so that in her phenomena the still unwitting character of intelligence is already piping through. Nature’s highest goal, to become wholly an object to herself, is achieved only through the last and highest order of reflection, which is none other than man; or more generally, it is what we call reason, whereby nature first completely returns into herself, and by which it becomes apparent that nature is identical from the first with what we recognize in ourselves as the intelligent and the conscious”.<sup>4</sup>

This *identity of being and thinking*, of ideal and real as *Indifference (Indifferenz)* of subject and object – presented as the philosophical result of transcendental philosophy – is not unknown to mythology. If nature is to be conceived philosophically

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<sup>3</sup> Franz Joseph Wetz, *Friedrich W.J. Schelling zur Einführung*, Junius, Hamburg, 1996, Nautrbetrachtung statt Naturverachtung, p. 33-69.

<sup>4</sup> F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 2001, p. 6.

in its ideal *essence*, mythology seems to have done that already, although in a non-scientific way, by means of representations. Schelling's conceptual revitalization of nature has been suspected of "*speculative animism*" or "*pantheism*" – captured in the idea that nature is nothing else than the *dormant spirit*, whereas the *spirit* is nothing else than the awakened nature.

A different important feature of nature's being is its *productive force*. The law of inertia is not accepted as the dominant law of matter. This rejection of mechanistic physics renders nature more close to spirit, bridging the Cartesian impermeable isolation of body and mind. Schelling evokes the notion of a *Weltseele* ("ein allgemeiner Geist der Natur", SW I, 387) that accounts for its intrinsic finality displayed as harmony of parts within the whole. Nature is obscurely alive, ever-moving and striving to actualize itself from the darkness of its lower levels towards a progressive illumination it only reaches in man, and within humankind – especially in artistic contemplation.

To anticipate, it seems that, according to the philosophy of nature, the universe itself is, somehow, intrinsically mythological.

"The immediate object of human knowledge [*Erkennens*] remains nature, or the sensible world; God is only the dark, vague goal that is strived for and that is first sought in nature. The popular explanation through the deification of nature would first find its place here, because at the least an inborn, dark lore of God would always have to take the lead."<sup>5</sup> (SW11:76).

We could conveniently argue that in overcoming the mechanistic Newtonian representation of nature, Schelling put into evidence intrinsic movement over inertia and organic inter-relation over mechanic causality, which renders us closer to a mythological view of nature within the very language and positive approach of science itself<sup>6</sup>.

"Through the presupposition of a religious instinct it might be conceptualized how man believes to find the God that he seeks initially in the ubiquitous elements or in the stars that exert on him the most powerful or salubrious influence; and how he

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<sup>5</sup> *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, F.W. J. Schelling, State University of New York Press, 2007, p. 56

<sup>6</sup> "More precisely, the externally and independently existing being cannot renounce, according to Schelling's determining of the idea of that-which-exists (*das Existierende*), two fundamental characteristics: firstly, to be a becoming and overall realized, evolutionary produced, and secondly to be corporeal, and therefore to have a spatially extended existence. (...) If we and all surrounding things would have not been the result of developing and becoming, we would lack any anchor and fixity in the context of a nature; we would be like "spots" deploying on the screen of our phenomenon without the roots that tie us with nature". This remark underlines the mobility and the time-factor that Schelling stresses as he strives to "enliven" the inertial mechanistic notion of nature. (Thomas Buchheim, *Die Idee des Existierenden und der Raum. Vernunft hintergründe einer Welt äußerer Dinge nach Schellings Darstellung des Naturprozesses 1843/44*, Kant-Studien, Band 106, 2015, p. 38).

gradually, to bring God nearer to himself, visualizes him as descending to the earth, visualizes him even in inorganic forms, and fancies himself to be able to represent God, first in organic beings, for a time even among animal forms, and finally in purely human form. Thus, here would belong the interpretations that consider the mythological deities as deified natural beings; or in particular only one of these beings, the sun, which in its various positions in the course of a year would each time become a different deity—for example in the explanations of Volney, Dupuis, amongst others.”<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Schelling's Original Support for the Naturalistic Interpretation of Mythology

Perhaps the most common explanation of myths is the so called *naturalistic* one. Myths are not what they present themselves to be. They should of course not be literally credited with direct truth-value. However, they do have a justification. Given their primitive origin, it is to be supposed that primitive mankind *diverted* the confrontation with exceptionally mysterious natural phenomena through an allegorical interpretation. Metaphysical transcendent fiction would thus be nothing more than a conventional immanent discourse about physical reality. The naturalist approach of myths renders them a physical function while denying them their substantial metaphysical claim. This is to say mythmakers attest to the pre-scientific mentality, and this should be regarded as *infantile* scientific endeavour. The naturalist approach is also a *reductionistic* approach, reducing myths to mere (imperfect) descriptions of nature.

In one of Schelling's first explorations of the nature of myths *Ueber Mythen, historische Sagen und Philosopheme der aeltesten Welt* (1793), he tends to subscribe to this Enlightenment approach that most myths are primeval attempts of wise men or geniuses in seeking to explain natural phenomena to render accessible difficult ideas by means of a pictorial language.

During his aesthetical studies Schelling begins to depart from naturalism. In his *Philosophie der Kunst*, he describes mythology as the *material of art*, a sort of intuitive plastic aesthetical philosophy. Mythological beings are nothing but *realized ideas*. But his renewed effort of understanding already leads Schelling to slowly renounce the naturalist approach. Allegory, the main procedure of naturalism, implies the use of pictorial analogies to depict abstract ideas. But mythological figures are more and more individualized as we go from Oriental to Greek mythology. Mythological figures are rather concrete ideas than abstract ideas (they are not just realized ideas, but also individualized ideas). They are not just figurative speech about abstract ideas. They are individualized realizations of ideas. And as such, they are absolutely real. Gods are *ideas* intuited as real (paragraphs 28, 29, 30)

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<sup>7</sup>ibid., p.56

“These same syntheses of the universal and particular that viewed in themselves are ideas, that is, images of the divine, are, if viewed on the plane of the real, the gods, for their essence, their essential nature = god. They are ideas only to the extent that they are god in a particular form. Every idea therefore, = god, but particular god. (...) The absolute reality of the gods follows directly from their absolute ideality, for they are absolute, and within the absolute, ideality and reality are one, absolute possibility = absolute actuality. The highest identity is at once the highest objectivity”<sup>8</sup>.

Ideas are not alien to nature itself. Rather they are the ontological texture of nature itself. Mythology does not describe nature. Both nature and mythology reveal the intelligible realm of ideas, and this is why they are congruous. But with this, the naturalistic approach is overcome.

#### 4. Schelling’s Late Rejection of the Naturalistic Interpretation of Mythology

Slowly but surely, Schelling comes to dismiss teachings of wisdom based on *allegory* from the realm of mythology. Mythology expresses itself in symbols. The difference, although thin, is actually fundamental.

<b>Allegory</b>	$U \leftarrow P$	The universal is intuited through the particular
<b>Symbol</b>	$U \leftrightarrow P$	The universal and the particular are implying each other and they interpenetrate each other as being one

The metaphysical claim of mythology is not intellectual, metaphorical or allegorical. It does not hold its characters to be *fictions* standing for elaborate *ideas*. It is ontological in nature. Natural forces are individualized and they are personified and really concretized. In the allegory of the naturalistic approach, the fictional form indicates an ideatic content. In mythology, *the content is identical to its form*, or, as he puts it employing a term from Coleridge „Mythology is not *allegorical*, it is *tautegorical*” (XII, 139).

The naturalistic approach is an *a posteriori* attempt of explanation. It holds, for example that Uranos and Gea are nothing but personifications of the Sky and the Earth<sup>9</sup>. In point of fact, as Schelling argues in his mature ontological *Spätphilosophie*,

<sup>8</sup> F.W.J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1989, p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> „The physicalist version is of particular interest for Schelling, because the relation of mythology and nature. Supporters of this view are classical philologues as Christian Gottlob Heyne and Gottfried Hermann. Heyne sees in mythology a ‘camouflaged allegorical history of nature’ The content of mythology comprises therefore philosophemes about the *Weltbildung* (...). Divine names signify therefore something different than they say. They are personifications of natural and historical contents. The same perspective is the basis of Hermann’s elucidation of myths (...) where the etymology of divine names is related to nature as far as he tries to establish predicates of nature forces in them”, Sandkühler, H.J. (ed.), *F.W.J. Schelling*, J.B. Metzler Verlag, Stuttgart, Weimar, 1998, p. 159.

following an *a priori* approach, Schelling implies that things are precisely the other way around. Primitive people have not invented some fictional characters to talk about the sky and the earth. It is the primary metaphysical unconscious need and certainty of an immanent (accessible) world and a transcendent (inaccessible) world that prompted men to indicate them in analogy with nature. Uranos and Gea are symbolized by the sky and the earth, not the other way around. *The physical is an a posteriori image of an a priori metaphysical, not the other way around.* The ontological difference is rendered visible in the gap between the „transcendent“ sky and the „immanent“ earth. People didn't invent Chronos to symbolize the physical time, but time symbolizes Chronos. People did not invent a *God* to describe the order of *nature* – it is the order of nature which renders God visible.

### 5. Mythology as Natural History of Consciousness

Mythology, language and the emergence of consciousness are *equally original*, and they contain both intentional and unintentional constituents. Their origin is not just subjective, but substantial as well. A philosophy of mythology is therefore equally justified as the philosophy of nature because the *ontological source* of nature and mythology is identical. Both reflect an original unconscious unity that was lost through differentiation. The construction of nature in speculative physics is nothing else than contemplating this unity in the manifold expression of nature. The philosophy of mythology has identified an original monotheism that was broken by virtue necessity into polytheism. The emergence of polytheism is a necessary process. It is not the mere creation of a fictionalizing subject. On the contrary, this is something that overcomes the subject and actually happens to him.

“It is a production and a process independent from thinking and will (...) that has an unavoidable reality for the subjected subject”<sup>10</sup>.

