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BOOK REVIEW

RETURNING TO SELF AND LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN NEOPLATONIC SEMANTIC OF *EPISTROPHE*

CORINA DOMNARI[1]

Abstract. In my paper I will discuss the reinterpretation of the Neoplatonic 'epistrophe' as a hallmark of description of subjectivity in the Patristics. The Plotinian theme of *epistrophe* outlined a new understanding of Self, centered on individuality and subjectivity. By affirming the existence of distinctive levels in Self, Plotinus brought a degree of complexity to the Platonic Self, by introducing levels of epistrophe, manifested in a continuum that extends from the sensitive to the intelligible. The intelligible Plotinian realm is 'in us', the one that can be reached on the way back to oneself. Converting transference means decisions made by the rational beings to move toward their cause and beginning or their own end, God.

Keywords: self, subjectivity, reversion, levels of consciousness, Plotinus, Maximus the Confessor

1. Introduction: A Couple of Hermeneutical Precautions

In this paper, I intend to analyze the constitutive process of the meanings of the term '*epistrophe*', – and its consequent re-signification – a word that played a pivotal role in the late antique thought, opening at the same time the first horizons in patristic theology. Nevertheless, such an assessment is not exactly a facile one considering not only the diverse and complex conjuncture in which this concept was set in motion, but also the way of understanding its implementation: the grace of an experience that is in first instance lived and then covered by a terminological expression. In other words, the concept in question does not consist of a rational

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[1]   PhD Candidate, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi. Email: <domnari.corina@yahoo.com>.

description, referring on the contrary to a living reality. Neoplatonists shared the conviction that wisdom cannot be expressed or transmitted via intellection or rational language, but despite this repudiation of discourse, their texts possess a rich doctrinal content, which functions along with these reservations. They believe there is a central metaphysical fact underlying this persistence in pursuing the nondiscursive way, and that is why the identity theory – the doctrine claiming the intellect is its own object and the very nature of the self-disclosure of intellectual activity – is at the core of Neoplatonic philosophy and dialectics.

This theory of truth is difficult to demonstrate and even if one does make the attempt, the main premise, that is the existence of a faculty capable of accessing the eternal nondiscursive truths (Rappe 2000, 13), will always be eluded. Such a conception about truth, which is by definition impossible to communicate to someone else, – as any representation would cut off the involved unity of the subject and the object – leaves the philosophical endeavor in predicament, which can only be solved using the paradox, a compromise or a contradiction. *Nous*, the faculty of intellectual intuition, is implicit in all Neoplatonic texts concerning self-presence and immediacy: an "auto-encapsulation" for the intellect makes known to himself his own content. But what kind of language can be utilized to transmit the truth comprehended by this faculty? If the answer is that the *nous* semantic must be thus metaphorical, it should be noted that both conceptual and metaphorical representations do not correspond to its intuitions, as Sara Rappe point out in *Reading Neoplatonism. Non-discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius*. All truth affirmations become metaphors because their literal meaning has been from the start rejected for its uselessness. Neoplatonists refused to accept that truth could ever be entirely revealed; truth itself is a veil covering the source outside of any representation. The discursive strategies composing the Neoplatonic texts are a configuration of the nondiscursive truth, and this tradition in its entirety is an appeal to what can be known as *unwritten tradition*, Rappe insists (Rappe 2000, 14).

2. Doctrinal Configuration of Neoplatonism and the Semantics of *epistrophe*

A.C. Lloyd, in *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism*, sees that *epistrophe* is granted with the significance both of a returning/inclination to self and the significance of a turning back/orientation to a superior source, and that because this term is one of the Plotinian Triad – *emanation*, *reversion* and *remaining,* receiving in this case a rather technical sense, as an element of the Neoplatonic theory of reversion. In the Neoplatonic tradition, the soul's ascension is rendered by the term *epistrophe*, translated as "reversion". One can however sometimes meet this Greek term in its strict sense of "being oriented toward something", referring to a certain inclination, and other times in a much more complete sense of "returning" or "turning back". But when the term refers to superior levels of existence and the sole activity or the relevant activity of a subject is the conscience or thought, "being inclined to (do) something" rather signifies *having the attention directed towards…*, and if this is necessarily accompanied by thinking, the subject must reflect upon that and nothing else. But at this stage, saying literally that the Soul and the Intellect "return" does not mean that they changed their place, but rather that the content itself of conscience or thought has been changed. As shown and made explicit in the Proclus' *Elements* (Proclus 1932, 13), the procession gives existence to the subject, while the reversion adds "something" to its existence (Lloyd 1990, 127). In Plotinus, this process is repeated analogously every time a new entity is produced. Proclus denotes a special type of reversion, *i.e., the epistemic reversal*, signifying "the consciousness of causation by goodness", the presence of an image of the Good and of a form of self-consciousness. The best act of the Intellect, says Plotinus, is the thought of everything that has preceded it, "because turning back to itself, it's moving toward its origin" (Plotinus 2018, VI. 9. 2. 33-6). Damascius is aware of the difficulties raised by this theory, but his position is fundamentally the same: the alternative types of *epistrophe* are involved in each reversion case. So, in every situation, *to return*, *to remain* and *to proceed* are, in his formulation, one single aspect of two relations (Damascius 1964, I. 170. 16-171. 7R). For practical reasons, Neoplatonists did not need, though, to distinguish between *epistrophe* and the general notion of the Soul's Ascension as One (Lloyd 1990, 128).

Should be put then into question a second problem with regards to understanding the semantics of the Neoplatonic *epistrophe*. How does one distinguish between the inversion of cause and the cause remaining within itself? Reverting to the cause seems to restore *the status quo ante*, but then everything that was unfolding will be losing its identity. A first issue arises at this point: it appears to be clear that the reversion function, establishing the identity of something undetermined, is incompatible with the reverting to cause and thus it belongs only to the auto-reversion. It is true that the Neoplatonists could have seen that as unsatisfactory, but if they had asserted that the ascending reversion usually entails a prerequisite auto-reversion, they were not forced to come into conflict with their own theses. So, it would be more appropriate to presume that the issue is not called into question because, as a universal law, "inversion" does not mean "turning back", but only "inclination". This is surely the case with Plotinus whereas it does not explain how the Intellect, "turning back to itself", is actually "returning to its origin" (Plotinus 2018, VI. 9. 2. 33-6). The self-reflection in the sense of existence/beingness is to see itself as a single existence/being. Having this conscience means to be indirectly conscious of the One since a direct conscience of the One is impossible. Plotinus names this conscience "indirect" because it "looks toward the One". The reason is that "the One", who is itself and has a direct self-reflection, is both an effect and an image of its cause, which is "the One". That is why Plotinus can affirm that being self-conscious is to be in the presence of the One.

The nature of the Intellect must be unified with *this* One to that extent because if "the One who is" would not exist, as well as the multiple categories and forms, the Intellect would not either exist. A similar argument can be deduced from the narratives on genesis, which replace "good" or "object of desire" with "the One" (Lloyd 1990, 129). If procession is considered to be the generation of new entities, it is easy to understand that *epistrophe* can also be considered as one of its necessary conditions. Proclus describes this pair as a continuous circular movement, and hence excludes a priority order (Proclus 1932, 33). It can be suspected that this persistent simultaneity was seldom meant to forestall the emphasis on the generation process, literally, that is *in time*, but Plotinus' "pre-intellect" suggests that he actually wanted to say more because

imagining a process whose each "moment" must be accomplished before another moment related to the function that we consider at a certain point, one has to attribute to one or several moments, an undetermined or potential stage before that would become determined or real.

3. Subjectivity as Returning to Self. Plotinus' Concept of Subjectivity

Reviewing the academic debate on the theme of *Self* in Greek and Roman philosophy made in the last decades, Hutchinson says that was a subject of intense debate, due to some opinions according to which the idea of *returning to Self* has first emerged within the Roman Stoicism. The theme, developed as well by the Neoplatonists, will lead to a new conception of Self based on *individuality* and *subjectivity.* Plotinus is following Plato in the affirmation of some of the Self's layers, the latter identifying the human being with the soul, given that the soul directs the body, using it as an instrument. Furthermore, he identifies – like Plato – the Self with the rational soul because this is the part possessing the knowledge of what is good, allowing us to pursue what is good for the soul. But nonetheless, Plotinus adds a certain degree of complexity to the platonic Self by introducing some of the *Self's layers*. The main feature of these layers is that their manifestation is a continuum extending from the sensible to the intelligible world. *The Self* is a way of consciousness that differs throughout these layers, fluctuating according to their level of reality. The Plotinian intelligible realm is not a super-cosmic kind of place separated from Humanity to which man cherishes the hope (as Plato does) of coming back in the afterlife (Hutchinson 2018, 11). It is rather "within us" and accessible through the way of *returning to Self*, and from there in the vertical direction moving upwards (Plotinus 2018, III.4.3.21-24).

Plotinus identifies the true *Self* with the *Noetic Self*, meaning that the Intellect is the *Hypostatic Intellect*. To comprehend why it is so, we need to have a brief synthesis of Plotinus' psychology. The superior soul is our intellect, that gives form to the form-matter compound, which is though separated from the composite. The form from the form-matter composite is also composed by the activity of two souls, a soul urn, and

an inferior soul. The "soul urn" is an image of the smallest capacities of the *anima mundi* (soul of the world). The inferior is an image of the superior soul. Plotinus does not always show clearly which of the world-soul's (*anima mundi*) and inferior soul's capacities contribute to the functioning of the body. However, as Hutchinson indicates, the incarnated human beings primarily own capacities associated both with the life of plants (nourishment, reproduction, growth, and passive power of perception) and with the life of animals (pleasure and pain, appetency and passion, sense perception, imagination, and memory), but also with a level of life proper only to humans – discursive reasoning, belief and language (Hutchinson 2018, 12). Incarnated human beings have two sources of perception. On the one hand, we can receive impressions which "descend" from the Intellect by virtue of our superior soul, on the other hand we can receive, however, the sense perception coming from the inferior soul. Together with our imagination – accountable for the integration of these two entrance sources and to produce unitary experiences – the discursive reasoning processes evaluate and pass judgments on these impressions, expressing them with the help of language. We may therefore say that the Rational Self has two levels: a superior one in the intelligible world, and an inferior one in the sensible world.

The superior Self is the true Self because it represents that part within us remaining always in the Intellect, which makes the inferior Self capable of reasoning (Plotinus 2018, V.I.10.11-32). Hutchinson points out that the superior Self, who is actually the same as the Intellect, allows the inferior Self to put reason into practice. Forms constitute a holistic system in which all of them are interconnected and transparent to each other. The Intellect has infallible knowledge about the eternal truths contained in this holistic system. The certainty of its knowledge is self-evident because Forms are intrinsic to it, sharing the same actuality. The principles of judgment, deriving from Forms through Intellect, enable the latter to understand the eternal truths, present also in our intellect, that at its turn gives the *Dianoetic Self* the capability of discursive reasoning (Hutchinson 2018, 13).

4. The Instruments for "Sculpting our Self" and the Experience of Authentic Self

A critical aspect is that, according to Plotinus, there are instruments that we can use to sculpt our Self, they are in fact *virtues*; nevertheless, a virtuous life does not simply lie in moderating our irrational desires, as we see in Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy. It rather lies in a complete self-detachment and the experience of their emotional impulse only when it is necessary, and that is because irrational desires originate in the *soul urn*, that provides information to the body and all its affections, and being external to the soul does not truly constitute the ego, insist the author of *Plotinus on Consciousness*. The detachment process involves three hierarchically-ordered degrees of virtue: *the civic virtues* (they are setting the limit and the measure of our irrational desires); *the purifying virtues* (separating soul from the body, removing all that is extraneous, allowing it that way to operate independently from the desires and irrational opinions), and the *contemplative virtues* (they are held by the soul, which is purified by its involvement with the body, accomplishes its nature intellectually and absorbs itself wholly by contemplating the forms). Practicing virtue expels all desires and irrational opinions originating from the compound and leads to the final experience teaching us that the authentic self is our Intellect, in which lies true virtue. As Plotinus says, "so, when the soul is purified, it becomes form and forming power, intellectual and completely bodiless, belonging entirely to the Divine" (Plotinus 2018, I.6.6.13-15).