The strong ontological assertion of Schelling, parallel with the pantheistic turn of his philosophy of nature is that mythical creations are just like natural productivity a *theogonical process*. But the mythological process is a theogonical process realized within consciousness, the doctrine as experience of the real divine realization.

“The creative potencies of nature are simultaneously the potencies that create the consciousness and that become active and real in it, as mythological processes”<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> „Die Mythologie als im Bewusstseyn sich ereignende, aber nicht von ihm hervorgebrachte Tatsache ist hinsichtlich der Notwendigkeit ihres Auftretens das Erscheinen der Natur im Bewusstsein, genauer: das Erscheinen der Produktivität der Natur auf der Stufe und im Medium des Bewusstseins“, (SW, 11:194).

<sup>11</sup> Sandkühler, H.J. (ed.), *F.W.J. Schelling*, op. cit., p.163.

Mythology contains nature but it is the first disruption within nature as well. The promethean myth for example signifies the breaking with the closed circle of nature, with the assertion of consciousness against and out of the calm and warm original unity with the gods. Mythology is the first attestation of this original unity with nature as well as the nostalgic evocation of its loss.

“The philosophy of mythology reconstructs the history of consciousness on the level of nature, the philosophy of Revelation reconstructs the history of consciousness on the level of freedom”<sup>12</sup>.

## 6. The Mythological Process: Nature is Supernatural

Researching myths is for Schelling not archaeology of infantile preconceptions of primitive mankind, but a necessity for philosophy itself. Since mythology is not a recent artefact of subjectivity, but comes from a *distant past* (transcendentally, not only chronologically prior) – belonging therefore to the first (*archaic*) constitution of the universal consciousness. Otherwise put - the mythological process is the first process of self-consciousness within the natural sphere that precedes the constitution of the purely theoretical consciousness.

The prospection into the *immemorial*, into the night of time, is required so that the universal consciousness could find itself, by means of an epochal reduction, in the point of the original constitution of meaning. Mythology is profoundly embedded in the original unconscious origins of mankind’s self-consciousness – just like the genesis of *language* or the genesis of *peoples*. These are all original and immemorial constitutive acts in the unfolding of the universal consciousness of mankind. The countless variety of divine images is not to be seen as an *infantile/anthropomorphic* symbolization of nature. Quite the contrary: nature should be seen as symbolization of the divine. The infinite is not a symbol of the finite – the finite is a symbol of the infinite. Mythology is not pure imagination; it is not description of nature or society, or projection of psychological conflicts. Mythology is a *cosmic description* of the *super-cosmic realm*. Mythology is the first act of self-consciousness, *Uranfang*, that practically constituted mankind, as finite subjectivity confronting the limit of the *Indeterminate*. The entire effort within German idealism was to thematise the Indeterminate without betraying deductive rigour and the form of the scientific spirit. The philosophy of mythology is the self-explanation of the mythological process, the awareness of how the *unconditioned Cause* outside the phenomenal world expresses itself within nature and through the finite subjectivity.

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<sup>12</sup> Sandkühler, H.J. (ed.), *F.W.J. Schelling*, op.cit., p.166.

Where do myths come from: from outside or from inside? Both: they are objective and subjective, conscious and unconscious. Myths are a relation between a comprehensive subjectivity and an objective comprehended. Gods and mythological figures, as *concretely subjectivised natural objects* attest to the superior unity of subject and object that Schelling determined as *Indifferenz*, negative unity of subjective and objective. Mythology is not subjective discourse about the objective phenomenal world. It is not an objectified description of the subjectivity. It is thematisation of what provides unity to both, as indifference of both, as transcendent actuality that erupts and is present in both finite sides of the world – man and nature.

Myths transpose us in the condition of this *Indifference* whose eruption into subjective awareness and objective immanence is conceived as *Immemorial* through a radical reduction that brings us back to the first awareness and constitution of self-consciousness. Philosophy is comparatively, a *derived* mode of self-consciousness. This is attested by the extraordinary violence and authority with which myths appear at all peoples.

The mythological process is not dependent upon intellect and will, it has a powerful unconscious dimension, as awakening of a power inside the consciousness. The unfolding of the mythological process uses natural images to depict the supernatural, which impregnates the natural history of the universal consciousness.

The mythological process is „die Geschichte der menschlichen Götterbildung“ – the *growing* of God in human consciousness. Externally, these images always retain something contingent – but internally, inside the noumenal core of each phenomenal surface, there's necessity at work, revealing a content that is indissociable from its form.

Nature is therefore *sublated (aufgehoben)* in mythology, thus becoming a more perfected, refined and pure revelation of the supernatural.

### **Acknowledgement**

This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/159/1.5/S/136077.

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## CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AT THE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES IN WESTERN ROMANIA

IRINA VASTAG (VLĂDUȚESCU)<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** No organization can be led efficiently if it is unaware of true values. Starting from this aspect, this study aims to analyse the organizational culture of professional emergency services in the Western part of Romania, a complex, social, formal, well organized and coordinated structure. Various ways of reform have been tried out; however only a few were concerned with starting change from the cultural elements, i.e. from knowledge, awareness and valuation of these elements. When collecting data, I used both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the conclusions of the research show that there are certain significant correlations between the dominant decision-making style and the cultural types, both existing and desired by the employees, according to the staff categories they belong to; and the profile of dominant rules reflects a special emphasis on the interpersonal values.

**Keywords:** *organizational culture, professional emergency services, O.C.A.I. Test, Decision Style Inventory, dominant values.*

**Motto:** “The dominance and coherence of culture have proven to be essential qualities of excellent companies.”  
(Peters, Waterman, 1982)

### Introduction

In our constantly changing society, the management of organizational culture must be an essential component of the transformation process of Romanian organizations. Because transformation, regardless if it occurs at the level of structure, at the level of ownership, if it concerns technology types or management strategies, it always requires cultural changes, since conservation and cultural maladjustment are opponents to the success of the process.

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Organizational culture is very important in sustaining the objectives of profitable growth of an organization. It forms and develops under the influence of certain dominant tendencies and some elements of change which act at the level of all components of the society. The steps oriented to the changing of some cultural elements within the professional emergency services must consider the whole range of social factors that have impact in this field of activity.

Although rather numerous, the definitions of organizational culture all tend to the idea that organizational culture designates the ensemble of values, beliefs, rituals, symbols, heroes and myths shared among the members of the organization. Organizational culture is analogous to the unwritten laws of a family, highlighting some inherent values and principles.

Remarkable contributions to this field have been brought by: A. Pettigrew, E. Schein, G. Hofstede, offering significant information, both theoretical and practical, regarding this concept.

When an organization is created, its culture will represent the foundation on which it will work, because it exerts a strong influence on some key elements, such as: decision making, management style and the evaluation of success.

“Three aspects of organizational culture are especially important in the analysis of the probable impact of culture on a given organization: direction, penetration and force.”<sup>2</sup>

Direction reveals how the cultural elements of the organization show a positive or negative correlation, to a certain degree, in the efforts of the organization of achieving its goals. Penetration refers to the degree of the expansion of cultural elements among the employees. Force indicates the level at which the members of the organization accept different cultural elements promoted by the institution in which they perform their professional activities.

The concept of organizational culture is fundamental for explaining some phenomena taking place within the organization, such as: creation of the hierarchy of values, interpersonal bonds, and the configuration of informational system, defining fundamental attitude toward changes in internal and external environment.

The present research sets off from the idea that organizational culture is the key of success within any organization bringing it closer to better functioning, favoring communication, adaptation, the confidence building and adopting common means in order to achieve the target objectives. Besides, any institution that presents a well outlined and effective organizational culture can be saved from the consequences of a derogatory economic or social environment.

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<sup>2</sup> Ionescu, Gh., Gh., 1996: 51.

Generally, a strong culture reflects an organization whose members agree on the importance of certain values they follow, while a shallow culture sheds light on an organization in which there are no common values or activity types.<sup>3</sup>

Referring to the organizational culture specific to Romanian public organizations, we can say that this is in a period of transformation (characterized by a resistance to bigger changes), process-oriented (employees prefer routine activities which don't require too much responsibility, so they prefer anonymity), limited (employees identify mostly with the organization and not with the professional field they belong to) and maybe even a semi-closed system (they manifest reluctance to newcomers).<sup>4</sup> From this point of view, most of the organizations from Romanian public activity require important changes when it comes to the system of values and management processes. So Romanian organizations require essential changes at the level of organizational culture, changes that especially highlight modern managerial principles.<sup>5</sup>

The proper knowledge and approach of organizational culture of professional emergency services in Western Romania (the Emergency Situations Inspectorate „Banat” of Timis County, “Semenic” of Caraş-Severin County, “Porolissum” of Sălaj County, “Someş” of Satu-Mare County) will offer managers the possibility to make capital out of the organization so as to assure its optimal change and development at an organizational level.

The conclusions of the undertaken research will be useful suggestions to improving the activities of the professional emergency services of Western Romania.

### **Organizational culture and decision-making style**

Decision is an important stage of management, because the managing process is based on devising, making and applying certain decisions. In terms of decision-making style, this is a “multidimensional characteristic”, which includes both the level of knowledge of the problem, the accuracy of the analysis of all details, the speed at which a person decides and the “confidence that the decider associates with the assumption that his or her decision is correct”, the time interval after which the post-decisional regret appears, its volume, force and significance, but also the “motivational constellation underlying the reasoning and which usually substantiates its decisions and even the fact that the values are concentrated or dispersed to certain levels, i.e. whether this style is well defined or unconscious.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Voicu, 2002: 60.

<sup>4</sup> Coroiu, 2011: 252-253.

<sup>5</sup> Coroiu, 2011: 257.

<sup>6</sup> Vasilescu, 1986: 289.

Considering the fact that choosing an action strategy and establishing its way of implementation as well as providing the corresponding resources influences the way work unfolds, we can state that decision-making styles are tightly bonded with the aspects of organizational culture.

Organizational culture guides the members of an institution in the process of decision-making, in times when there is no clear guidance.

Organizational culture has a strong impact on the decision making process, acting in a discreet and insidious way, both on the surrounding decision-making environment, in its endogenous component, and on the deciders<sup>7</sup>.