But even though we have come to identify ourselves with the Divine, realizing that the One is an intelligible universe, we can be only partially integrated in this intelligible world, and that sets bounds to our knowledge. Due to this restriction, our Intellect gets to know the intelligible world from a mere perspective, which is limited, defined, and represented only under a certain aspect. This perspective thus particularizes the experience of the intelligible world, individualizing our Intellect in relation to other intellects just like a theorem subjected to critical analysis is individualized by other theorems (Hutchinson 2018, 27).

5. "First-Person" Subjectivity and the Different Levels of Consciousness

It takes a presumed inner forum to reflect on one's own experience, and that can only be accessed personally. Likewise, in order to represent the intelligible world under a certain aspect there has to be a perspective accessible only from the contemplating person's view. For the last several years there has been a debate on the existence or non-existence in ancient philosophy of this notion of first-person subjectivity. The description and the understanding of Plotinus' subjectivity requires the distinction between three levels of subjectivity: At the first level, subjectivity refers to a subject, and that is to be *the kind of being to whom mental states can be attributed in a valid manner*. On the second level, subjectivity refers to a first-person view, that is *the experience of the world from the perspective of his/her own beliefs and desires, and the reflection upon his/her own experience from that point of view*. On the third level, subjectivity refers to the self-consciousness of *a conscious thinking subject in certain relations with its own conscious states*, whose relations with its own conscious states or with the conscious states themselves play a fundamental role in shaping the ethical worldview.[2]

Cristopher Gill argues that the use of subjectivity in the Classical Greek and Hellenistic thought as a criterion of subjectivity is anachronic because it means importing all modern European notions of Self, modeled by the European thought ever since Descartes. Gill criticizes Charles H. Kahn, A.A. Long, and Michel Foucault especially, who claim that, in the Hellenistic period, the focus was on self-consciousness, which presupposes an individual or personal perspective (Gill 2006, 334). Hutchinson does not agree with this interpretation of the Hellenistic theories about Self and disagrees as well with Gill's criticism of the aforementioned authors. He is however on the same page as him when it comes to being cautious about attributing modern theses about Self to ancient philosophers, and

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[2]   The modern continental philosophers, from René Descartes to Jean Paul Sartre, can be considered as situating at the third level, since they treat their own subjectivity as being decisive in the knowledge of the Self and of the World, but also some of the contemporary analytical philosophers, who characterise Mind in terms of a group of notions derived from the Cartesian tradition, such as *immediacy*, *transparency* and *authority*, as indicates Hutchinson.

that of course to avoid the distortion of the original/classical theories. *Enneads* contains a theory of conscience that indicates a powerful sense of subjectivity without involving the modern notion of self-consciousness. The importance of studying the Plotinian theory of conscience is that it allows to analyze its nature outside the post-Cartesian framework and define at the same time new understandings of the notion of conscience that stem from this framework, indicates Hutchinson (2018, 39). In arguing that the American author point out that Plotinus utilizes four terms to refer to cognitive activities: *antilepsis*, *parakolouthesis*, *sunaisthesis* și *sunesis*. Each of these terms express a different way of even if they all could be translated as "consciousness". *Sunaisthesis* is the most present type of consciousness, and it appears at each of the levels of Plotinus' ontology and at every level of the human self. On the level of the physical self, it refers to the internal awareness of our corporeal parts and all embodied activities. Its function is to unite the body in a subject, enabling it to recognize that the parts and the respective activities belong to it and at the dianoetic and noetic levels, it refers to the internal awareness of our psychic and noetic activities. The fundamental role of *sunaisthesis* is to produce unity by constituting the subject as a structured coherent whole. *Antilepsis* is a type of consciousness that emerges in the *Dianoetic Self*: imagination (*phantastikon*) is one of the two principal powers of this Self, who is responsible for the awareness of sensible and intelligible objects. Unlike *sunaisthesis*, *antilepsis* is indirect and mediate because the Dianoetic Self becomes conscious of the sensible and intelligible objects through images. The role of *antilepsis* is to generate activities which take place in the soul-body compound or in certain parts of the soul. *Parakolouthesis* is a type of consciousness that appears in the *Dianoetic Self*, in the *Noetic Self* and the *Intellect*. It is a higher order consciousness involving a second-order state directed toward a first-order state. At the level of *Intellect*, the second-order state (one thinking that is thinking) is included in the first-order state (thinking). As Hutchinson indicates:

"Plotinus admits that incarnated human beings can think or act without being conscious that they are thinking, or they are taking action, and even draws attention to the fact that being conscious of

our thoughts and actions can actually be an impediment to thinking and action." (Hutchinson 2018, 39)

Bearing these coordinates in mind, we see how all this indicates an approach with a high degree of complexity, due mostly to the expanded vision of reality based on the emanation doctrine. In such a way that the (modern) notion cannot be translated by a single term and it takes four concepts to cover the Plotinian semantics of consciousness. That, combined with the description of the existence of three levels of self-awareness, provides a surprising picture of the complexity of Plotinus' doctrine, impossible to be framed in a modern description as it includes aspects related to ontology.

6. Proclus and Origen: *epistrophe* versus *apokatastasis*

In Proclus, the use of *epistrophe* is parallel to that of *apokatastasis*, as part of the triadic movement of *mone*, *proodos* și *epistrophe* Proclus attributes the theorizing of this movement to Iamblichus, according to whom the Monad is the principle of identity and the moment of immanence, the Dyad introduces the procession, and the Triad is the origin of reversion. *Procession*, according to Proclus, is a movement from better to worse, while *reversion* describes the reversed process from worse to better (see Hutchinson 2018, 36-37).

Ilaria Ramelli sees that for Proclus, only the bodiless and partless, as soul itself, can return to wit can have an *epistrophe*. The body does not have an *epistrophe*, which also implies that there is no resurrection of bodies. Origen excluded, as well, the resurrection of the material, *ipokeimenon*, of a body, which is in unceasing flux, and admitted only the resurrection of *eidos* or of the metaphysical form of the earthly body, transformed into a spiritual body; and Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius of Pontus make similar assertions. For them, resurrection is part of the restoration, which involves soul and intellect, as well as body, that will be elevated at the level of the soul, and the latter at the level of the intellect. The connection between *epistrophe* and *apokatastasis* is well-defined especially for souls: the *Decade* indicates the inversion (*epistrophe*) of all the beings in the Cosmos toward the One; and the *Ninety*, the

restoration (*apokatastasis*) to the monad next to the procession (*proodos*).
The restoration is posited, like the reversion, next to the procession.
Dionysius, who was strongly influenced by Proclus, regards restoration
as a reversion (Ramelli 2017, 107). Proclus observes that the reversion of
soul, which is parallel to Origen's notion of *apokatastasis*, "is achieved by
virtue of likeness" with the highest principle. *Apokatastasis* is common
both to "souls" and to "mortal animals", but in different ways because
for souls alone depend on life "according to virtue". Proclus states this
general principle:

> "Each return is perfectly accomplished by means of the likeness
> of those returning to the principle to which they return." (Proclus
> 1932, 32)

Proclus was relying on Plato's *Homoiosis Theou* (see *Theaitetos* in Plato
1997, 176 B), Origen on Plato and Scripture (*Genesis*, 1: 26-27), but none
of these sources includes the specific idea that the return/restoration will
be through likeness. This is rather found in Origen and Proclus. The
latter noted that in Plotinus, likeness was a fundamental presupposition
of all knowledge (Plotinus 2018, 1.8.1), meaning that he interpreted
knowledge as a type of reversion. Dionysius, who knew well the
writings of Origen and Proclus, asserted as well that likeness is the
motor of reversal, which in his opinion is associated with *apokatastasis*
(see Ramelli 2017, 108).

7. Between Plotinus and the Horizon of Christian Thinking

As John Rist says in *Plotinus and Christian Philosophy*, where two doctrines
apparently have a common basis, as it is the case with the Christian and
platonic notions about the ultimate perfection of man (or of the human
soul), confusion it is most likely to occur. Throughout the history of
Early Christians there was an obvious tension and antagonism between
those who considered the platonic self-perfection theory to be a sort of
anticipation of Christianity, and those who dismissed it firmly as a
deceiving, or maybe even blasphemous parody of the Christian truth.

Sometimes, both types of reaction can be seen at the same author, as in the case of Augustine. In such a (prolonged) history of interaction between Platonism and Christianity, we must first grasp the degree of influence that the Plotinian version of human perfection had over the perspective of Christian authors (Rist 1996, 393). What really mattered for this presence of platonic concepts in the Christian discourse was that any form of Platonism which supported Arius' Subordinationism became after Nicaea unacceptable, so a part of the Neoplatonic discourse was excluded, and the Christians who had read Plotinus, but wanted at the same time to remain Orthodox (as the vast majority of them did), had no other way but to reject the Plotinian Hypostases of the One (Rist 1996, 395).

8. Maximus The Confessor and the Re-signification of *epistrophe*

Maximus the Confessor used and adapted the Neoplatonic philosophical concepts of *proodos* (procession) and *epistrophe* (conversion) when expressing the central theme of his thought, the *Incarnation of God*. In an excellent study, Vladimir Cvetković points out that to portray the union between God and Creation, Maximus utilizes the revised form of the Neoplatonic dialectical pair of procession and reversion (*proodos-epistrophe*) (Cvetković 2015, 197). Maximus asserts that the only *Logos* is a multitude of *logoi* on the ground of creative and conservative procession, while many *logoi* coexist in *Logos* due to the transfer and providence of conversion. Procession, according to Maximus, is made up of two elements: a *creative element* and a *conservation element*: creative procession can be identified with the creation of the world in agreement with the divine wills concerning the created beings. We can distinguish two types of *logoi* or divine wills: the universal *logoi* vs. the individuals' *logoi*. The structure of the *logoi* can be presented graphically, in the exact same way we find it ordered in the Porphyrian tree, all these *logoi* are unseparated from their participation with the *logoi* of the superior hierarchies. Yet, the *logoi* of each being maintains beings undivided in the general order, keeping them at the same time unblended among themselves (Cvetković 2015, 198).

The natural *logos* of every being is defined and circumscribed not only by the *logoi* of its essence, nature, or species, but also by the *logoi* of

the relation, blending, position, quantity, and quality, which preserves the particularity unconfounded with the other beings. In the process of creative procession, God predetermines every being through its *logos*. The term "predetermination" needs to be understood in a broad sense because the level of likeness that created creatures have with their *logoi* depends on its character. The converting transfer process commences with the decision taken by the rational being of moving toward the cause, beginning or actual end. In both cases, the destination of this movement will be God. While it returns to its cause, moving toward the actual end or the final union with God, and finding eventually the purpose of its existence or its own *logos*, the rational being will also learn the way to fulfill this purpose. Through Incarnation, Christ showed the way that every man must assume to divinize himself. Christ did not only convert (*epistrophe*) human nature toward God, but also lead it step by step. The *epistrophe* process should be the divinization process of the entire humanity, which is not over. Therefore, Maximus states that God divided the whole History in two periods: a preparing stage in which God had to become man, and another stage in which Humanity can ascend into God. The dividing event, but also unifying, for these two periods, that gave at the same time History meaning, is the Incarnation of Logos in the Person of Jesus Christ and His saving work, which culminated with His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

The terminological novelty of Maximus was of replacing *epistrophe* with the more precise term *antistrophe*. While the term "conversion" (*epistrophe*) describes only the returning process of the human being to God, the "reversion" process (*antistrophe*) refers rather to the divinization of the human being. The latter is not only a term that expresses the mutuality and correspondence between them, but also describes their outcome. Whereas the outcome of the humanization of Christ was the hypostatic union between His divine and human nature, the outcome of the divinization of the human being should be the hypostatic union between divine and human, result that is potentially present in every human being (Cvetković 2015, 200).

9. Conclusions

A fluid semantic of *epistrophe* came into play in the speculative frameworks of the authors who constituted the Neoplatonic tradition, from Porphyry to Damascius. In each of these authors, different emphases appeared regarding human's ability to travel the path of reversion, *epistrophe*. Late Neoplatonic authors favor the role of theurgy in the possibility of reversion, since the self, in all its aspects and layers, is completely lowered. The act of contemplation no longer signifies the connection to *Nous*, due to the inexistence of a continuum with it. In many cases, the adaptation of the Neoplatonic notions was accompanied by the invention of certain terms meant to capture all the complexity when expressing the Christian message. Maximus the Confessor refines the Neoplatonic concept *procession* by using attributes like "creative" and "conservative" to stress the permanent presence of God in the world, also by replacing the term "conversion" with the term "reversion", Maximus shows how the Incarnated God ended the process and initiated the conversion process. And by expressing in different terms the *returning process*, it is shown that God and His creation contribute equally to this process.