The decision-making process means passing through some stages, one after another: the identification and definition of the problem, defining the criteria and decision objectives, setting the possible decision variants, choosing the best variant and the valuation of the result.<sup>8</sup>

A decision is made depending on a series of factors that form organizational reality. The identification of these factors is essential for the decision-making process. Even if respecting the stages of decision-making management, the probability of making an efficient decision is low without an analysis of these factors. If we refer to the professional emergency services, the internal factors that influence the decision-making process are: aspects related to the hired staff (leading and relational skills, the employees' involvement level, the degree of loyalty towards the organization, etc.), the component of the organizational level (organizational objectives and interests, specific services to citizens, etc.). External factors with an impact on the professional emergency services are: the particularities of interventions, socio-political aspects, technical equipment, the characteristics of citizens requesting support, etc.

When making any kind of decision, the decision-making style and the necessary level of group participation are also influenced by aspects such as: the degree of importance of the decision, the degree of involvement of the subjects, but mostly the available time.

### **The management of organizational culture**

Management is regarded as a summing up of administrative duties, which involve negotiation skills, necessary in order to achieve the coordination of organizational activities.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Văduva, A. & Stancu, C.M., 2007: 2.

<sup>8</sup> Hâncu, 2002: 24.

<sup>9</sup> Coroiu, 2011: 233.

The management of organizational culture refers to the extent to which the organization is actively and deliberately involved in the development of organizational culture.<sup>10</sup>

The management of organizational culture must be a permanent process and it has to represent one of the main interests of the person in a leading position. The most powerful influence on the organizational culture belongs to the managers at a superior level followed by the managers at a medium level. As management is becoming professional, exercised in an increasingly constructive manner, the impact of managers on organizational culture is growing more and more pronounced.<sup>11</sup>

Currently, the management of organizational culture is especially concerned with managing cultural changes that are distinguished by the following characteristics: they are difficult to control, and progress is difficult to measure; the change of leadership is fundamental, changes are predominantly value-oriented, toward the quality of professional life, with particular interest in analyzing and transforming main dysfunctional beliefs.<sup>12</sup>

“Changing culture means working on three components: the physical, the psychological and the philosophical one”.<sup>13</sup> Change on a physical level imply modifications of the structures, of decorative elements, configuration of the offices, furniture, artifacts or perceptible symbols of the organization (heraldic signs, flag, mascot, motto, etc.). Changes in organizational culture at a psychological level refer to the modeling of the organization members’ behavior, either by signs of recognition or by delegation of decision-making. The philosophical component targets values to which the employees relate when they analyze, justify their own professional activity and behavior. Only the changes that reach this last level are real lasting changes.

### **Short presentation of professional emergency services<sup>14</sup>**

After the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2004, according to H.G.R. (Government of Romania Decision) no. 1490/2004 and H.G.R. no. 1492/2004 Romanian professional emergency services act as decentralized public services subordinated to the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (as a result of combining the county Fire Departments and the county Inspectorate of Civil Protection).

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<sup>10</sup> Van der Post W. Z., T.J. de Coning, et al., 1997: 146-169.

<sup>11</sup> Nicolescu, Ov. & Verboncu, I., 2001: 281.

<sup>12</sup> Gherguț, A., 2007: 164.

<sup>13</sup> Antonesei, L. si alții, 2000: 29.

<sup>14</sup> Vastag, 2014: 8.

Their main purpose is to solve operational problems including defending life, goods and protecting the environment, monitoring the risk types in their area of responsibility, analyzing and evaluating the operational situation, organizing interventions, specific medical activities in case of disasters, emergency healthcare and extrication, as well as psychological assistance, by:

- Prompt interventions, of maximum efficiency, within the response time established at European level;
- Rational allocation of the forces and means, on the same principle of response time;
- Maintaining the predictable risks at acceptable levels;
- Limitation of the loss of lives, material damages and negative effects on the environment;
- Protecting the citizens.

To this purpose, the professional emergency services are equipped with: water and foam carrying fire fighter trucks, mechanical ladder of 30 meters, and special vehicles for extrication with other different machines and equipments for cutting and clearance, fully equipped ambulances for any emergency response, resuscitation, trucks for transport and electric pumps etc., served by professional military.

## **PRACTICAL PART (Research methodology)**

**Goal of the research:** Identifying the cultural profile of professional emergency services in Western Romania, in terms of reform and modernization, the cultural factor being approached as an essential element for the operation of these institutions.

**General objective:** emphasizing the organizational culture of these services, in order to identify possible changes that can and must be accomplished, at a managing level.

### **Research hypotheses:**

H 1: There are significant correlations between the prevailing decision-making style at the level of professional emergency services of Western Romania and the cultural types, both existing and desired by the employees;

H 2: The specific position of the employees of professional emergency services in Western Romania (leading position or executive position) and their professional status (officers and noncoms) generate specific identity profiles in the register of global organizational culture orientation (existing and desired), in the inventory of basic cultural elements (dominant characteristics of the organization, leadership,

human resource management, the strategy of the organization, the values of the organization, the criteria of success – according to the O.C.A.I. model proposed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn), as well as different decision – making styles;

H 3: The profile of dominant rules reflects a special emphasis on the interpersonal values, due to the specific activities.

**Participants:**

The employees of the Emergency Situations Inspectorate „Banat” of Timis County, “Semenic” of Caraş-Severin County, “Porolissum” of Sălaj County, “Someş” of Satu-Mare County have been the subjects participating in this study (1450 subjects), officers, non-commissioned officers and contractual staff, with an average age of 39,5 years, both sexes (being a military institution, it is predominantly male, with a 95,7% of males), marital status: most of them married (76%), with secondary education (36% are university graduates) and the average seniority within the professional emergency services is 8,5 years.

**Description of the investigation tools:**

Taking into consideration that, by its nature, any organizational culture presents several aspects, some easier to study by qualitative methods while others by quantitative methods, for a genuine knowledge of the subject of research I used both methods.

a) Qualitative tools: semi-structured interviews, focus group, open, participatory, systematic observation, analysis of internal documents: work procedures, internal and external reports, mass-media articles referring to the institution, case study.

b) Quantitative tools:

**O.C.A.I Test Questionnaire** made up of 48 questions, divided into two groups: the first one identifies the existing culture in the organization, while the other one measures the type of culture preferred by the employees. It refers to 6 dimensions targeting the specific elements of organizational culture (dominant characteristics of the organization, leadership, management of human resources, the binder of the organization, the underlying values of the organization, criteria of success) of all institutions. For each of the 6 dimensions there are 4 variants of answers. For each of the 4 statements (of every dimension) the subjects have to assign a total of 100 points, depending on how appropriate they consider it for the organization in which they work (or wish to work – in the dimensions in the second part of the questionnaire). The evaluation is accomplished in a simple manner: the answers for the first statements of every dimension are added (all the A answers), and then this sum is divided by 6. All the other answers B, C and D are processed in the same way. In the second part of the questionnaire (where the desired culture is



diagnosed) the procedure is the same. Finally, there will be 8 scores, 4 resulting from the first part of the questionnaire and 4 from the second part. Each score is tied to a certain type of culture (Table no. 1) thus helping us to obtain the profile of the organizational culture.

**Table no. 1** – Types of organizational cultures

<p><b>The Support (Collaborate) Culture</b> "Oriented cultures are family-like, with a focus on mentoring, nurturing, and <i>doing things together</i>."</p>	<p><b>The Adhocracy (Create) Culture</b> "Oriented cultures are dynamic and entrepreneurial, with a focus on risk-taking, innovation, and <i>doing things first</i>."</p>
<p><b>The Hierarchy (Control) Culture</b> "Oriented cultures are structured and controlled, with a focus on efficiency, stability and <i>doing things right</i>."</p>	<p><b>The Market (Compete) Culture</b> "Oriented cultures are result-oriented, with a focus on competition, achievement, and <i>getting the job done</i>."</p>

Source: *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. San-Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E.. 2011

**Decision Style Inventory (DSI)** – was made up by Mason, Rowe and Dickel<sup>15</sup> and it consists of 20 items/situations (each with 4 response options) describing four main ways in which people generally make decisions (directive, analytical, conceptual and behavioral), differentiated by two dimensions considered simultaneously: smaller or larger cognitive complexity and orientation toward rational or intuitive. To each of the four answer variants corresponding to the questionnaire items, the subjects have to assign a number of 8, 4, 2 or 1 points, depending on how appropriate the answers are for them. After adding up the assigned points, the obtained scores are in a relation with a certain type of decision-making style, and thus we find the dominant style.

**Table no. 2** – Basic styles of approaching decision-making problems in organizations.

Decision style	Characteristics
Directive	Reduced cognitive complexity and orientation toward the rational. Deciders with this decision style are efficient and logical, especially focusing on "here and now". They have the necessary willpower and energy to accomplish difficult tasks and are oriented toward power and control, sometimes exploiting others for their own interest.
Analytical	Increased cognitive complexity and orientation toward the rational. Analytical deciders usually make a deep analysis of the situations they are facing so as to find the best solution. They are people who like to solve problems, to search for clear and real facts and to study them thoroughly.

<sup>15</sup> Rowe, Mason & Dikel, 1982: 217.

Conceptual	Increased cognitive complexity and orientation toward the intuitive. Conceptual deciders are creative and able to see more options to solve a problem and to foresee the consequences better.
Behavioral	Reduced cognitive complexity and orientation toward the intuitive. Deciders with this decision style help the people they work with, they are open to their suggestions, they use persuasion and embrace a more relaxed control style.

Source: *Managing With Style: A Guide to Understanding and Improving Decision Making*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Rowe, A. & Mason, R. 1987, pp 45-50

**Questionnaire regarding dominant rules and values in an organization** – The questionnaire has been elaborated starting from the Kuczarski Model of changing the organizational values and it is used with success in the process of changing organizational values, but also in the ensemble remodeling of organizational culture. The questionnaire contains 50 items grouped around 10 normative-value dimensions (the pride to belong to the organization, concern for excellence, team spirit, trusting hierarchy, concern for good management, concern for colleagues, concern for citizens, innovation, interest in formation, atmosphere of confidence within the organization). For all the items the respondents have to express their degree of agreement by choosing one of the variants: A (fully agree), B (mostly agree), C (mostly disagree), D (fully disagree). The corresponding scores for every choice are added up for every normative-value dimension and the total is multiplied by 10, thus each obtaining ten percentages. These results are transferred to the interpretation grid of the dominant rules and values within an organization.

**Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the obtained results:**

H 1: Correlations between decision style and organizational culture.

From a statistical point of view I could notice the following significant correlations between the existing organizational culture and decision style:

-The hierarchy type of organizational culture (control) correlated positively with the directive decision – making style ( $r = 0.46$  at  $p < .05$ ) and the behavioral decision-making style ( $r = 0.23$  at  $p < .05$ ).

The first correlation obtained, the one between the hierarchy type of organizational culture (control) and directive decision – making style supports the theory of Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn which claims that in organizations characterized by a formal attitude with multiple levels of hierarchy there is a pronounced sense of organization, with a special emphasis on respecting deadlines, the deciders being oriented toward power and control, elaborating detailed plans for the implementation of their decisions.

Although the two decisional styles, directive and behavioral, may appear antagonistic, it seems that in the present research the existing culture type at the level of professional emergency services in Western Romania (supportive type of organizational culture) correlated positively with both. The positive correlation with behavioral decisional style is, for sure, a result of the specific activities carried out by the professionals in emergency situations which, under the pressure of time, cannot always afford a minute analysis in order to take a decision, because the interventions they participate in carry on in a fast pace, the life of people, animals and the safety of goods and environment depend on the response time and efficient, quick decisions taken at the scene.

Thus, considering the nature of tasks and missions in which the staff of professional emergency services participate (services mostly marked by complexity and uncertainty), a balance between decision-making styles is recommended, both at individual level and at the level of the group of deciders, i.e. a harmonious blend of the rational and the intuitive approach, of concern for the tasks and caring for the people.<sup>16</sup>

Between the desired organizational culture type and decision-making style, only one significant, positive correlation came out:

-Between the supportive type of organizational culture (collaborative type) and the analytic decisional style ( $r = 0.65$  at  $p < .05$ ).

As a consequence, H 1 is partially confirmed.

The revealed positive correlations between the desired supportive organizational culture (collaborative type) at the level of professional emergency services in Western Romania and analytic decision-making style support the O.C.A.I. model, because cultures which promote open discussions and active involvement of the staff in task solving increase commitment in the decision making process, weighing out and looking for alternatives and solutions in order to make the best decisions.

H 2: The comparison between the categories of staff, according to the specific of their position (leading or executive position) and to their professional status (officers and noncoms) regarding the existing and desired organizational culture, basic cultural-organizational elements and decisional styles.

First of all we have to state that there were no significant differences noted from a statistical point of view between the considered staff categories (persons with leading positions – persons with executive positions; officers-noncoms), regarding the existing and desired organizational culture. The general profile of the existing organizational culture is mainly characterized by the hierarchical cultural type, whereas,

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<sup>16</sup> Iftimescu, 2005/2006: 182.

when speaking of preferences, all categories of staff emphasize the component of the supportive type of culture.

Nevertheless, a few differences were observed regarding certain basic cultural-organizational elements. Thus, the following statistically relevant differences were observed between staff in a leading position and staff in an executive position:

- the staff in an executive position perceives the existing binder inside organization in accordance with the specific of the supportive type of organizational culture, while for the staff being in a leading position the binder of the existing level of organizational culture rather corresponds with the hierarchy type of culture;

- The personnel being in an executive position has a more accentuated preference for a leadership in accordance with the ad-hoc type of culture, while the personnel being in leading position prefers a leadership characterized in terms of the hierarchy type of culture.

The only significant difference between the lot of officers and noncoms is that the noncoms consider that the binder which holds together the members of the organization targets the team spirit, loyalty, mutual trust (i.e. aspects associated with the supportive type of culture), as opposed to the officers who believe that the employees are bound together by strong rules and well outlined military procedures (aspects specific to the hierarchy type of culture).

In terms of decisional style, the results have not emphasized statistically relevant differences between the lot of officers and noncoms, and referring to the specific of their function, it was established that the staff being in a command position have a more accentuated preference for rational decision-making style ( $t = 3.41$  to  $p < 0.001$ ).

As a consequence, H 2 is partially confirmed.

As there was only one statistically relevant difference in terms predominant decision-making style between the categories of staff considered in the research, depending on the specific position they are involved (management or executive positions) and professional status (group of officers and group of NCOs), and only small differences were noted when it came to some specific dimensions of existing and desired organizational culture and no significant difference in the general profile of existing or desired organizational culture, we can say that the two categories of staff are a relatively homogeneous group (at least in terms of organizational culture and predominant decision-making style).

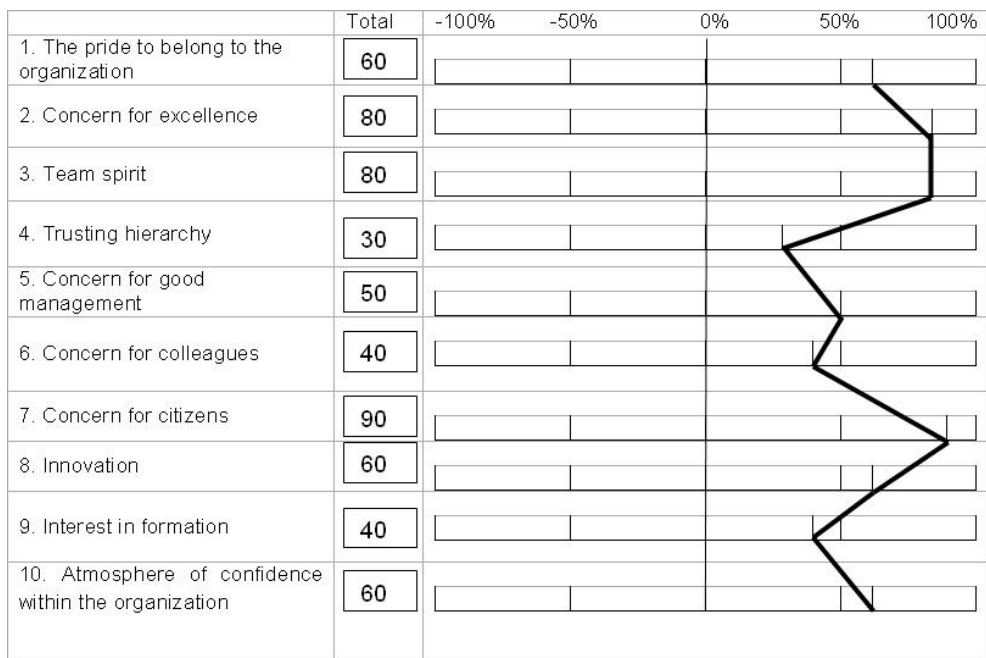
H 3: The profile of dominant rules and values within the professional emergency services in Western Romania.

Any organization sets its goals according to their own aspirations: what goals it aims to reach, this being manifested in the collective values of the organization.

Values and rules are fundamental components of organizational culture and of the underlying decision-making style. They are resources that encourage or discourage us in the actions we take.<sup>17</sup>

Values influence the understanding of what is good or bad in an organization, being closely related to the characteristic ideals of a human group. Values define the organization and determine its organizational behavior. The rules represent the views of the group on what is right and wrong. In formal terms, this can result in laws and, informally speaking, in social control.

From the questionnaire on the norms and values prevailing in an organization I could draw the following normative value profile of professional emergency services in Western Romania:



**Figure 1.** The normative value profile of professional emergency services in Western Romania

When grouping the 10 dimensions of normative values into three categories (personal, interpersonal and labor values), we can say that the normative value system is geared mainly towards interpersonal aspects (team spirit, concern for people seeking help) and then to the labor (e.g. innovation), minimizing personal normative values (e.g.

<sup>17</sup> Coroiu, 2011: 224-225.

interest to training). Therefore, we describe the investigated group as characterized by concern for others (colleagues, and people seeking help), the openness to change and less of a desire for self-accomplishment.

The big distance to power (persons in command positions are perceived as "omniscient", they have the main coordinating role in the overall activity of these services), a management style where decisions are often imposed without consulting and excessive control may be the motives why normative values like trust in hierarchy scored a lower result among employees.

Identifying this profile will be a very useful tool for staff in leadership positions in the professional emergency services, providing them with information and real support on the most appropriate practices to be adopted in order to motivate employees.

Staff in leadership positions must follow the declared values (resulting from the application of the questionnaires, preferably anonymous, or contained in speeches, projects), so that these should overlap the operational values (those found in the decisions, strategies and effective operating modes).

However, this profile will have an important role in the management of organizational culture as it reflects the desires and goals of employees, explaining their long-term concerns, and it allows identification of potential areas of conflict generated by different values in the intervention teams.

H 3 is confirmed.

### **Suggestions on managing organizational culture in the professional emergency services in Western Romania**

Given the types of organizational culture (current and desired) identified in the professional emergency services, the characteristic styles of decision making and the profile of dominant values and rules, the management of organizational culture should particularly aim at capitalizing competence of the whole staff (regardless of the professional category) of the organization and at structuring it so as to achieve a synergy effect.

Also, since decision making is a very important aspect in the work of managers, organizational success depending on their ability to make good decisions, involving all staff in the process, organizational culture management must consider the protection of staff against risks during the decision making process by finding various possibilities of action, always having various alternatives at hand.

All these issues are extremely important so that the staff in leadership positions can develop the feeling of stability, continuity and appropriate behavior among employees.

On the other hand, the management of organizational culture in the professional emergency services should focus on the principles and theories of modern management, as values and objectives are catalysts for economic and social reforms promoted in society.