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HAPPINESS ACCORDING TO
BOETHIUS' *CONSOLATIO PHILOSOPHIAE*

VASILICA MUGUREL PAVALUCA[1]

Abstract. As a philosopher or a lover of philosophy, one wonders whether this area can also be useful in everyday life; whether philosophy also has a reason that leads to happiness. Boethius tried to find the answer to this question in the 6th century through his writing *Consolatio Philosophiae*. The Lady Philosophy helps the prisoner Boethius see true goodness and choose authentic happiness. In this essay we try to analyze the text of the *Consolatio Philosophiae* and show how a happy life is possible through philosophy. We go through all the books and analyze the key passages of the *Consolatio*. At the same time, we follow the state of mind of Boethius and see how far he understands the prospect of happiness. From diagnosing Boethius (as established by Lady Philosophy) as banished in his existence, through understanding *Fortuna* as an ever-changing goddess, to true happiness, we accompany Boethius in his sorrows and doubts. The last questions of books four and five, the questions of the theodicy, refer to the justification of the philosopher to believe in a God who allows evil in the world and who supposedly does not predestine creation in his foreknowledge. The conclusions are partially redundant. It is up to the individual to decide whether philosophy can be a good companion on the way to eternal happiness. Some prerequisites of Boethian philosophy and theology could be established here.

Keywords: Boethius, happiness, philosophy, theology, Consolatio

> "The beauty of earth changes.
> Enjoy it but never think to trust it.
> As with the fleeting pleasures
> of men, a stern law decrees
> that nothing in life lasts" (Boethius II 3, 2008, 37)

[1] Private Docent at the Institute for Lutheran Theology of the University Carl von Ossietzky Oldenburg, Docent at the Institute for Lutheran Theology of University Dortmund and Guest Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University Bucharest. Emails: <pavalucamugurel@gmail.com>, <mugurel.pavaluca@tu-dortmund.de>.

Introduction

The question of whether philosophy can provide a mental state that can lead to a happy life was answered positively by the great philosophers of antiquity. However, the question "What is meant by happiness?" reflects also not negligible relevance. Most ancient philosophers seem to reject the notion of happiness as a hedonistic collection of goods or a casual attitude toward ephemeral life. We think at just one example. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) speaks of θεωρίᾱ as a lucky divine vision[2] long before Christian thinkers such as Dionysius Areopagita (most probably 6th century A.D.)[3] or Maximus the Confessor (580-662 A.D.)[4]. Aristotle does not deny that material goods are necessary for a healthy and good life. However, these are only means to an end which don't bring happiness, for the true goal is the divine contemplation (cf. Aristotle 1999, 176-177). If one looks at the origin of the term *theoria* and split it into the two building words that lead to the formation of its meaning, one concludes that it is about Seeing (ὁράω) God (θεός). To see God implies no bodily eyes, but a special cultivation of the soul because this kind of pleasure involves "no pain or appetite" (Aristotle 1999, 122), but it concerns divine matters beyond the senses. Those, who see God, are to be named *θεωρός*, viewers of God (Wolfgang Pfeifer et al 2003, 1429).

Leaving Aristotle, we ask ourselves: What if one is already fallen in this life, in its boundaries and material limits? Does one have the chance to escape it through philosophy?

Many thinkers did not learn it only by theory, but also by living. In the stoic philosophy, for instance, there is a close bond between the philosophy as the study of virtue and the philosophy as living the virtue itself. This interdependency is defined by Seneca (1 B.C. – 65 A.D.) as follows:

> "For philosophy cannot exist without virtue, nor virtue without philosophy. Philosophy is the study of virtue, by means, however, of virtue itself; but neither can virtue exist without the study of itself,

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[2]   "Happiness extends, then, just so far the contemplation does […] Happiness, therefore, must be some form of contemplation." (Aristotle 1999, 176).

[3]   Cf. Dionysius the Areopgite I, 4, 1857, Vol. 3, 592D.

[4]   Cf. Maximus the Confessor, 1052A.

nor can the study of virtue exist without virtue itself. […] the path by which one reaches virtue leads by way of virtue itself; philosophy and virtue cling closely together." (Seneca 1920, *Letter 89, 8*, 569)

Seneca sees the gaining of virtue in the acts of contemplation and conduct, which correspond to the study of philosophy (contemplation) and the practice of the same (conduct) (Seneca 1920, *Letter 92, 45*, 649). Gaining the virtue itself presupposes a low state of mind at the beginning of the process. That's why one can conclude that the real form of contemplation is a form gained after empirical failures. Recognizing the Hight of philosophy as the striving to seeing God (Seneca 1917, *Letter 65*, 23, 323)[5], and the bottom upon one finds himself, the contemplation reshapes itself in the form of consolation. One cannot directly embrace the philosophical pureness, but firstly recognize it by measuring the deepness of own fall. The discrepancy between the philosophical life as, for instance, understood by Aristotle and the real life, full of decadence and weakness, is compensated in our context by the term *consolation*.

Consolation is what could be not gained from the very beginning, but first after a kind of loss.

The kind of consolation one might find in philosophy, be it as a free initiative or forced by the context, is uniquely described in the history of philosophical thinking by the Latin philosopher and theologian of late antiquity Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (480-524 A.D.) as the looking for happiness. This essay attempts to show how philosophy can bring consolation or happiness, using the example of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*. A few introductory words about his person, his life context, and his general contribution to the history of ideas are mentioned here before the Boethian consolation of philosophy.

1. Boethius: life context and relevance

Boethius lived during the reign of the Ostrogoth king Theodoric (454-526 A.D.), at whose court he embraced high offices as Roman senator and consul.

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[5] Seneca speaks here about the contemplation of the nature created by God.

"By 522 he had risen to the position of Master of Offices at Theodoric's court in Ravenna." (Boethius 2008, xii)

Despite his position and rising career as politician Theodoric suspected him of supporting a conspiracy together with the Eastern Roman Emperor against the rule of the Ostrogothic reign. He was arrested on Theodoric's orders and executed after several months in prison. His sentence to death took place without any proof of his guilt of treason (cf. Fried 2015, 28). Historians hold that Theodoric suffered from paranoia during this period and believed any rumor of betrayal (Boethius 2008, xii).

During the years of his burgeoning career Boethius endeavored to realize ambitious projects. He intended to translate and comment all the works of Plato and Aristotle, and make them accessible in Latin:

"I shall translate into Latin every work of Aristotle's that comes into my hands, and I shall write commentaries on all of them; […] And I shall also translate and comment upon all Plato's dialogues and put them into Latin form. […] I shall bring the thought of Aristotle and Plato somehow into harmony and show that these two philosophers are not at odds in everything as a great many people suppose." (Boethius 2008, xiii)[6]

He could not fulfill these projects because of the sudden sentence to death. Nevertheless, he left many writings, commentaries and translations in which Aristotle and Porphyry are of paramount importance (Marenbon 2003, 164-182)[7]. Boethius wrote also as a theologian. In his four Theological Tractates he dealt in particular with the two natures of Christ. Here Augustine's theology played a decisive role for him (cf. Lerer in Boethius 2008, xiv).

Although the monumental projects remained unfinished because of his death, he became the most important mediator of Greek logic,

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[6] Boethius expresses this intention in his commentary on Aristotle's *Perihermeneias*.

[7] Marenbon offers in ninth Chapter "Boethius's Influence in the Middle Ages" the main works of Boethius and their reception in the Middle Ages. The main logical translations, commentaries and treatises as well as the *Opuscula Sacra* and the *Consolation* are here displayed and commented.

mathematics, and music theory to the Latin-speaking world from the Middle Ages to the 12th century.

> "Boethius's translations of the logical texts were used universally in the medieval universities, and they were copied in hundreds of university manuscripts." (Marenbon 2003, 165)

His translations and commentaries on Aristotle and Porphyry will constitute the fundamental basis for logic schools and universities in the West until the late Middle Ages. Marebon says in this respect:

> "The Isagoge, Categories and On Interpretation, in Boethius's translations, formed, along with Boethius's textbooks, the syllabus of the early twelfth-century logical schools. […] Boethius's translations of the logical texts were used universally in the medieval universities, and they were copied in hundreds of university manuscripts." (Marenbon 2003, 165)

Nevertheless, his work *Consolatio philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*), which he wrote while he was in prison, had the strongest impact on the future Western philosophy. Alcuin, Abelard, and Aquinas (cf. Marenbon 2003, 173, 176-179) are just a few names of Western thinkers and theologians, who were massively influenced by Boethius' work *Consolatio*. Even if the Consolatio is read less after the year 1200, it continues to remain a source for many thinkers, poets, and philosophers. Relevant influences can be seen at many later thinkers such as Dante, Boccaccio, or Chaucer (cf. Marenbon 2003, 173).

If one is to say a few words also about the sources and influences which determined Boethius to formulate his *Consolatio* as he did, the conclusion is not a simple one. By analyzing special passages of his *Consolatio*, one would assume that Boethius was working like a Cicero, Seneca, or Augustine when he wrote the *Consolatio*, and might see his consolatory text passages as a collection of material for one's own work (cf. Gruber 2006, 40-41). After he was suspended from his offices and taken to Pavia, Boethius misses in prison especially his library. Therefore, he must quote from memory. This fact makes it difficult to

identify the sources for the *Consolatio*. One can prove the Neoplatonic interpretation of Platonic (*Timaios*) and Aristotelian (*Physics*) thoughts by comparing them with corresponding passages from Neoplatonic commentaries. Beyond Plato and Aristotle, an influence from Cicero (*De Divinatione and Somnium Scipionis*) can also be claimed, but nowhere can it be shown that a specific passage of these texts is the exact and only source (cf. Gruber 2006, 42).

   Consolatio philosophiae, which can be described as his main work, was written under the influence of his sad situation in prison at the time and presents his main ideas on ethics and metaphysics. The fall from his previous promising position moved him, in his current state, to think about authentic life and its true goods. In *Consolatio* Boethius combines the Platonic conspectus with the Aristotelian method, developing "the pedagogic dialogue found in the works of Plato, Cicero, and St. Augustine into a dramatic narrative of self-awareness." (Lerer in Boethius 2008, xv). In both forms, poetry and prose, the work is written as a dialogue between the imprisoned Boethius and the Lady Philosophy (the personified philosophy), who is supposed to comfort and teach him, leading eventually to his soul healing. The title of the work, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, indicates its literary genre as consolation. The genitive "*philosophiae*" can be either possessive or subjective. As possessive the consolation belongs to the realm of philosophy and comes from it; as subjective the philosophy gives consolation, also in the meaning that the Lady Philosophy comforts the imprisoned (cf. Bechtle 2006, 266). Both meanings indicate the philosophy as a source of comfort for wounded souls.

2. *Fortuna labilis* and its deceptive consolation

Despite the title "Consolatio Philosophiae" Boethius does not use the word "*consolatio*". He questions instead the term "*beatitudo*"[8] as a specific synonym for consolation. Therefore, we use alternative the terms "happiness" and "consolation" (the striving for happiness) also as synonyms.

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[8]   Boethius, *Philosophiae Consolationis*, Book III, 2, 2-3, in Bibliotheca Augustana, available at: https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost06/Boethius/boe_con2.html, last time accessed on April 29, 2022.

The main references to happiness and its false understanding as good of the material world and as consolation of the goddess Fortuna can be found in the first two books of *Consolatio Philosophiae*. In the first book the prisoner laments his sad fate and the unfaithfulness of the fortune that once favored him (cf. Boethius 2008, 1-2). In the process of his lamentation philosophy appears to him as a venerable female figure (cf. Boethius 2008, 3). Malicious slanderers would have plunged him into misfortune. The Senate, for which he selflessly campaigned, had let him down, and the ill-informed public considered him guilty (cf. Boethius 2008, 13).