Some of the measures that an effective management of organizational culture must consider are<sup>18</sup>:

I. Increased communication within the intervention teams and between different teams (teams fighting fire in buildings, forests, vegetation, search and rescue teams in enclosed spaces and waters, medical first aid teams and teams of transport of victims to hospital facilities, teams of extrication of victims of various accidents, CBRN teams – interventions in case of chemical accidents, bacteriological, radiological and nuclear or other natural disasters, or pyrotechnical teams – land reclamation and destruction of unexploded munitions etc.), because:

- better communication allows solving problems in a shorter time and, often, even prevents them;
- faster decisions and increased degree of responsibility assumption by employees;
- decreasing or even eliminating the differences between formal declarations of the staff in leadership positions on the one hand and the attitudes and behaviors displayed by them on the other hand.

II. Promotion and harmonization of individual initiatives with teamwork at all levels of hierarchy. Anonymity, still quite present in the Romanian public institutions, should disappear; employees expressing valid opinions and interpersonal interaction at work should be valued. Moreover, a culture that does not encourage employee involvement in the act of leading, where subordinates are not stimulated in their interaction, independence and participation in decision-making, will affect the smooth running of work in an organization.

III. Optimization of organizational climate (it is known that it is closely linked to organizational culture) and increased employee performance. This measure will be extremely useful especially as a motivation, as the motivational system is very poorly known in all public systems in our country, both in terms of recognition of merit and in terms of organizational climate.

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<sup>18</sup> Coroiu, 2011: 257-259.

**IV.** Organizing classes with predominantly practical use to prepare and train employees, but according to the new trends seen internationally – it is very important to retain and motivate staff.

**V.** Encourage the system of values and rules of behavior (for example: cooperation, competition, initiative) that the management wants to be immortalized in culture. A genuine reform depends considerably on making a change in the value system as it relates to human existence itself. Changes in the value system are essential to the success of modernization, but they cannot be made at once, only in time, because they are elements with a high level of resistance to change, involving fundamental changes in the consciousness of individuals.

Great care must be taken because the process of change can have negative effects, as the solutions found are not always consistent with the situational context.

### **Conclusions**

The information obtained by statistically processing the data collected shows a well-defined strong cultural identity of the professional emergency services in Western Romania. We deal with military organizations, with a well-structured, strictly controlled environment, characterized by a hierarchy type culture. The activity of these services is governed by an extensive system of rules and formal procedures, but there should be greater emphasis on the moral aspect, caring for the employees, paying more attention to their professional development. The staff in leading positions should try, according to different situations, to use facilitating, mentor-like behavior.

We also note that, generally, when employees of these emergency services have a task, a dilemma or a conflict, they search for information from different sources, consider all possible solutions, and then make decisions. They are being logical, focusing especially on the "here and now", adopting (due to the specific activities undertaken) an attitude of adaptation, willing both to take risks and to prevent / avoid them.

The results have important implications on the use of management tools, on how they should be individualized according to the specificity of each category.

The exact radiography of organizational culture and the correct identification of the decision making style will prove extremely useful for the staff in leadership positions, regardless of their level in the hierarchy, they will be able to act according to the values, beliefs, regulations of their subordinates, so as to meet their personal needs and expectations and to boost their motivation and job satisfaction.



Also, knowledge of organizational culture and its proper handling can be a powerful tool to influence employees, allowing staff with control functions to shape moods, attitudes and behaviors in the work of subordinates.

It is possible that the results obtained are differentiated by the type of subjects (male or female), the type of missions in which they participate (fire fighting, SMURD – Mobile Emergency Service for Resuscitation and Extrication, pyrotechnic, CBRN - Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear accidents, search and rescue in water and enclosed spaces) or by the nature of the job they occupy (post operative or inoperative positions), therefore an important issue to be addressed in future studies is to achieve cultural profiles according to these criteria, but also to include a greater number of service employees of the professional emergency in Romania, covering other regions of the country (if not a whole research aimed at the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations).

It is important to note that the results are relevant only for subjects participating in this study, at the time of the application of questionnaires, and comply with the specific professional activity, with the cultural particularities of the area, the level and type of training. Conduct of further research will have the purpose to emphasize that the results are similar to other samples with subjects belonging to professional emergency services in other areas of the country and even to other structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

This research could be of help to managers but also unit psychologists, employees of the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, so that they might get a better understanding of the dynamics of their institutions, as seen through the subjectivity of group members.

My undertaking might be a major premise for better communication inside the organization, as well as among organizations, and also for the optimization of the decision-making process. With the right knowledge of the cultural profile of the professional emergency services, managers can anticipate the degree of success of the strategies they devised for the development of the organization and can build adequate support policies and strategies, to fit the culture and the environment of a given organization.

The activity of unit psychologists in professional emergency services in the Western part of Romania should focus more on this invisible “force” beyond things we can easily grasp and notice (organizational culture), as this is the social energy determining people to take action.

Unit psychologists might consider staff training so that they understand their own reactions to change in the organizational culture and their reactions to other employees, in the process of change, thus enabling them to recognize that organizational development is strongly linked to their own adaptability skills.

## Acknowledgement

This work was cofinanced from the European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, project number POSDRU/187/1.5/S/155559, Competitive Multidisciplinary Doctoral Research in Europe.

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## BUILDING DEMOCRACY: TRANSITION AND CONSOLIDATION PATTERNS IN POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIA

IULIA ANGHEL<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** The study intends to analyse patterns of transition and consolidation connected to Romanian scenario, in order to identify the vulnerabilities and dysfunctionalities derived from local trajectory towards democratization. The research is grounded on two major assumptions. First work hypothesis claims the existence of a strong particularism within Romanian rite of separation, entailing also significant differences in sphere of consolidation prospects, while second hypothesis sustains the conservation of societal modernization gaps, influencing the ascent to democratization. Exploratory endeavour utilize a comparative frame, decrypting the transitional mechanism through filter of four regime change theories: functional approach, transnational view, genetic theory and interactive paradigm.

**Key words:** *post-communism, transition, democratic consolidation, reversibility, modernization*

### I. Semantic of democracy in changing societies. Consolidation prospects in a divided transitional landscape.

Fall of communist systems at the beginning of the 90 opened the way for an extended and elaborated phenomenon of societal reconstruction. Regime changes occurred in Eastern and Central Europe triggered a complex process of transition, emergence of new democratic actors being often engraved by difficult transformative operations. Although, modification of political paradigm tends to be considered as a defining mark of communist break-down, regime changes were doubled by essential economic, cultural and structural transmutations<sup>2</sup>. Resurrection of national agendas and recrudescence of traditionalist idiosyncrasies influenced the reconstruction of

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<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, „Comparative reflections on democratisation in East-Central Europe: a model of post-communist transformation?”, eds. Geoffrey Pridham, Attila Ágh, *Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in East-Central Europe*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 2001, p. 1.

social pacts, many of the post-communist societies confronting with divergent and contradictory evolutions. If debut of transitional stage was marked by a general appetite for democratisation, further trajectories experienced by former communist actors generated important questions regarding the consolidation quest. Concurrently, difficulties encountered by post-communist societies in assuming the institutional and attitudinal frames of new political order revealed the presence of some hidden border inside post-Cold War cartography.

Apparition of two separated layers within post-communist landscape nourished distinct expectations concerning potential achievement of consolidation aim, Central Europe benefiting by a relevant advance in its pre-transition ascent<sup>3</sup>. Liberalisation waves promoted subsequent to Gorbachev doctrine in the '80<sup>4</sup>, fostered a discrete adaptation of political and institutional environment, separating Central Europe by enclaved forms of communism, hosted at the Eastern border. Nevertheless, totalitarian systemic legacy constituted a key factor in establishment of transitional patterns, yet post-communist pathways will be influenced also by other contiguous aspects.

Polarisation supervened between hard-line communist regimes, as Czechoslovakia or Romania, and reformed communism, such as Poland, was enhanced by the peculiar configurations of national topic and political-cultural modernization scale<sup>5</sup>. Dynamics of regime change interfered too with transformation cadres, influencing the adaptability and stability of new created democratic structures. Rites of passage encountered by former communist ensembles highlight important dissimilarities, a crucial feature concerning the transformation anatomy. Amid pacted transition<sup>6</sup> and violent changes of political order were coexisting a multitude of shades, post-communist topography disclosing interesting limits. Fragmentation arose inside post-communist realm determined growing concerns regarding the chances for complete democratisation and general consolidation of the region, endanger of reversibility remaining a central point on the transitional

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<sup>3</sup> Idem, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Gorbachev doctrine represented a reformatory experiment, ailing to balance the communist chronic economic and social crisis. Moderating the industrialization schedule and allowing a discrete decentralization, Gorbachev dogma also included a decrease of ideological pressure, permitting to new civic actors to emerge. Julian Cooper, "The Prospects for Socialist Economy", eds. Walter Joyce, Hillel Ticktin, Stephen White, *Gorbachev and Gorbachevism*, (East Sussex: Psychology Press), 1989, p. 64.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Pacted transition concept refers to a gradual transformation of political order, granted by negotiations occurred between new created civic actors and progressionist elements of communist order. Power transfer is realized in a non-violent way, inaugurating a democratic path. Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, (Baltimore: JHU Press), 1996, p. 61.

agendas<sup>7</sup>. Discrepancies accumulated during transitional phase determined multiple explanatory exercises, main purpose of these inquiries being related with algorithms of consolidation.

The central question was if non-adaptive cases of communism, adjourned on their road liberalisation, will surmount the structural gap which separated them from western branch, succeeding in establishment of a consolidated democratic climate. Initial prospects referring to East European democratization dynamic were reticent, reluctance of nationalist affinities and cryptic survival of totalitarian political culture moderating the initial optimistic diagnosis. Still, Eastern perspectives for democratic consolidation proved to be positive, in defiance to activation of some influential transitional pathologies such as reinforcement of compulsory leadership, decline of institutional scaffolding, vicious electoral mechanisms<sup>8</sup>. Although consolidation clause tends to imply an extended collection of structural, cultural and environmental conditions, present analysis will utilize a synthetically definition, including three main levels: behavioural, attitudinal and constitutional<sup>9</sup>. Thus, from a behavioural point of view, a democratic regime is engaged in a consolidation phase when no important social, economic, political or institutional actors mobilize resources in attempts to annihilate the democratic order<sup>10</sup>. Absence of organized groups of pressure, acting against democratic establishment, guarantee the stability of political regime, this criterion excluding however the activity of democratic opposition<sup>11</sup>.

Attitudinal requirements refers to sedimentation of political culture, which foster collective attachment to democratic values, while constitutionally aspects imply the edification of a complete an unitary institutional frame, ensuring resolution of

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<sup>7</sup> Consolidation of democratic equations depends by capacity of new created political order to acquire legitimacy and to solve social tensions, inherently determined by transitional economic and cultural modifications. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press), 2012, p. 254.

<sup>8</sup> Economic depression and clash of previous societal equilibriums nourished major systemic cleavages. Effects against democratic development were crucial. In absence of a functional set of norms and regulations, consolidation of democracy is endangered by spectrum of reversibility. Frank Bonker, Klaus Muller, Andreas Pickel, „Cross-Disciplinary Approaches to Postcommunist Transformation. Agenda and Context”, eds. Frank Bonker, Klaus Muller, Andreas Pickel, *Postcommunist Transformation and the Social Sciences: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield), 2003, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Existence of a system of public contestation represents a guarantee of democracy's functionality. Between public contestation and degree of democratization arose a strong dependence, no consolidation of democratic rule being possible in presence of a power monopole. Robert Alan Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, (Yale: Yale University Press), 1973, p. 6.

conflicts under rule of the law<sup>12</sup>. Theoretical definitions of democracy encompass notable difficulties in explaining the diversity of concrete regimes. Yet stipulations invoked above could provide a useful tool in decrypting the typology and configuration experienced during post-communist transformation. In the same time, concentrated definition of consolidation are accompanied by other subjacent constrains, as presence of articulated forms of political competition and state responsiveness to the preference of its citizens, seen as equals<sup>13</sup>. Attempts to define and predict transitional trajectories originated a variety of theories of change, but a group of four axes can be considered as classical elucidative frames: functionalist approach, transnational perspective, genetic theory and interactive explanation<sup>14</sup>. Further endeavour aims to summarize the core arguments of these four axes, in order to isolate an expository picture for evolutions paths shared by different post-communist societies.

## **II. Exploring patterns of democratic transgression: functional approach, transnational view, genetic theory and interactive dimension.**

Functionalist theories of change tend to accentuate the importance of cultural, economic and social presuppositions of democratisation, recollecting many founding arguments from modernization tradition. Emphasizing the crucial role of economic development and social mobilisation, functionalist approach militates for a central vocation of modernisation is increasing chances for democratic evolution. Nonetheless, structural requirements of modernity such as urbanization, secularization and industrialization<sup>15</sup>, played a significant role in favouring installation of democracy, still other derivate components of modernization can trigger contrary reactions. Increasing political participation, accompanied by a rising activism of peripheral spaces, determined contradictory echoes for modernization-democratization two term process. Liberalisation of political life contributes to establishment of democracy's functional scaffolding, but still encompasses associated vulnerabilities. In many cases of modernizing countries, free electoral mechanism tend to confirm the conservation of power by former authoritarian elites, disruptive and reactionary forces ailing to seizure the state<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Alan Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, p.1.

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, „Comparative reflections on democratization in East-Central Europe: a model of post-communist transformation?“, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, (New York: Free Press), 1958, p. 63.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (London: Yale University Press), 1968, p. 7.

Modernization movement contributed directly to creation of presuppositions for many regimes change, entailing also some relevant malfunctions. In this context, modernization occurred in Central Europe after 1970 can be labelled as an essential step in shaping future transitional paths. Afterward initial uniform development of communist archipelago, crystalized in the '50 under soviet tutelage, communist space engaged on multiple trajectories. At the end of Second World War, most of East European societies were confronting with backwardness, lacking fundamental claims of modernity<sup>17</sup>. Insertion of communist rule determined a fragmentary modernization, by promotion of urbanization, secularization, industrialisation and increasing literacy. Nevertheless, the crucial aspects of political participation and civic activism were absent, but this intermediary step towards modernity played a significant role for further societal evolutions<sup>18</sup>. At the end of the '70, Central Europe assisted to a secondary modernisation phase, induced by liberalisation wave of *Perestroika* and *Glansnost*<sup>19</sup>. Recovering the criteria of civic activism and allowing the creation of actors as Polish Solidarność, Central Europe's communist regimes were assuming a double transformative process. In this case modernization acted as triggering vector for later democratic scenarios.

Though, modernization dynamic proved to fail in confirming its monopole in explaining regime changes. Romanian case serves in this context as an exemplary contra-example. Severance of local communist from general evolutions of Socialist Bloc occurred in the '60, even if true colours of Ceaușescu's patrimonialist dictatorship were revealed in late '80. Inversion of modernity realized by local communism incriminates the regression of previous societal evolutions. After the '60, Romanian communism revolved around a traditionalist paradigm, reinforcing economic segregations and aggravating social cleavages. Exacerbation of industrialization project and assertion of strong limitation in space of civic expression diminished anterior gains in direction of modernity, after 1970 social climate and attitudinal dimension suffering by an accelerated degradation. By hybridization of nation-building project with elements specific to a dynastic totalitarianism, Ceaușescu regime

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Rose, *Understanding Post-Communist Transformation: A Bottom Up Approach*, (New York: Routledge), 2009, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, „Comparative reflections on democratisation in East-Central Europe: a model of post-communist transformation?“, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> The essence of *Perestroika* and *Glansnost* (Restructuration and Openness) was to determine a slow “democratization” of communist world, threaten by an imminent economic and social collapse. Still, primary consequences of Gorbachev's doctrine were disappointing, Soviet Russia confronting with social tensions, growing unemployment and common goods shortages. Stephen White, “Reforming the Electoral System”, eds. Walter Joyce, Hillel Tickin, Stephen White, *Gorbachev and Gorbachevism*, p. 25.



adjoined the evolution towards liberalisation. Indigenization and monolithization of communism-nationalism binomial formula stimulated also a volatilisation of modernity<sup>20</sup>.

Contrary to this assurance measures operated by local communist in front of Gorbacheov's heresy, fall of Romanian totalitarianism apparently respected the general pattern of third wave's revolutions. Important questions arose in this specific context. If in the case of anti-modern local communism, regression of social climate and corruption of political culture still conducted to a break-down of oppressive regime, which are the consequences propagated upon consolidation clause? Presence of anti-modern societal structure induced different outcomes for revolutionary mechanism? It is obvious that Romanian transformation rite tend to individualize in landscape of transitional experiments, yet its long term implication still remain cast in shadow. Functionalist theories offer an interesting insight concerning the correlations appeared among economic development, modernization and promotion of democracy, while they still encounter important limits in explaining the border cases, such as Romanian vernacular communism.

Transnational theories concerning regime changes share some common grounds with functionalist approach, but tend to favour a broader internal and external perspective. These orientations stress essential influence of external factors, within processes of systemic change. Thus, occurrence of simultaneous transitional phenomena was explained as a result of diffusion and contamination tendencies. Waves of democratisation were stimulated by a hypothesis of proximity, snowball effects being obtain trough informational and cultural lens<sup>21</sup>. Under those arguments, communist collapse can be subsumed to a domino reaction, determinant vectors of systemic change having a double insertion, internal and external. Still, despite attractiveness of an integrative theory, transnational approach experiences some serious difficulties in elucidation of particular cases. Central Europe was reconfirming the contours of reformed species of communism, the hypothesis of contamination being potentiated by a contiguity criterion. Permeabilization of western border and continuous cultural exchange with hinterland of democracy assured progressionist communism an advantageous transitional path. In this manner, behaviourally and attitudinal factors for further consolidation were already present in a landscape where *nomenklatura* accepted the negotiation with new emerged civic sphere. Deconstruction of communism began thus in the middle of the '80 and ended in

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<sup>20</sup> Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1991, p. 315.

<sup>21</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, „Comparative reflections on democratisation in East-Central Europe: a model of post-communist transformation?“, p. 7.

pacted versions of the '90. Claiming the crucial role of informational dimension, transnational explanatory model also fostered the subversive force of underground media networks<sup>22</sup>, as one provided by Polish syndicalist movement.

However, transnational perspective was threatened by circularity. Central Europe evolved in a solidary pattern and the contamination theory is sustained by apparition of strong similarities, accumulated after adoption of Gorbachev doctrine. Nonetheless, for some peculiar scenarios this contamination explanation failed in assuring a realistic expository finality. Once again, Romanian particularism generates important questions regarding the transnational causality. Romanian revolution burst in an eccentric point, propagating fast to all societal and spatial dimensions. In this case, what started as a small conflict among reformed parishioners and communist authorities from Timișoara, transformed in a social movement with violent expressions, conducting to unexpected dissolution of Ceaușescu's dictatorship<sup>23</sup>. Influence of external factors could be considered almost inconclusively for Romanian case. Dramatic food shortages and diffusive terror asserted by dynastic communism in the late '80 contributed to creation of a silent tension. Implosion of local communism produced gradually during years of extreme oppression, Timișoara episode acting as triggering vector for a much extended social pressure. Still, some questions remain. Would Romanian personalist dictatorship clash in a peaceful communist scene, engaged on the mirage of perpetuated *perestroika*? Even if it is difficult to give a definitive answer, there are certain arguments in favor of such scenario. Disjunction occurred in the '70 and aggravated during the '80, isolated local version of communism from cultural and political atmosphere of Socialist Bloc.

Hermetism manifested by Romanian sultanism<sup>24</sup> could be also translated as a self-reliance of Romanian pathway to liberalization and democratization. Still, it remains necessary to underline the subtle differences intervened between liberalization and democratization. More than an anti-communist revolt, Romanian revolution can be considered as an anti-dictatorship movement. Such interesting distinction is confirmed by tolerance and cultural lustration which accompanied former communist elites during first days of transition. Collective malfunctions

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<sup>22</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> Grigore Pop-Eleches, "Romania Twenty Years after 1989. The Bizarre Echoes of a Contested Revolution", eds. Michael Bernhard, Jan Kubik, *Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2014, p. 87.