In the second book, the two interlocutors deal with Fortuna, the goddess of fortune and fate. The prisoner accuses Fortuna of his misery and shows that she has changed her attitude towards him. The Lady Philosophy warns him about the changeable being of Fortuna, who is by nature fickle and treacherous (cf. Boethius 2008, 28). Exactly this variability is her essence and the only reliable thing about her. Furthermore, the Lady Philosophy deepens these thoughts by describing the individual goods in their dubiousness. The culmination point of the second book is reached in the conclusion that possessions are not real and a real good can never harm its owner (cf. Boethius 2008, 47).

Boethius recognizes from the very beginning the value of Lady Philosophy, who is "ancient and nobody would mistake her for a creature of our time" (Boethius 2008, 3). This recognition provides a good start for the treatise, because the philosophy finds in him the good will to listen to her and to converse with her. Her quality as "ancient" is confirmed by saying that she has been doing the battle of consolation forever against "proud stupidity" (Boethius 2008, 8); long before Plato's (428/427 – 348/347 B.C.) time.

Here arises the question: Why is the consolation necessary?

Philosophy establishes a diagnosis about Boethius. She says he suffers from lethargy and depression because he no longer knows who he is (cf. Boethius 2008, 6, 24). She seems to know exactly how to cure him. The cure bases on the fact that he used to know her. She just needs to clear "the mist that beclouds his vision" (Boethius 2008, 6). The mist which should be cleared is the banishment, in which Boethius thinks he finds himself. This kind of banishment is according to the Lady Philosophy no real danger for Boethius. He just judges it wrongly. More important is that the banishment is not merely geographical, but especially an inner thing:

> "You have been banished from yourself, and one could even say that you are therefore the instrument of your own torments, for no one else could have done this to you. You seem to have forgotten what your native country is. It is not a democracy like old Athens, but as Homer (8th century B.C. says, 'There is one rule, the one king,' (*Iliad*, 2204-205) and he is a friend to his subjects and never sends them into exile. To obey his justice is the only freedom." (Boethius 2008, 20)

The banishment from oneself is the consequence of not knowing anymore who one is. The Platonic motive of reminding marks here the finding to the real self. Lady Philosophy connects the finding of the self with the "native country", the place where is neither unjustness nor exile. The ruling king requires through his justice the kind of obedience which brings the real freedom.

The role of this dialogue is to get Boethius in the right mood of recognizing his own inner attitude as false. Even if he was sincere in his attitude to Senate or Theodoric, his attitude was still untruthful to himself. There remain a few questions still open: What did Boethius wrong? How did he move away from his own self and from his "native country"?

The Lady Philosophy argues that Boethius relied on someone who is never reliable: Fortuna. This goddess "spins the wheel (of luck), and one or another number comes up lucky, while the only constant is change" (Boethius 2008, 30). Trusting her can only bring misery (Boethius 2008, 29). As a demonstration the Lady Philosophy plays the role of Fortuna herself and addresses Boethius:

> "I gave you all kinds of affluence and luxury, whatever was in my power, and you took it as if it were your right. Now that I have taken it back, you ought to thank me for the use of what was always mine anyway rather than complain of the loss of what was never yours." (Boethius 2008, 31)

The principle of chance or having by chance is strongly questioned in this context. Boethius himself is supposed to have known that there is no constancy in human affairs and Fortuna works always with the time which brings change inevitably (cf. Boethius 2008, 36). A parallel with

the text of Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians is obvious. Paul says: "For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?"[9]. Consequently, having goods or luck, and being happy or comforted because of it, makes someone not different in his being. The only difference, which might bring unhappiness and misery, is made by embracing the false state of mind.

Interestingly, the Lady Philosophy offers Boethius the other side of Fortuna, which might bring consolation by her very characteristic of changeability:

> "You are unhappy because you have lost those things in which you took pleasure? But you can also take comfort in the likelihood that what is now making you miserable will also pass away." (Boethius 2008, 36)

In connection with this thought Lady Philosophy draws an extreme conclusion at the end of the second book. She shows that misfortune is more instructive and better for the human soul because through it fortune shows its true face from the very beginning. In this respect she says:

> "The fact of the matter is that ill fortune is better for men than good. When Fortune smiles, she is always false. But when she is inconstant and whimsical, she shows her true self. The first aspect of Fortune will deceive people, but the second is instructive. The first blinds while the second opens men's eyes to how fragile the happiness of mortals really is." (Boethius 2008, 56-57)

3. The true happiness (consolation)

At this point of the second book the Lady Philosophy problematizes the nature of happiness and implicitly of its consolation. Is happiness relying on the real Fortuna?

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[9] I Cor. IV, 7 in English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible. Available at: <https://www.esv.org/> last time accessed on April 29, 2022.

Firstly, she argues that there is no such thing as happiness based on material possession and high positions. Even those who seem to have everything miss something, which makes them unhappy (cf. Boethius 2008, 39). Therefore, good fortune is not something that one possesses entirely or forever. If good fortune, understood as being wealthy and embracing high positions in the society, can not provide happiness, then one should not look outside of himself, but inside. Being in possession of yourself is the most precious thing and the only one Fortuna cannot take away (cf. Boethius 2008, 48-49). In this respect, Lady Philosophy argues:

> "If happiness is the highest good of a rational man, and if whatever can be taken away cannot be the highest good (because that which can't be taken away must be a higher good), then it makes no sense to say that good fortune can supply happiness." (Boethius 2008, 49)

Conclusively, the happiness is not what it seems to be and it cannot be gained through Fortuna. Furthermore, authentic happiness does not belong to the category of impermanence and death. It is a matter of the soul that cannot be satisfied by material and time-affected goods:

> "[…] the bodies of men are subject to happenstance and in any event are mortal and will die. If you still hold that position, it is difficult to see how you would argue that bodily pleasure can bring happiness, if every kind of mortal thing is fated to descend into misery and death." (Boethius 2008, 42)

At this point the Lady Philosophy talks about the deceptiveness of possessing money and wealth, showing that someone who finds value in himself does not need external trinkets (cf. Boethius 2008, 46). The real discovery of the self in its pureness implies no attachments to ephemeral means like money, whose possession harms not only the possessor by inducing the false state of mind, but also the others because "it cannot be shared with many men, and it cannot be possessed without making others poorer" (Boethius 2008, 44). With this assertion, Boethius not only problematizes the possession of money in itself, but also the ethical dimension in relation to others. He assumes that the quantity of goods in

this limited world is also limited, which logically means that the wealth of one leads to the poverty of another.

Furthermore, the Lady Philosophy warns Boethius against a false attitude, which one might embrace even when he is independent of material goods or money. It is a question of a wrong approach to philosophy in which one claims to be a philosopher "not from a dedication to truth and reason, but out of vanity, as a way of enhancing his reputation" (Boethius 2008, 54-55). When somebody suggested that such a "philosopher" is a fraud because he does not adopt a patient manner by bearing in silence the insults and injuries of life, the "philosopher" claimed he would embrace such attitude. After months or years of practicing the philosophy in silence the "philosopher" asked his challenger: "Now do you admit that I am a philosopher?" (Boethius 2008, 55). The challenger replied: "I would have, if you had kept silent" (Boethius 2008, 54-55)[10]. It seems that this well-known saying (if you had remained silent, you would have remained a philosopher) has its roots in *Consolatio Philosophiae*.

However, the main question of this context is: What is the content of real happiness? Or what is the consolation of Boethian philosophy?

The third book deals mainly with this matter. The starting point of the third book is that happiness constitutes itself as the main and only goal of the human being (cf. Boethius 2008, 61). The Lady Philosophy understands happiness as a union of all goods that can never be lost. Wealth, power, fame, honor, pleasure, material advantages etc., are not really defining happiness because they push one to need more, producing fear and worry (cf. Boethius 2008, 63). At this point, Lady Philosophy and Boethius conclude that the origin of all things is God.

Happiness can only be called real happiness if it leaves nothing to be desired. The absolute claim of happiness[11] as the absolute fulfilment of the being and the highest good assumes that nothing can be missing when one has it. All men strive for this inborn condition of being happy, but many of them are misconducted und look for it at wrong places such

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[10] Cf. the Latin text: "Intellexeram, inquit, si tacuisses", Boethius, Philosophiae Consolationis, Book II, 7, 21, in Bibliotheca Augustana, available at: <https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~har sch/Chronologia/Lspost06/Boethius/boe_con2.html>, last time accessed on April 29, 2023.

[11] "So happiness is necessarily that state that is perfect and that includes within it everything a man could want." (cf. Boethius 2008, 61).

as: wealth, high office, power, fame, and pleasure (cf. Boethius 2008, 63). This thirst, which is falsely quenched, will never end because bodily needs just produce more needs. Boethius never defines the happiness as a need because it belongs to another category of being. It rather refers to a state of mind regarding the soul of man. The main difference between need and happiness is that the first is marked by fear and worry (cf. Boethius 2008, 72), while the second represents the inner value, which is not compelled by necessity (cf. Boethius 2008, 175)[12]. Even glory and reputation, which seem to be inner values, are nothing more than vulgar and deceptive needs, which do not last and depend on the "whimsical judgments of the mob" (cf. Boethius 2008, 74).

After these dialogues with the Lady Philosophy Boethius seems to have understood what happiness is not. The connection to the content of happiness and real consolation is made by the Lady Philosophy through reminding of Timaeus, where Plato says that "we ought to ask for God's help even in the smallest matters" (Boethius 2008, 83)[13]. Therefore, both conclude to call God for help. At this point the Lady Philosophy begins to sing:

> "O Lord, you govern the universe with your eternal order: you brought time itself into being, and all that marks its changes in the heavens and here on the earth, both moving and also in stillness. Nothing but your love could have prompted you to bring forth the matter and forms that together make up the world. From within yourself, ungrudging, you brought out the pattern of all that is good, inasmuch as it partakes of your own goodness. […] To the

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[12] See Book V. Freedom is a subject we will return to.

[13] Boethius refers here most likely to the passage where Socrates speaks about the "duly calling upon the Gods" and Timaeus concludes: "All men, Socrates, who have any degree of right feeling, at the beginning of every enterprise, whether small or great, always call upon God. And we, too, who are going to discourse of the nature of the universe, how created or how existing without creation, if we be not altogether out of our wits, must invoke the aid of Gods and Goddesses and pray that our words may be acceptable to them and consistent with themselves". See *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett. E-texts for this edition by Antonio Gonzalez Fernandez, *Timaeus*, 1857, available at: <https://www.academia.edu/26973388/The_Dialogues_of_Plato_428_27_348_47_BCE> last time accessed on April 29, 2022.

blessed who alone behold it, you are the sole serene goal in which we may rest, sat is fi ed and tranquil, and to see your face is our only hunger, our only thirst, for you are our beginning, our journey, and our end." (Boethius 2008, 84-86)

The song of the Lady Philosophy goes beyond calling God for help and names him the beginning and the end, the origin and the purpose of all things and beings. The answer Boethius is about to get is already given in the song.

God, the creator of all things as good things, is the only one who can encompass all goods the human nature is longing for, be it named consolation or happiness. The Father of all things cannot receive his goodness from outside, but only from inside. Receiving it from outside would imply a better source than he is. This would also lead to a god who is missing something (cf. Boethius 2008, 87). That's why he must be the most excellent of all things. This kind of rationalism leads Boethius to assert that "the author of all things is inherently and, in his substance, the highest good" (cf. Boethius 2008, 88). The further remark of the Lady Philosophy, that the highest good, they were talking before, is the happiness as goal of every man, conducts to the only possible conclusion: "Then happiness is itself God"[14] (cf. Boethius 2008, 88). Moreover, since the content of happiness is the divinity itself, the "men in the pursuit of happiness are actually in the pursuit of divinity. But as in their efforts to pursue justice they become just, and in the pursuit of wisdom they become wise, this logic would lead us to conclude that in the pursuit of divinity they would become gods, which is awkward because God, by his nature, is singular. Still there is nothing to prevent the acquisition of divinity by participation in his divinity" (Boethius 2008, 89). Over 800 years before Gregor Palamas (1296-1359) Boethius speaks of men as gods by the grace of God and not by substance. The

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[14] Cf. Latin text: "Igitur, inquit, deum esse ipsam beatitudinem necesse est confiteri". Boethius, Philosophiae Consolationis, Book III, 10, 17, in Bibliotheca Augustana, available at: <https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost06/Boethius/boe_con2.html>, last time accessed on April 29, 2022.

term he uses is "participatione"[15]. In Palamas' theology, in the sacramental events of the Ekklesia, man becomes god by grace, as Palamas puts it in his dialogue Theophanes: "all become gods in their entirety, without coinciding with the nature of God" (PG 150, 936C)[16]. Therefore, the Lady Philosophy talks about a participation in God's divinity, that means in God himself. There is no talk about an outer reality of God produced by God, but of the inner being of God. This conclusion can also be drawn from the idea that the substance of God is the goodness itself (cf. Boethius 2008, 91).

As one who misses nothing, God has all goods in himself together. That's why he is the only source corresponding to the seeking for the highest good. As *summum bonum*[17] God himself is the unity of all things par excellence. The efforts of living beings to keep their own unity and to avoid dissipation are an expression of their striving for the highest unity and the universal good, and this is God Himself (cf. Boethius 2008, 102).

4. Two matters of theodicy

The answer that God is the only fulfilment of human happiness and consolation is for Boethius not a closed matter. It arises new questions regarding some theological issues which are discussed in the last two books of *Consolatio Philosophiae*.

In the fourth book Boethius arises the question of theodicy. He problematizes how God allows evil and let it flourish, while virtue goes unrewarded (cf. Boethius 2008, 106). Lady Philosophy answers that everyone strives for the good. Attaining the good means becoming good yourself (cf. Boethius 2008, 110). Thus, only certain who are good themselves can attain the goal. The wicked can only either give up their wickedness or

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[15] Boethius, *Philosophiae Consolationis*, Book III, 10, 25, in Bibliotheca Augustana, available at: <https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost06/Boethius/boe_con3.html>, last time accessed on April 29, 2022.

[16] „Ολοι διόλου γινόμεθα θεοὶ, χωρὶς τῆς κατ᾽ οὐσίαν ταυτότητος".

[17] Boethius, *Philosophiae Consolationis*, Book III, 10, 20, in Bibliotheca Augustana, available at: <https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost06/Boethius/boe_con3.html>, last time accessed on April 29, 2022.

fail in their endeavors. If he succeeds in realizing his intentions, this will only sink him deeper into misery (cf. Boethius 2008, 124).

In the fifth book it is questioned the free will of man. This question is a kind of continuing the matter of theodicy because it is put in connection with the foreknowledge of God (cf. Boethius 2008, 152). Boethius problematizes here the foreknowledge as predestination. Lady Philosophy's answer goes in the direction of dividing the foreknowledge from anticipation (cf. Boethius 2008, 168-170).

This part of our essay deals mainly with these two theodicy questions: the existence of evil and the free will of man.

a. The existence of evil

The problem of evil mentions Boethius already at the end of the third book. The reasoning behind Boethius' assertion that the evil does not exist is announced by the dialogue with the Lady Philosophy about God as source of everything that is good. If God is omnipotent and can do everything, but he can not do evil, it results that evil is not a category of being. Evil is nothing "because God cannot do it and there is nothing he cannot do"[18] (Boethius 2008, 102). Also in the Greek thinking of the time was the evil the lack of participation in being, which means no participation in hypostatic form (being a person). In this respect Dionysius the Areopagite (5th-6th century A.D.) denies evil's hypostatic quality and calls it "parhypostasis"/ "παρυπόστασις" (PG 3, 732C, lat. *substantia simulacra*), a kind of parasitic subsistence.

At the beginning of the fourth book Boethius needs to hear a pertinent vindication of God regarding the existence of the evil in the world:

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[18] The good as the cause of being itself can be traced back to Plato, whose idea of the good takes a special position as the cause of creation. In the sixth book of the Republic Plato states: "In like manner the good may be said to be not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence, and yet the good is not essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power." See *The Dialogues of Plato*, *Republic*, 1390, available at: <https://www.academia.edu/26973388/The_Dialogues_of_Plato_428_27_348_47_BCE>, last time accessed on April 29, 2022. Cf. also Szlezák 2003, 111.

> "even though there is a ruler of the universe who is good, there is nonetheless evil in the world, even evil that passes unpunished. […] And there is a further question, too, which is that when wickedness rules, virtue not only goes unrewarded but is even overthrown and trodden under the feet of bad men. Virtue pays the penalty, rather than vice." (Boethius 2008, 106)

Returning to an explanation already established, The Lady Philosophy reminds Boethius that all men, good or bad, seek the good. However, they differ because some think that evil is good and confuse virtue with evil deeds and bodily pleasures. This difference leads to the next one, which is definitory for the context:

> "But since they are both seeking the good, but the good obtain it while the wicked do not, can there be any doubt that the good are powerful and the evil are weak?" (Boethius 2008, 111)

While the good exercise the virtues in order to obtain and maintain the good, the wicked try to gain the good by falling into the sinful deepness of their own desires. More than that, "vices are never unpunished, and virtue is never unrewarded" (Boethius 2008, 107). The weakness of ones and the power of the others are rewards in themselves. Participating in divinity by doing good practicing virtues leads to the nearness to the happiness itself, namely Got. The wicked men, on the other hand, participate in evil desires and acts, which provide no goods, and they move away from God. Boethius uses alternatively the terms "weak" and "wicked". The first one means the weakness of the body, the second one means a disease of the mind (cf. Boethius 2008, 127). Nevertheless, they become a pray of their own never-ending desires and their reward is the nothingness (cf. Boethius 2008, 114), because they do whatever they want, believing that through those things that they enjoy they will achieve the good they desire. "But they can never attain that good because wicked deeds do not lead to happiness" (Boethius 2008, 115). Therefore, one, who knows the good, should not ask for human justness and punishment for the weak and wicked. They should be treated as sick people, namely with pity and sympathy (compassion) (cf. Boethius 2008, 127).

The fourth book ends with the Lady Philosophy advising that fortune is not bad in herself, but the ways in which she is perceived by man. Here is the fortune vindicated in some way. Her task is not just to manage the realm of the ephemeral, but also to strengthen the virtues by testing men. For some is she just, for others is she instructive and useful (cf. Boethius 2008, 142). If one understands this fact, that she is not supposed to bring happiness because it is not her purpose to do it, and acts accordingly, one will also understand the righteousness of God, which does not belong to the perishable.

b. The free will of man

The providence of God rules in the entire creation, asserts the Lady Philosophy already in the fourth book:

> "It is providence that orders the motions of the stars, arranges the elements of matter with one another in proper proportion, and changes them in predictable ways. It renews the species of living things [...]." (Boethius 2008, 134)

Due to the divine providence nothing is left be chance. In this context, at the beginning of the fifth book, Boethius asks about the measurability of chance and whether the chance contains a part of random or coincidence (cf. Boethius 2008, 146). Lady Philosophy explains to him that "coincidence" is an empty word since all events are classified in causal chains (cf. Boethius 2008, 148). Only the ignorance of people who do not know the connections leads to the belief that something unexpected happened by accident. The term accident defines here something that happens presumably without any clear cause and purpose. Such a reality is not possible in a creation governed by divine providence. The Lady Philosophy defines therefore "chance" as "the unexpected result of causes that come together of things that were done for some other purpose" (Boethius 2008, 148). Having no knowledge of these causes and purposes or not understanding them does not mean that they are random or results of chaos. Their connection is the result of providence.

At this point Boethius puts the main question of the fifth book: "[…] but in all this closely linked series of causes, is there no room for

free will? Or does the chain of providence also constrain the motions of men's minds?" (Boethius 2008, 150). The answer that all rational beings must have free will to take decisions seems not to be good enough for Boethius. Therefore, he deepens the question returning partially, even if not naming it, to the issue of theodicy. God looks into the future and knows what is to come without error. Thus, there is no freedom of human will (cf. Boethius 2008, 152) if God's "certainty compels all thoughts and actions to happen" (Boethius 2008, 155). According to this assertion there are neither wicked nor good men, neither vices nor virtues because nobody can be punished or rewarded for acts he did not do freely.

The Lady Philosophy argues that the terms "foreknowledge" and "predestination" should be understood separately in their meanings. The fact that God knows in advance what men will do and how the story of creation will end does not mean that he predestines them. However, there remains one fact which is unsatisfactory. Even if God does not predestine man and creation, and "[…] even if foreknowledge is not the same as predestination, it is a sign that the future will happen inevitably in a certain way" (Boethius 2008, 159). In this case, even if one excludes foreknowledge, one can speak of predestination, insofar as the future has inevitably a predetermined path and is deprived of its dynamism (cf. Boethius 2008, 159).

Moreover, the interlocutors come back to God's foreknowledge. The Lady Philosophy introduces here an argumentation which bases on the ontological difference between divine and human nature. She explains that everything that is known is not known according to its own nature, but according to that of the knower. Thus, the divine knowledge corresponds to the nature of the divine substance (cf. Boethius 2008, 166-168). Therefore, God knows the flowing time of creation according to his divine nature. Since God's being cannot be encompassed by time because he is eternal, it is not appropriate to operate with empirical terms coming from human reason or experience.

Furthermore, "the eternity is the whole, simultaneous, perfect possession of limitless life, […] It is in an eternal present and has an understanding of the entire flow of time" (Boethius 2008, 168-169). Consequently, God's knowledge is not a grasping one in the course of time, but, unlike the human foreknowledge, it is timeless. For God there is no future, only eternal present; this means that future-related terms such as "knowledge in advance" and "anticipation" are not appropriate at all (cf. Boethius 2008, 168-180).

The Lady Philosophy draws the conclusion regarding the divine knowledge as follows: God's "knowledge surpasses time's movements and is made in the simplicity of a continual present, which embraces all the vistas of the future and the past, and he considers all this in the act of knowing as though all things were going on at once" (Boethius 2008, 170-171). Having this kind of absolute, timeless and whole knowledge of the creation, God is not someone who sees something before it happens, but in his eternity, in the eternal present, free from before and after. This knowledge of God is not just a passive knowing, but it constitutes itself as an active act of providence. It is not *praevidentia* (pre-vision), but *providentia* (providence) (cf. Boethius 2008, 171) as act of preserving all of creation to partake of life. That's why through the divine providence is maintained the freedom of man in its integrity (cf. Boethius 2008, 175).

The Lady Philosophy closes her work with Boethius by telling him that by virtue of man's free will, his acts and prayers will have meaning:

> "Do not be deceived. It is required of you that you do good and that you remember that you live in the constant sight of a judge who sees all things." (Boethius 2008, 175)

Conclusions

This essay attempted to show how philosophy can bring consolation or happiness, using the example of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*. Boethius is not a philosopher who thinks independently of Christian theology. He combines elements of Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy with Christian theology and creates a hybrid of common thinking which shows a clear interdependency of philosophy and theology in his time. He was not the only one. In search of truth and as a reaction to the Gnostic thinking of his time, Clemens of Alexandria (150-215 A.D.), for instance, ascribes a significant role to pagan philosophy in understanding divine truth and interpreting Holy Scripture (cf. von Ostheim 2008, 217).

Following the footsteps of Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plotinus, Augustin etc., Boethius creates a philosophical figure, the Lady Philosophy, who fulfills her purpose very well. The uniqueness of Boethius' work *Consolatio Philosophiae* consists in the fact that it seeks a philosophical consolation, which, however, is provided with Christian elements.

The banishment from himself is the diagnostic of the Lady Philosophy on Boethius, who does not know anymore who he is.

The Lady Philosophy shows Boethius that he is not in a geographical but in an internal exile. He needs infinite consolation, the consolation of happiness that lacks nothing. Boethius, unable to stray from Christian theology or classical philosophy, speaks of happiness as God himself, as the essence of God, the goal of human happiness. Participating in divinity by doing good practicing virtues leads to the nearness to the happiness itself, namely God. Thus, the first principle of the philosophical life is clear in Boethius' understanding: no happiness without the goodness that made it, God himself. This assertion brings with it certain counterarguments that we have presented. It is mainly the theodicy with its main argumentations, the existence of evil and the free will.