<sup>24</sup> The very essence of sultanistic drift of communism can be considered the unrestrained personal ruler ship. Trough fusion appeared amid public sphere and private ownership of the ruler, ideological background tends to fade way, being replaced with a patrimonialist cadre. Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, p. 54.

regarding representations of previous totalitarian regime opened the road for a late transitional pact. Negotiations initiated by reformist wings of former communist *nomenklatura* and masses were lacking the essential mediator factor of a secondary civic sphere. Defining exceptionalism imposed by local sultanism assured a separation of Romanian experience from the evolutionary logic of communist world, making the transnational explication almost inoperable. Certainly, general context of anti-communist movement played a subsidiary role within transformation of Romania's political order, but this specific influence was perceptible subsequent to communist collapse.

Another layer of explicative traditions concerning regime changes and transitional phenomena involves genetic theory. This direction militates for central relevance of elite's choices during processes of political transformation, transitional pacts being considered as founding frames for further democratic evolutions<sup>25</sup>. Moving attention from structural demands to dynamic aspects of transition, genetic approach enhances the part of elites in reconstructing the social consensus. Nevertheless, transactions hypothesis reveal its explanatory potential in relations with exemplary cases of pacted transition. New crafted civic elites, stratified during liberalization interlude of the '80, become slowly expression of new social vectors, assuring a process of mobilization<sup>26</sup>. Change of political order became thus the materialization of a silent deconstruction process, supervened inside communist power equations. Anyway, transactions models still pay a significant tribute to a specific configuration of transformative exercise. In this context, genetic paradigm is dependent by development of a tacit transition during the '80.

Elites made responsible for operationalization of transitional path did not appear during regime's material crisis, their origin being located in a much broader historical horizon. Over again, Romanian subject rejects these potential explanations of its transitional mechanism. Local genuine elites were decimated during communist purges of the '50 and '60 and creation of a progressionist layer within communist secondary echelons was impossible, due to increasing patrimonialist and personalist features of Ceaușescu regime<sup>27</sup>. Concurrently, the aggregation of secondary culture was not possible during late Stalinist decades of the '70 and '80, Romanian civic conscience

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<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, „Comparative reflections on democratisation in East-Central Europe: a model of post-communist transformation?” p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Social mobilisation arose in changing environment of communist world also determined a process of destabilisation of previous political order. Determinism appeared amid social mobilisation and political instability play a significant role in social transformations. New social vectors became active and put under scrutiny former power monopol. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 47.

<sup>27</sup> Dennis Deletant, *Romania Under Communist Rule*, (London: Center for Romanian Studies), 1999, p. 59.

remaining in a stage of potentiality. Deficit of elites encountered by transitional Romania reflected in typology of its post-communist leadership formulas. Romanian appetite for a leader oriented political system confirmed the necessity of a surrogate solution. The missing link of Romanian revolution remains nevertheless the elites.

Absence of an intermediary transition and volatilization of historical elites pressed Romanian society to confront in its early transition days more with a difficult succession rite than with a genuine change. In this specific context, social collisions arose in the summer of 1990 can be labeled as a tardive attempts of denouncing the vicious power seizure<sup>28</sup>. Adjournment of transitional transaction and creation of a closed pact, arranged between former communist elites and new germs of civic sphere, expelled the genetic explication concerning Romanian regime change. Lacking intermediary steps towards modernization and liberalization, Romania also will confront with a deficit of civic vehicles, their late establishment nourishing relevant social tensions. As a social fabric, elites were present just in a latency form, their aggregation in coherent structures being adjourned until late stages of transitional process. Without a real samizdat culture and missing efficient underground informational chains, transitional society nourished a culture of suspicion concerning political enrolment of civic and intellectual elites.

Last branch of the explicative chain refers to interactive view. Sharing similar grounds with genetic perspective, interactive approach tries to push a step further the explanatory potential of transactionism, introducing a new element within anterior theoretical frame. Highlighting the relevance of "confining conditions"<sup>29</sup> of revolutionary events, interactive theory aims to identify a determinant model for apparition of regime changes. Trying to find a balance between environmental aspects and particular decisions promoted by elites, interactive filter succeed in expanding its expository vocation. Still, it remains trapped into limitations of classical casuistry. Particular aspects existing at the birth of a new political community do not always guarantee further development of transitional path. Even if for non-violent transitional experiences, the presence of a specific liberalization and economic restructuration acted as adjuvant factors for subsequent social consensus, the Romanian case makes again a discordant note. Confining frames of Romanian revolution were connected with an extended mass mobilization. Outcomes of this primary collective burst were however doubtful, in context of a slow gliding of revolutionary agenda from an anti-dictatorship movement to a corrupted expression of pactism.

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<sup>28</sup> Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, p. 346.

<sup>29</sup> Otto Kirchheimer, "Confining Conditions and Revolutionary Breakthroughs", *American Political Science Review*, Volume 59, Issue 04, December 1965, p. 964.

Among initial urban revolt and further deformation of revolutionary pattern are subsisting high differences. The revolution movement was supposed to inject “political participation”<sup>30</sup> within entire social dimension, but this claim remains unsatisfied. Lack of civic and political involvement of peripheries remains related with symptomatology of fragmentary modernity, marginal spaces being trapped in a traditionalist equation. The revolutionary move was encountered with enthusiasm, but during subsequent evolutions, countrified margins of Romanian society validated a distorted political version. In this context, the interactive theory is limited in its elucidative quality, between initial picture of Romanian revolutionary movement and subsequent developments appearing critical disparities. Those aspects were not entirely motivated by elite’s contextual actions.

Short theoretical inquiry operated above stressed the particularism of Romanian scenario, divulging also the presence of some interesting differences comparing to classical post-communist models. By contradicting the modernization thesis and minimalizing the relevance of transnational hypothesis, Romanian regime change becomes the expression of a hybrid evolution. Lacking an authentic transactionist pact and facing multiple reconfigurations of its primary revolutionary agenda, Romania’s paths toward democratic consolidation remains thus engraved by important vulnerabilities. Last section of study intend to analyses consequences propagated by specificity of Romanian context, trying also to develop a diagnosis about consolidation-reversibility prospects.

### **III. Rites of separations: Romanian journey towards consolidation.**

Rotten mostly in a contradictory modernity, Romania’s deficit of evolution will trigger subsequent transitional pathologies, nourishing also adjacent burdens in its ascent to consolidation. In this context, relevant correlations appeared amid degree of social fragmentation, under-development and successful propagation of dysfunctional political models remain relevant<sup>31</sup>. Maybe one of the most eloquent samples of local democracy’s uncertain limits refers to its attachment for a leader oriented political culture. Although many of emerging democracies tend to manifest an obvious appetency for dominant leadership<sup>32</sup>, Romanian example exacerbated this feature, as will be highlighted by transition’s maleficent drifts.

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<sup>30</sup> Stephen D. Roper, *Romania: The Unfinished Revolution*, (Amsterdam: Hardwood Academic Publishers), 2000, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Revolution and Counterrevolution: Change and Persistence in Social Structures*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers), 1960, p. 292.

<sup>32</sup> John M. Carey, “Institutional Design and Party Systems”, ed. Larry Diamond, *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, vol. I., (Baltimore: JHU Press), 1997, p. 78.

Structural consequences of communist anti-modernity are trackable subsequent to functionalist examination. Detachment of local version of totalitarianism from general dynamic of Socialist Bloc in the '60 generated essential effects against further structural and cultural evolutions. Distinctions between modern and anti-modern societies are regarding a set of key features, including rule of the law, openness, economic functionality and predictability<sup>33</sup>. In its late stages Romanian communism failed in satisfying the evaluator grid proposed above, its potential anti-modernity being confirmed also by its structural configurations. Development of sultanistic shift determined an interesting fusion mechanism, the borders separating public and private becoming undetermined. As a consequence, leader's ability to seize the institutional scaffolding generated a massive regress of modernization. Rule of law was thus suspended and replaced with a feudatory system, which acted also as an anti-bureaucratic movement. Cannibalization of communist elites during the '80 and apparition of tribalist chains of power, constructed on kinship, created the basis for a closed societal model. Declining the exigence of rule of law and openness, Romania's late communism also failed in assuring the crucial clauses of economic functionality and predictability. In defiance to its luxuriant mythology of economic prosperity, local communism collated with crucial systemic miscarriages. Therefore planned economy corrective fluxes were assuring with great difficulty the survival of an ensemble marked by chronical common goods shortages and striking inefficiency. Conserving an anachronistic industrialization agenda, Ceaușescu regime intended to obtain an historical independency, but as an irony, succeeded in establishment of a spectacular regression. Dysfunctionalities divulged in aftermath of Romanian dictatorship confirmed the corruption of modernity. Clash of peripheral industrial branches under galopant recession of state's interventionism and cultural decoupling of countrified marginal space determined effects upon further consolidation endeavor. Concurrently, partial achievements of communist lacunar modernity generated hidden cost for local emerging democracy. Also, between institutional demands of modernity and its structural definition appeared interesting correlations.

Intensive urbanization movement did not succeeded in creation of a genuine modern cultural *oikumena*. Many of Romania's villages, re-baptized cities, remained exponents of a traditional economic and representational culture. Lack of interest of Romanian communism for true picture of rural space translated in a double marginal posture<sup>34</sup>. If until 1965, peripheral layers of Romanian society were maintain a

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<sup>33</sup> Richard Rose, *Understanding Post-Communist Transformation: A Bottom Up Approach*, p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> Katherine Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania*, (New York: Cornell University Press), 2003, p. 227.

parochialist foundation, while urban centers were slowly gliding to new forms of political consciousness, dark decade of the '80 reinforced the connection between village and city. Lacking fundamental survival supplies, urban population began to practice a fragmentary migration. This temporary reunification generated a subsidiary re-traditionalization of urban clusters, with relevant effects towards consolidation prospects. Another important feature, demonstrating local communism contradictory modernity, implies the secularization circumstances. Doctrinaire orientation supervened within ideological substance of Romanian communism in the '70 generated an inversion of the secularization process<sup>35</sup>. Recovering many of traditionalist archetypes, local communism created a hybrid construct, reuniting in *mélange* frames of interwar ethno-nationalism with new personalist traits.