Boethius perceives philosophy as healing the soul. Philosophy is not only a way of speaking or arguing, but also a way of life. If we compare his philosophy with the Greek "*apatheia*" then it is an abandonment of the sinful self. It's not about giving up at all, it's about redeeming the selfish and sinful self. In the 7th century Maximus the Confessor spoke of dispassion, that is, liberation from bodily affects (*apatheia*), abstinence from all evil and participation in God (cf. Savvidis 1997, 122). If we remember those who, through their good deeds, become doers of good and participants in the goodness of God, then we do not get far from a special asceticism of philosophy in Boethius' thinking. All of Boethius's references that we have read regarding virtue and vice are nothing more than a tendency towards a process of the soul liberation of the human being from the affects, which does not stand against human nature and determination, but it brings fulfillment for becoming like God. It is not a Manichean view that the body is the dwelling place of evil, but a process of *apatheia* in late antiquity of the Western philosophy. Boethius never says the body is bad or source of sinful fall, but he talks about man as a whole.

Boethius' originality seems to lie in the topic of free will of man. One gets the impression that the essential goal that determines the whole discussion is the free will (cf. Bechtle 2006, 283). The whole logic of the *Consolatio* is based on the idea that God preserves man's free will. This means that man is not the result of a chaotic action, but he is sustained by divine providence, being in the same time product of his own will.

Boethius' answer to the question of whether a successful life in the spirit of philosophy is possible is yes. However, this life according to the principles of Lady Philosophy is doable solely in connection with a divine entity. Seeing beyond the ballast of the material ephemeral is Boethius' main thesis. Happiness is not what it seems to be.

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ON CREATIVITY AND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PASSION

SYLVIA BORISSOVA[1]

Abstract. The article aims to pay aesthetic and axiological tribute to Charles Fourier's conception of the so-called *attraction passionelle* – the basic drive of social development, and, in particular, of the composite passion, "the most beautiful of the twelve passions, the one which enhances the value of all the others". The exposition will consecutively focus on Herbert Marcuse's note in *Eros and Civilization* on the transformation of labor into pleasure as the central idea of Fourier's socialist utopia; on Fourier's insisting that only the composite passions, not the simple, are human trait; and, respectively, on analyzing beyond Fourier and Marcuse the role and significance of the composite passion – or, the "pure human passion", as the base of creativity in contemporary culture of post-/trans-/alter-human art, science and technology. Last but not least, the exposition will pay attention to how this "pure human passion" as the core of creativity could be related to the *emotional intelligence – artificial intelligence* (EI *vs*. AI) opposition in contemporary age.

Keywords: creativity, the Composite passion, EI vs. AI battle, Fourier, Marcuse

1. Preliminary notes

This article will step upon French philosopher, among the founders of utopian socialism, Charles Fourier's *New Industrial and Societary World* (Fourier 1829) and those aspects of his philosophical-fantastic *Theory of the Four Movements* (Fourier 2006/1808) that are of particular interest for exposing and analyzing his conception of 'the most beautiful passion'. In them, Fourier (1772-1837) foresaw a throughout transformation of society through a new organization of labor: through the *free* and *attractive labor*. Such an association will come, he wrote, in which the free development of each one will be condition for the free development of everyone; here

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[1] Associate Professor Culture, Aesthetics, Values Department, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Email: <sylvia.borissova@gmail.com>.

we already can hear the Renaissance appeal for a full-blooded life of a harmoniously and comprehensively developing personality.

The four movements of societal development are grouped two by two – as can be seen on *Figure 1*, there are two ascending and two descending movements: first and fourth are chaotic, and these in between are harmonic. Human history is periodized through the development of production, the human race is destined for happiness (cf. Fourier 1829, 33), and in Fourier's view, civilization has actually reached its zenith but its descending order begins because it has not found a way out to a higher form in time.
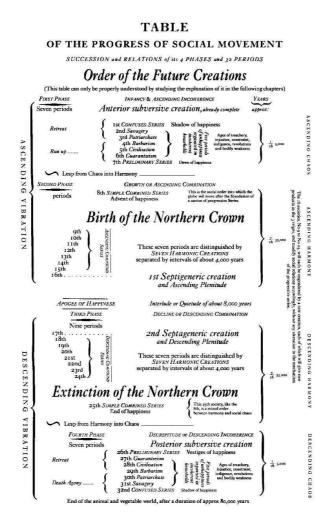

Figure 1. Fourier's table of the four movements (1808)

Periods preceding the harmonic society are those of guaranteeism (transitional period, semi-association) and socialism (first stage, simple association). So-called *harmonism*, or complex association, can be reached and maintained – and the last fourth descending stage of civilization development can be avoided along with guaranteeism and socialism – if only the principles of harmonic society are known.

Fourier's association, or *Phalanx*, is his utopia in which the possibilities and desires of humanity would coincide. And the key for the know-how of Fourier's beautiful harmonic society and the transformation of labor is finding the natural mechanism of human passions and attractions.

It was Fourier himself who was constantly forging new words, had original terminology, even his own punctuation and original fonts, and who was easily used to formulate the subject of new sciences, compose musical opuses, have a penchant for mathematics, write satirical poetry, to be interested in geography and physics… All this could be explained by Fourier's contemporary era – the unprecedented charge for freedom of the French Revolution gave birth to a new civil code (Napoleonic code), first-of-its-kind Declaration of the Rights of Man, respectively, first-of-its-kind Declaration of the Rights of Women, new names of the months, new metric system, even new playing cards. Though, it is the *butterfly passion*, that natural state of one's fleeting attention and mind from one thing to another and third according exclusively to one's inner mood and impetus etc., named by Fourier himself which very accurately describes the creative nature of the incomparable French philosopher.

His testament – the complex plan for the "passionate series", which will make society harmonious, and in individual terms will change the very fate of the individual – is forever engraved on his tombstone:

Figure 2. Charles Fourier's tombstone at Montmartre Cemetery
(Paris, France). Photo: Alex_Es, 2004:
*La série distribue les Harmonies. Les attractions sont proportionnelles
aux destinées. (The series distribute the harmonies. Attractions are
proportional to destinies.)*

2. Charles Fourier's butterflies and the unnamed human passions

2.1. *The types of passions no one has even named so far*

In both his *New Industrial and Societal World* and *Theory of the Four Movements* (Fourier 2006/1808), Fourier wrote about these types of passions that no one has even named so far, but drive society and culture; furthermore, the free use of all of them, taken together, will lead to the realization of the "true happiness" for humanity.

More precisely, Fourier describes 12+ driving passions which are essential for the well-being of culture and society when they are being used in their full capacity. Why 12+? Because, according to him, there are twelve 'radical' passions to be combined and a thirteenth, 'unityism', or harmonyism, which in harmony would comprehend the whole:

The first five 'luxurious' passions (*luxism*) correspond to the five senses, sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, and concern relationships with things, and their gratification depends upon health and material affluence. In Harmony, each sense would be accorded a guaranteed 'minimum' level of fulfilment.

Secondly, there are the four cardinal, affective passions (groupism) – friendship, ambition, love, and paternity or 'familism'. These passions could also be generalized as social since they concern relationships with other persons and form the basis of the four possible types of groups, that of friends, of associates, of lovers and of familial relationships. In particular, two of them, ambition (or honor, glory, interest, corporation) and friendship, represent the so-called major string; and two of them, love (or celadony) and familism (or parenthood), represent the minor string.

Finally, there are the three 'distributive, or mechanising' passions (seriism), the 'Cabalist' (Dissenting/Graduating), the 'Butterfly' (Papillone/Flitting/Alteranting) and the 'Composite' (Coinciding/Meshing) which function is to ensure co-ordination between the sensual and affective passions. The 'Cabalist' is a conscious exaltation produced by divisions in a domain according to minute differences. That is why it is associated with the formation of combinations, with intrigue and calculation; it, in Fourier's words, is the favorite passion of women, courtiers and politicians. The 'Butterfly' refers to "the need of periodic variety", of permanently

changing activities and pleasures; it is of particular importance because it links variety to "rapidity of movement" and thus is "the universal agent of transition". According to Fourier, the need for change is felt by each human being *moderately every hour and "acutely" every two hours*: hence he prescribes the two-hourly change of activity in his utopian association, or Phalanx. The ennui of existing society is namely a result of the systematic denial of this passion embodied in the two main foundations of civilization: marriage and labor. And finally, the 'Composite' passion which encompasses "blind", uncalculating, rapturous enthusiasm and exaltation produced by the combination of stimulations or pleasures from different orders, and engages both the senses and the soul in this. The 'Composite' is particularly associated with love and was described by Fourier as the passion nearest to God (cf. Fourier 2006/1808, 19-20).

It is precisely the union of luxurism and groupism, mechanized by the three distributive passions, that leads to unityism, the feeling of oneness between the individual and the multitude.

2.2. Attraction passionelle – the main force of social development

Fourier's conception of the so-called *attraction passionelle*, or passionate attraction, the main force of social development rather taken in philosophical-anthropological, aesthetic and axiological view as the prime component of a theory of 'universal unity' (cf. xviii), is more deeply developed in the section in *The Theory of the Four Elements* called *On the Study of Nature by Passionate Attraction* (Fourier 2006/1808, 74-78).

In Fourier's vision, passions are vicious, negative and anomalous only when we oppose them to labor and social norms. That is what he has in mind when he writes that

> "[O]ur desires are so boundless in relation to the limited means we have of satisfying them that God seems to have acted rather thoughtlessly when he gave us passions so eager for pleasure." (Fourier 2006/1808, 74)

Hence, for Fourier it is just a question of common sense that we have to put these passions in fruitful force for achieving the societal order of Harmony. It is dogmatic and even despotic moralism that is barely aware even of the first nine of the twelve passions "which constitute the chief motivating forces of the soul", the five sensual appetites and the four simple appetites of the soul – the groups of friendship, love, paternity/family, ambition/corporation (Fourier 2006/1808, 74), and has a "very inadequate idea of the four most important ones" (74). In the first part of the general destinies, Fourier notes the following:

> "None of these philosophical whims, known as duties, bear any relation to nature. Duty is man-made, attraction comes from God; so if we want to understand God's intentions we have to study attraction, in its natural state, with no reference to duty. Duty varies from one century to another and from place to place, but the nature of the passions has been and will remain unchangeable for all peoples." (Fourier 2006/1808, 75)

If from *what-should-be* mode we shift to *what-is* mode and dynamics, the world shines in a different light. Fourier's striving is firstly, to show that none of these diamonds is a 'worthless stone' which has to be tempered or suppressed, and secondly, furthermore, to shed light upon the rest four and most neglected passions: the Cabalist, the Butterfly, the Composite and harmonyism, or unityism.

> "To discover what these aims and purposes are we have to move on from ideas of duty to an analysis of that passionate attraction." (Fourier 2006/1808, 78)

or attraction by passion:

> "Because attraction is irreducible, even though it contradicts duty, we must in the end give in to its siren voice and study its laws. For as long as we continue imposing ours upon it, attraction will always make fun of them, to the triumph of God and the confusion of our everchanging systems." (Fourier 2006/1808, 75)

From here, Fourier deduces the first degree of passions, which has three branches, in order to come to the trunk: harmonyism, or unityism. Thus *attraction passionelle* is regarded as the source of all the passions, of which there are three at the first level, twelve at the second, and so on. At the first degree or the first division of the trunk there are those three sub-focal passions or centres of attraction, already considered in section 2.1., to which human beings of all ranks and in all ages are drawn; namely, the passions of:

1) *luxism* – the desire for luxury, which provides and governs five secondary passions: the sensory passions, or the desires of the senses. It is important here that luxury in Fourier's examination is both internal and external, *i.e.*, it could lead to such subtle refinement *in mente* as it does through external sensory experience;

2) *groupism* – the desire for groups, which provides four secondary passions, the affective ones (two major of honor/corporation and friendship, and two minor of love and family/kinship) already mentioned, and

3) *seriism* – the desire for series.

Therefore, the soul "is driven ceaselessly towards these three aims by twelve stimuli, or *radical passions*, which are the roots of all the others": five material passions; four spiritual passions, or simple appetites of the soul; and, last but not least, three refining passions, or "compound appetites of the soul which lead to social and universal unity" (cf. Fourier 2006/ 1808, 84).

> "These last three passions, which I have called refining (and which might be better designated by the term mechanising) are scarcely known at all to Civilisation. Only a few glimmers have appeared on the horizon, just enough to arouse the anger of moralists in their relentless war against pleasure. Their influence is so negligible and their appearance so rare that they have not even been separately classified: I have had to call them intermeshing, varying and graduating, but I prefer to designate them by the numbers 10, 11 and 12; and I shall postpone defining them because nobody would imagine that God, for all his power, could ever create a social order capable of satisfying three such insatiable passions for pleasure.

> The seven spiritual and refining passions are more in the realm of the soul than of matter: they are at the primitive level. Their combined action creates one collective passion, the product of all seven, in the same way as white is made by the union of the seven colours of the spectrum. I shall call this thirteenth passion harmonyism [or unityism]." (Fourier 2006/1808, 84-85)

From here, Fourier concludes that although the Cabalist, the Butterfly, the Composite and harmonyism are those passions "stifled and suppressed completely by the conventions of our Civilisation, the germ of their existence continues to live in our souls" (Fourier 2006/1808, 85). Fourier concludes:

> "In short, the reason why the human race can only find perfect happiness in grouped Series or the combined order is that it assures the full development of the twelve radical passions, and thus of the thirteenth which is a composite of the principal ones. Whence it follows that, in the new social order, the least fortunate men or women will be far happier than the greatest king is today, because the only true happiness consists in satisfying all one's passions." (Fourier 2006/1808, 86)

Which means that unityism, or the "thirteenth passion" harmonizing all sensory, affective and distributive passions in one, in the Fourier's view is the only path to a full development of human potential and capabilities, in a tight eudemonistic mode.

2.3. On a note in Herbert Marcuse's "Eros and Civilization"

So it was not by accident that Herbert Marcuse noted Fourier's idea of the transformation of labor into pleasure as the central idea of Fourier's socialist utopia (see Marcuse 1966). The chapter of *Eros and Civilization* in search of the aesthetic dimension gravitates around the first complete aesthetic utopia in Western philosophical thought, Friedrich Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* in a collection of letters (Schiller 2004). It is the play of form impetus and matter impetus, the same old Kantian free play of understanding and imagination, the feeling of pleasure and

displeasure in between which warns that the devaluation of higher values can only "bring them back to the organic structure of human existence from which they separated, and that this reunion can change this very structure. If higher values lose their remoteness and isolation from and against lower abilities, then the latter could be freely admitted into the culture" (Marcuse 1966, 172-198)[2].

3. The composite passion

In the earliest manuscripts the passions which Fourier later called the Cabalist, the Butterfly and the Composite were termed 'composition', 'oscillation' and 'progression' (cf. Beecher 1968, 67)[3].

On the other hand, the 1841 edition of *The Theory of the Four Movements*, following Fourier's annotated copy, has: "10th The Dissident (or Cabalist), 11th The variant (or Butterfly), 12th The Enmeshing (or Composite), 13th Harmonyism (or Unityism)" (cf. Fourier 2006/180, 152, note 1).

The three distributive passions drive the arousal, combination, and alternation of the sensitive and affective passions. They are proper to human beings:

The Cabalist and Composite tend to arouse and sustain exaltation, but by opposite ways. While cabalist excitation is often a calculated intrigue, it is goal-driven, and it tends to make agreements based on identity, composite enthusiasm is rather blind, it is stimulus-driven, and it tends to produce unions based on contrast. Opposed to both is the Butterfly, which can break this exaltation in order to produce a change.

The three distributive passions correspond to respective ways of thought. The Cabalist is associated with arithmetic progression and sequential logic, the Composite with isomorphism (similarity in form) and intuitive shortcuts, and the Butterfly with alternations and breaks.

> "We are quite familiar with the five sensitive passions tending to Luxury, the four affective ones tending to Groups; it only remains for us to learn about the three distributive ones whose combined

[2] See Chapter 9. *The Aesthetic Dimension*.

[3] See *Oeuvres completes de Charles Fourier*, vol. XII, 415.

impulse produces Series, a social method of which the secret has been lost since the age of primitive mankind, who were unable to maintain the Series more than about 300 years.

The four affective passions tending to form the four groups of friendship, love, ambition, paternity or consanguinity are familiar enough; but no analyses or parallels or scales have been made of them.

The three others, termed distributive, are totally misunderstood, and bear only the title of vices, although they are infinitely precious; for these three possess the property of forming and directing the series of groups, the mainspring of social harmony. Since these series are not formed in the civilized order, the three distributive passions cause disorder only." (Fourier 1964[4])

Still, within the realm of 12+ passions, Fourier called the Composite "the most beautiful of the twelve passions, the one which enhances the value of all the others", since it "requires in every action a composite allurement or pleasure of the senses and of the soul, and consequently the blind enthusiasm which is born only of the mingling of the two kinds of pleasure." (Fourier 1964). Here is Fourier's analysis on simple, material pleasures:

"The composite is the most beautiful of the twelve passions, the one which enhances the value of all the others. A love is not beautiful unless it is a composite love, combining the charm of the senses and of the soul. It becomes trifling or deception if it limits itself to one of these springs. An ambition is not vehement unless it brings into play the two springs, glory and interest. It is then that it becomes capable of brilliant efforts.

The composite commands so great a respect, that all are agreed in despising people inclined to simple pleasure. Let a man provide himself with fine viands, fine wines, with the intention of enjoying them alone, of giving himself up to gormandizing by himself, and he exposes himself to well-merited gibes. But if this man gathers a

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[4]   See   https://archive.org/details/socialistthought0000unse/page/n5/mode/2up.   Apart from it, I managed to access the texts of Fourier's titled *Selected Writings* (1964, 129-150) online but unfortunately pages are not pointed in this edition available online.

select company in his house, where one may enjoy at the same time the pleasure of the senses by good cheer, and the pleasure of the soul by companionship, he will be lauded, because these banquets will be a composite and not a simple pleasure.

If general opinion despises simple material pleasure, the same is true as well of simple spiritual pleasure, of gatherings where there is neither refreshment, nor dancing, nor love, nor anything for the senses, where one enjoys oneself only in imagination. Such a gathering, devoid of the composite or pleasure of the senses and the soul, becomes insipid to its participants, and it is not long before it *grows bored and dissolves*."[5] (Fourier 1964)

Fourier's conclusions of the essence of the Composite passion quite resemble George Herbert Mead's concept of *the reverie* – "that undefined yearning in images" (Mead 1926) more than a century later, and, at the same time, Kant's concept of *aesthetic ideas*, a century earlier. All three maintain an ontological level of harmony through the aesthetic in reverie, the freedom of floating thought and ideas, the transcending symbolization of them all.

In addition, only composite passions for Fourier, not the simple ones, are a pure *human* trait which make us finished in harmonyism, or unityism – and we can see this claim if we only compare the play in Kant, Schiller, Huizinga, and Ortega y Gasset.

4. Creativity and its role in the EI vs. AI battle in contemporary age

"Yet the earth is in violent upheaval with the need to create. This can be seen from the frequent appearances of the aurora borealis, which are a symptom of the planet's being in rut, a useless effusion of creative fluid, which cannot conjoin with the southern fluid as long as the human race has not carried out its preparations, and these can only be put into effect by the eighth society [8th Simple combined series: Advent of Happiness] when it has been established." (Fourier 2006/1808, 47)

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[5]   My emphasis.

This is the only paragraph in *The Theory of the Four Movements* where we find a trace of the idea of creativity; still, we are on our guard and we shall discuss this.

Due to following the Composite passion in Fourier, any work would be creative and fulfilling (cf. Leopold 2011). In his notes on *The Teaching of Charles Fourier*, Prof. Nicholas V. Riasanovsky (Ryasanovsky 2021, 41-42) stated that if the Cabalist is the passion for intrigue and the Butterfly stands for the urge for diversification, then the Composite represents "both the human desire for a simultaneous satisfaction of more than a single passion, with the added condition that the passions so satisfied must include at least one 'passion of the senses' and another of the spirit, a desire also described as *a thirst for enthusiasm*"[6] (Fourier 1852, 188), and *the rapturous enthusiasm itself resulting from such satisfaction.* In the last sense, the Composite has also been *interpreted by commentators as the creative passion*. While the Cabalist underlay the complicated systems of discords in Fourier's plan for humanity, the Composite served as the foundation for the equally complicated systems of accords. In full and unfettered play the twelve passions culminated in the passion for unityism, the drive toward unity which combined and integrated the happiness of the individual with the happiness of all.

Hence the *role and significance of Fourier's Composite passion, or the "pure human passion", as the basis of creativity* can be applied to the contemporary culture of post-, trans- and alterhumanist art, science and technology.

First of all, the definition of creativity so derived is a definition within *anthropocentric frame of reference;* without belittling in any way its possible non-anthropocentric sequels.

Second, it is anthropocentric because of its nature to seek for coincidence of simple spiritual and sensual, mind and body passions.

Third, it is a "pure human passion" precisely of making of this emblematic for human beings *attraction passionelle* a play, an ease and a grace.

Fourth, "the most beautiful passion" can be considered to be creativity because it gives birth to extremely new forms in matter charged and illuminated by inner soul and content so brightly: for the first time.
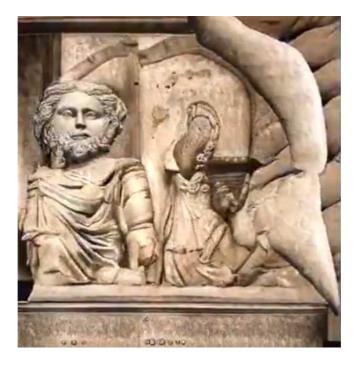
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6   My emphasis.

Fifth, this is the charge and illumination of the advent of happiness, the harmonic order in which humanity would use in full accordance all of its passions like power.

On the basis of these five characteristics, creativity can be easily distilled as a term broader than 'making art' but at the same time more precised by insisting on the *spirit – sense* and *mind – body* core and its effect of a *play*, and thus rearranging the existing order of being at the level of matter, inertia and presentability (cf. the sense of this rearranging in Badiou 2002 and Rancière 2013).

Given all this in mind, nowadays when an exclusively significant question emerges, which is leading, the avant-garde of humanity – that of *emotional intelligence or artificial intelligence* (cf. *Emotional Intelligence – The Essential Skillset for the Age of AI* 2019), creativity so distilled as a philosophical-aesthetic term and phenomenon, I believe, is still on the human side.

Figure 3. Renaissance Dreams. Site-specific installation by Refik Anadol, 2020. MEET, Fondazione Cariplo – Digital Culture Center, Milano, Italy (Anadol 2020a)

The so-called EI *vs.* AI battle is rather a fictional pathos of our real inner dilemmas of human personality and self-identification, our 'cabalist' measuring with the non-anthropocentric, our inner voice drowned by the languages we have created on our own, be natural, verbal or computational, our own exteriorized battle. As Refik Anadol (Anadol 2020b) narrates about his AI Renaissance project, based on the study of artificial intelligence, trained on StyleGAN 2 ADA and having available images of all sculptures created in the Renaissance; after all, it is a search for "new ways of imagination". As José Ortega y Gasset pointed it out, man is an animal rich in imagination: it is the "liberating power possessed by man" (Ortega 1932, 6)[7] that enables him to place a utopian world of imaginary things against a present judged to be unbearable (Ortega 1963). To composite the qualitatively different worlds of αἴσθησις and spirit in a third one is to illuminate matter with passion so brightly that a new world with new, unprecedented forms and contours emerges: a power unbearable for AI so far.

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[7]   See Chapter XIV. "Who Rules the World?"

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MUSIC AND EMOTION:
FROM ANCIENT GREECE TO CONTEMPORANEITY

FLORENTINA ENEA[1]

Abstract. Understanding how music and emotion co-vary has been the focus for many scholars for a long time, starting with the writings of Ancient Greeks to contemporary thought. Philosophers, musicologists, and cognitive scientists alike have been puzzling on the extent to which music can have an influence on how humans feel, think and act morally and ethically. Therefore, the understanding of this relation is of paramount importance as we are immersed in organized-sound contexts every day, and this has a major effect on how listeners think and act in social environments. The current investigation aims at highlighting the development of the music and emotion relationship throughout the stylistic periods of the European space (with a short comparison to Ancient Chinese music) as a preamble for a more nuanced future research on the topic.

Keywords: *music, emotion, aesthetics, ethics*

1. Ancient Greece

In Ancient Greece the interest in music was twofold: on the one hand, they were curious about the relation between mathematical parameters and acoustic events, as this could explain the harmony of the universe. On the other hand, they were thinking about the interaction between music and the ethical attitudes of the listeners. This was of major immediate importance, relevant for the method of governing the state and assuring that 'proper' emotions were being aroused by music into listeners.