Effects exerted by these structural and institutional corruption upon consolidation prospects were acute. Attitudinal clause of consolidation requires a general engagement in favor of democratic values, the emergence of democratic design remaining connected to this collective adherence. Still, it is relevant to underline that solidification of democratic affinities precedes and often determines regime changes. That prospective step was missing in Romanian transformative mechanism, due to peculiar encapsulation, re-traditionalization and isolation of local communism. If for Central Europe, democratic culture had a silent genesis during the '80, for Romanian case, seizure of nationalist agenda and reconversion of religious archetypes assured a generous validation of system, even in the maleficent stages of sultanism. Out phasing of attitudinal dimensions triggered also a subsequent behavioral deficit. Striking majority of peaceful regime changes operated in former Communist archipelago was exploiting existing political institutions. Also, they frequently utilized the persistence of a set of generally accepted values<sup>36</sup>. Romanian particularism expelled the aggregation of a democratic horizon anticipatory to communist collapse. In this context collective engagement in direction of genuine systemic change remained unclear for several transitional stages. Subsistence of latent contestation groups, acting against democratic equation can be considered also as an expression of a deformed evolutionary path. Reticence manifested against democratic outcomes, such as restraint of state's ownership or free market competition confirmed cryptic attachment for paternalist communist tradition.

Behavioral vulnerability maintained inside Romanian transitional and post-transitional society determines some negative prospects regarding accomplishment

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<sup>35</sup> Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "The break-down of communist regimes", ed. Stephen Richards Graubard, *Exit from Communism*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers), 1993, p. 24.

of consolidation aim. Maturation of local democracy requires more than well-developed institutional scaffolding, the attitudinal and behavioral conditions playing a crucial role. Functionalist theory of change proved its limits in decrypting the sources of Romanian scenario, but offered some relevant clues concerning peculiar traits of local evolution. Central interrogation determined by functionalist exam refers to further evolutions of modernization experience. If Romanian communist break down occurred in an anti-modern societal paradigm, what effects will propagate the presence of an adjourned modernization, accompanying the democratization phenomenon? It will be possible to assist to a resurrection of anti-modernity as a result of political actions performed by pauperized urban peripheries and marginal countrified culture? Increasing social migration and apparition of "multiple modernities"<sup>37</sup> under globalization process reopen the debates around consolidation and raise awareness regarding future prospects of former communist actors.

While functional theory delivers some useful insights about Romania's distinct transitional dynamic, transnational hypothesis also contributes to establishment of some key conclusions. Despite the fact that transnational determinism could not be used as a satisfying explanation for local extinction of totalitarianism, analysis of its founding thesis proves once again the existence of an interesting particularism. Transnational theory is grounded on two key assumptions: presence of external forces contributing directly to de-construction of totalitarian rule and to promotion of democracy and functionality of internal informational and action flows. Romanian case dismisses both basal requirements, trough filter of its own enclavisation constrain.

Informational dissidence provided by networks as Radio Free Europa played an important role in cultural mobilisation of certain social clusters<sup>38</sup>, but could not serve as a triggering impulse for collective movement. Penetration of this form of cultural resistance was facing the limit of urban civilisation, its effectiveness in the peripheral space being modest. Certainly, Romanian revolution was made possible by spontaneous solidarity of urban masses, but their capacity to realize a general political Up Rising was reduced<sup>39</sup>. Future transitional pathways were shaped by this initial

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<sup>37</sup> Multiple modernization paths engraved evolutions of post-communist actors, many of these varieties of modernity denouncing the initial compatibility with democratization project. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities*, (Leiden: BRILL), 2003, p. 502.

<sup>38</sup> Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, p. 358.

<sup>39</sup> Romanian never experienced an authentic Green Up Rising, political behavior of rural space remaining defined by a dominant passive approach. Green Up Rising can be defined as a process of peripheral social mobilization, margins of former traditional society becoming active in sphere of political choice and citizenship. End of modernization process corresponds to an annihilation of disparities generated by city-country gap. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 73.



participatory deficit, road towards consolidation being constantly adumbrated by reluctance of traditionalism. Consolidation process solicits beyond all the edification of a solidary political culture, discharging social fragmentation and assuring an inclusion clause. Thus, the attitudinal level of consolidation remains a difficult to achieve standard, especially within a marginal culture constantly threaten by its affinities towards compulsory leadership or providentialism. Incomplete modernity transmitted by sultanism affected inclusively the realization of behavioural quest.

Even if explicit discourses against democratic enrolment were avoided, Romanian leaders manifesting instead a lure of “westernization”, underground movement against democracy were experienced in several stages. Starting from non-democratic discourses of interim regime in 1990 and continuing with social tensions created by specific professional clusters until late stages of transition, in 1999<sup>40</sup>, persistence of obvious behavioural pathologies raised important questions. Although, exotic images of almost medieval revolt of miners were broadcast all over world, popularising local democracy’s failure in managing its complicated historical heritage.

In the end, transnational topic has its share of importance in promoting and sustaining the realization of constitutional cadres of democracy. As consequence of its borderline position within post-cold war cartography, Romanian transitional society benefited by a determinant international impulse towards democratisation, reflected mostly in the institutional echoes. Still, if state architecture apparently endorsed the democratic tradition, important disparities supervened inside political culture maintained the spectrum of a *praetorian deviance*<sup>41</sup>.

De-regulated negotiations arose among leaders and masses and conservation of an acute volatility of political options continued during transitional experience, even if “early anti-communist umbrella alliance”<sup>42</sup> succumbed after succession election from 1990. It is clear that preservation of a general equilibrium during Romanian transitional experience was stimulated by existence of a benevolent and sometimes adjuvant international scene, but some questions remain particularly relevant. Supposing that establishment of constitutional and even behaviourally clauses of consolidation was advocated by a favourable international climate, what would be the consequences of an unexpected degradation of external conjecture? Are Romanian consolidation prospects still linked by ideological and cultural colours of its borderlands?

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 361.

<sup>41</sup> Societies confronting with high levels of political participation and with low degrees of institutionalization are exposed to praetorian distortions, negotiations between social forces and political actors eluding the legal filter. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 80.

<sup>42</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1999, p. 96.

Conclusively, genetic approach and its interactionist extension provide some supplementary hypotheses concerning consolidation quest. Confining conditions of Romanian regime change do not imply a unitary pattern. In this context, extreme social tensions obtain through aberrant late communism policies constituted a surface symptom for a much deeper social pathology. Nonetheless, initial revolutionary agenda did not identify this deceitful distinction between episodic outcomes of dynastic communism and the profound contradictions entailed by system itself. Primary expectations regarding revolutionary movement revolved around a set of liberalisation impulses, often evading the core values of former political order. These tendencies towards reformation against systemic change were enhanced by personalist distortion of local totalitarianism. Elusive borders establish amid sultanistic aspects of local dictatorship and structural scaffolding of communist ensemble allowed a cryptic modification of primary impulses and confining conditions of revolutionary event. Thus, it can be isolated at least three distinct configurations of Romania's revolutionary burst: an initial stage of urban riot, a phase of intermediary pactisation and a period of civic denunciation. Without detailing every successive level, it becomes clear that every layer implies the presence of substantially different constituent perspective. At initial moment of urban riot evolutions towards democracy were uncertain. Without adjuvant support of international conjecture Romanian society could easily collapse in a formula of reshaped *perestroika*. Changing just the leader and hoping to reform the system, this option of aborted revolution was not far to materialization. Elite's actions in this violent context were inarticulated, oscillating between public abjuration of previous ideological commitments and retreat in a secluded expectance. Immersion in an atmosphere of fear, tension, confusion and conspirationist plot augmented this intuitive retreat. Genetic approach fails to in proving its expository quality regarding Romanian case due to lack of stability of conditions subsequent to regime's change. Intermediary pactisation stage nourished different possible evolutionary pathways, initial acceptance of interim power structures being connected with abeyance of a further civic and social round table<sup>43</sup>. Unfortunately, this historical reconciliation never produced, interim power assuming a quite non-democratic monopole of revolutionary topic. Elite's attitudes along pactisation stage could be labelled as ambivalent, genuine and manifest attachment regarding democracy remaining very often as an implicit claim. In the end, a determinant rite of separation supervened after overwhelming electoral victory obtained by National Salvation Front, coined as a legitimate "emanation" of

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<sup>43</sup> Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, p. 361.

revolutionary burst<sup>44</sup>. In this predictable trajectory towards vicious consolidation of former echelons of defunct political order, confining circumstances of regime change supported again a major transformation. Elite's affiliation scavenged between new imposed political regime and objector civic movement, blazed in centre of Bucharest. Outcomes of these sequentially of founding paradigms generated important difficulties in isolating a unique confining cadre for Romanian case. Concurrently elite's actions and attitudes concerning further evolution paths of post-totalitarian society were contradictory and instable.

Even if these peculiarities endorsed by Romanian scenario expelled the genetic explanatory mechanism and consecutively limit the relevance of an interactive approach, they still determine interesting conclusion regarding the consolidation process. Due to its multiplicity of overlapping formative frames Romanian society suffered the pressure of contradictory social vectors. Consolidation process was hindered by conservation of a crucial out phasing among civic sphere and political culture. Behavioural and attitudinal clauses of consolidation were directly affected by void installed between leaders and new created electoral masses, absence of a secondary power sphere fostering the spectrum of an uncertain democracy. Although it is difficult to formulate a final assessment, it remains important to underline that roots of Romanian transformative mechanism are substantial different from ones experienced by other contemporary rites of passage. Also, by dismantling the idea of Romanian revolution seen as a typical expression of third's wave mutations, it becomes certain that vernacular experience of consolidation will imply distinct challenges and linger under omen of a parallel modernity.

### **Acknowledgment:**

*„This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/140863, Project ID 140863 (2014), co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.”*

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<sup>44</sup> Idem, p. 361.

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