The deep connection between music and the Ancient Greeks can easily be inferred from two facts:

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[1]   University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy. Email: <cornelia-florentina.enea@s.unibuc.ro>.

✓ the *holistic approach* (poetry, melody and dance forming a unitary musical event)
✓ the interchangeability of the words *singing* and *speaking* in their language.

Music was about movement as it was about singing and speaking. More importantly, in Anderson's understanding Plato considered that certain musical features could highly influence the listener's thoughts and actions (Anderson 1966), such as rhythm and harmony.

1.1. Plato and Aristotle

Music had an "ethos" through which it acted upon people's soul, and it did so differently for men and for women. Modes[2] and rhythms inducing orderliness and delicacy were meant for women, whereas the ones inducing courage were meant for men (Monro 1894). Hence a direct link between musical features and emotions was already in place in Ancient Greece through the writings of Plato and Aristotle.

Besides modes, harmony and rhythm, also timbre had a specific impact on people's moral actions. In the *Republic*, Plato suggests that plucked stringed instruments (*e.g.*, lyra, kithara) are the favourites of the gods due to their capability to elevate and stimulate the soul. On the other hand, the reed-blown pipes considered to incite disorder and have orgiastic effects, therefore being excluded from the idea of a perfect city-state. On a more general note, wind instruments are not accepted by Plato in the ideal city-state as they contradict the idea of a holistic musical event (by not allowing poetry or the singing voice to be included in the performance).

In other words, the harmony of the entire city can be influenced by the type of music being played for its citizens. Modes, harmony, rhythm, and timbre can all have a tremendous effect on how people thought and acted, being capable of arising different types of emotions, such as exaltation or

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2   One of the seven ways of arranging the notes of a scale according to the relation with the tonic (the gravitational centre of a song), thus structuring the profile of the melody. Depending on the tonic, they are Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian.

feelings of bravery, grandiosity, orderliness, or discreteness. Plato even goes as far as saying "our songs are our laws" (799e, 10-11) and proposing a strict manner of choosing the right tunes for the city-state of Athens.

The role of music as a mediator of moral education is also discussed by Aristotle in *Politics*, who thinks that music's role expands also to being a way of relaxing after work and as a means for leisure. He declares that it is very important to listen to the 'correct' music and aim for a virtuous music which should tame powerful and intense emotions. The moral message of the 'correct' music has the power of liberating the listener from overwhelming emotions or feelings of excitement, fear, or anxiety. Plato agreed with Aristotle's view noting that the Dorian mode[3] and also the Phrygian mode[4] induce a certain degree of temperance, firmness of character, and moderation of feeling.

> "[Dorian] would fittingly imitate the utterances and the accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare or in any enforced business, and who, when he has failed, either meeting wounds or death or having fallen into some other mishap, in all these conditions confronts fortune with steadfast endurance and repels her strokes. And [Phrygian] for such a man engaged in works of peace, not enforced but voluntary, either trying to persuade somebody of something and imploring him — whether it be a god, through prayer, or a man, by teaching and admonition — or contrariwise yielding himself to another who is petitioning or teaching him or trying to change his opinions, and in consequence faring according to his wish, and not bearing himself arrogantly, but in all this acting modestly and moderately and acquiescing in the outcome. Leave us these two harmonia — the enforced and the voluntary — that will best imitate the utterances of men failing or succeeding, the temperate, the brave — leave us these." (*Republic*, 9-11)

Additionally, also rhythms can have comparable effects on the moral profile of a listener. Some may induce stability, other degenerate behaviours, or even freedom of character.

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[3]   The second of the seven Greek modes of the major scale.

[4]   The third of the seven Greek modes of the major scale.

It can be observed that if Plato's writings about the relation between music and emotions are rather normative (how it should be in the ideal city-state), Aristotle's are rather descriptive (how it is). Even so, they both stress the importance of music education for the 'cultivation of the soul' or the tampering of excessive feelings and orientation towards purified thoughts and moral actions in accordance with the virtues of a community.

1.2. The Harmony of the Spheres

One important aspect in how the Greeks explained the relation between music and emotions is the relation between the greater cosmic setting and the smaller human order. The heavenly system was copied on Earth through the use of a duodecimal numerical system (Pont 2004). This mathematical cosmology provided an understanding of the relation between the higher order and the human order, a system translated in music and political laws.

The 'analogy of the macrocosm and the microcosm' is also known as 'the harmony of the spheres' (Pont 2004) meaning a sort of earthly imitation of the celestial proportions. This idea draws from the longstanding belief that the cosmos was ordered according to the music scale which was, in turn, based on the monochord[5]. Plato developed an analogy between music and politics using the monochord and numerical proportions. For example, the tritone[6] (the most avoided dissonance in the Western musical canon, also known as 'diabolus in musica') is compared with the tension between a tyrant and a good man (*Republic*, 587e).

To better understand the deep interconnectivity between music and politics, hence the moral/ethical profile of a community, it is worth thinking of the word *syntagma* which can mean both a political system and a musical system (Rudhyar 1982, 14). The interconnectivity of music and the city life went as far as being considered that "architecture is frozen music" and some scholars even proposing that the musical proportions were encoded in the buildings of the city-states (Pont 2004).

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[5]   An ancient musical instrument, with one string (chord).
[6]   Augmented forth or diminished fifth (for ex. C – #F in C major).

The harmony of the spheres is a musico-political explanation of the prevalent proportions found in the microcosm – the individual, the mesocosm – the city, and the macrocosm – the universe. Music, through its specific features (modes, rhythms, harmonies, timbre) was a catalyser between these three levels of existence, being able to tap directly in the moral behaviour of individuals and communities through 'likeness' and 'sympathetic vibrations'.

1.3. How music affects the ethos

Plato was very explicit when describing the influence music had on feelings and emotions. For example, 'evil rhythm' and dissonances ('disharmonies') were associated with bad temper and the reverse one with happier dispositions. Moreover, Plato linked the valence of music's influence on the moral disposition of the listener with the degree of exposure to a certain song. For example, a longer exposure has a negative effect while the opposite a positive effect (for the same music):

> "Now when a man abandons himself to music to play upon him and pour into his soul as it were through the funnel of his ears those sweet, soft, and dirge-like harmonia… and gives his entire time to the warbling and blandishments of song, the first result is that the principle of high spirit, if he had it, is softened like iron and is made useful instead of useless and brittle. But when he continues the practice without remission and is spellbound, the effect begins to be that he melts and liquefies till he completely dissolves away his spirit, cuts out as it were the very sinews of his soul and makes of himself a *feeble warrior*." (*Republic*, 410a-b)

Therefore, Plato's ideas about music and its effect on moral actions were concentrated on specific features of the music itself (modes, harmony, rhythm, timbre) and context (sex of the listener, degree of exposure). Even more importantly, Plato even tried to explain the mechanism through which music acts on peoples' 'ethos'.

Firstly, when discussing the mechanism through which music was thought to influence emotions in Ancient Greece, the text itself attached to the music was considered irrelevant: the meaning of the words followed the sounds of the music, not the other way around. The text of the music was merely supporting an already existing agenda of the emotions transmitted by the combination of modes, rhythms, and harmonies.

Secondly, the cultivation of a preferred human disposition by the development of peoples' characters through music's influence was explained as a cognitive appraisal and as a physiological response:

> "Once the Pythagoreans established the notion of consonant musical proportion to their own satisfaction, the matter of human response to these intervals had to be addressed. Plato's *Timaeus* does so by arguing that the human soul is patterned on the World Soul and is therefore ordered in these same proportions. Similarly, the three parts of the soul, and even the physical proportions of the human body itself, all participate in these ratios. The consonant intervals, then are pleasant to the ear because of their similarity to these same proportions within the listener. This argument accounts for the effects of music on the soul or on the emotions: by a sort of sympathetic vibration the sounds resonate with and therefore emphasize similar aspects of the soul. Appreciation of beauty or ugliness in music may therefore be seen as a physiological response as well as a conscious judgment by the intellect." (Moyer 2019, 18)

Thirdly, 'likenesses' between an individual's psychological profile and musical cues meaning a correspondence between sound organisation and temperament is one of the ways in which music acts on humans. In other words, the power of music to correct excessive, intense feelings and undesired emotions relies in its similitude with the internal disposition of the individual. And as the human soul is an imitation, proportional entity following the proportions of the soul of the universe, then some people will innately be able to recognise 'good music' (the ones following the 'correct' proportions of the celestial system), whereas others will need to be trained into proper aesthetic taste.

Lastly, we have seen that Plato speculates that the way in which music can act upon listeners resides in the 'likeness' between music, the human soul and body and the universe. Therefore, the manner in which the Greek modes, rhythms, harmonies and timbre penetrate the emotional side of the citizens is through a 'likeness' which generates a 'sympathetic vibration'. The "sympathetic vibration" as an explanation for how music can influence emotions is, however, a rather proportional correspondence between music and the human soul and body, not an actual vibration. These concepts are rather translations of the harmonious, numerical proportions between musical parameters and human/cosmic features.

1.4. Comparisons between Ancient Greece and Ancient China

Music's influence on human moral dispositions was also noted in Ancient China through the writings of Yue Ji (Record of Music, from the Li Ji[7]) and the Yue Shu (Book of Music, from the Shi Ji):

> "Men have powers of the body and powers of the mind, but they cannot remain stable with regard to grief, pleasure, joy, and anger. They are moved by external causes. Thus originates the appearance of the various affections. Therefore, if feeble, trivial, and rushed music prevails, people will be sad. If harmonious, peaceful, varied but simple music prevails, people will be gratified and happy. If vigorous, violent, and forceful music prevails, which arouses people to move their limbs and animates their blood circulation, they will be steadfast and resolute. If straightforward, steady, peaceful, and stately music prevails, people will be dignified and pious. If broad, serene, orderly, and flowing music prevails, people will be compassionate. If licentious, evil, hasty, and superficial music prevails, people will be dissolute." (Kaufmann 1976)

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[7] This is the oldest Chinese treatise on music, presenting Confucian ideas on how music, self-education, self-control and the awareness of natural rhythms co-vary. Human personality is presented as a musical development linking types of music with virtues. It is believed that the treatise had numerous authors and that it was written no later than the middle of the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C. – 24 A.D.).

Similar to the Ancient Greek thought the Chinese writings are also emphasising the connection between music's harmony and harmony from the Earth (*di*) and the Heaven (*tian*). However, musical features were no longer pointing to the regular proportions between the macrocosm, mesocosm and microcosm, but were actual association with natural phenomena (such as rain, wind, the seasons, etc.).

The more practical approach to understanding how music can influence the moral disposition of people is also evident from the way the Ancient Chinese writings are explaining this relationship. They point to a direct link between ethos and the physical body:

> "Music is what activates the blood flow and the meridian, circulates the energy, and harmonizes the appropriate ethos. Hence the Gong mode interacts with the spleen [meridian], and sincerity is harmoniously strengthened. The Shang mode interacts with the lung [meridian], and righteousness is harmoniously strengthened. The Jue mode interacts with the liver [meridian], and humaneness is harmoniously strengthened. The Zhi mode interacts with the heart [meridian], and propriety is harmoniously strengthened. The Yu mode interacts with the kidney [meridian], and wisdom is harmoniously strengthened. Hence, music reinforces the right ethos on the inside, while it differentiates between the respectable and the indecent on the outside." (SSJ 5, 698)

Therefore, the ethical power of music on the listener is done by activating the blood circulation, suggesting a tripartite relation between ethos, body, and music.

1.5. Concluding remarks

The Ancient Greeks, through the writings of Plato and Aristotle, built the 'ethos' theory explaining the connection between the microcosm (the individual), the mesocosm (the community) and the macrocosm (the universe), also known as the harmony of the spheres. They believed that a numerical proportion between these three levels of organisation exists, and that music was capable of capturing it in its internal structure.

Musical features (modes, harmonies, rhythm, and timbres) and context (sex of the listener, degrees of exposure, etc.) were thought to directly impact the workings of the souls and influence its moral dispositions. The character of the individual and the well-being of the community could be 'corrected' through the power of music and exposure to 'proper' music'.

Lastly, the Greek philosophical thought followed a more speculative and proportional approach, whereas the Ancient Chinese thought was more practical, using natural phenomena and physiological effects on the body to explain the link between music and its power over the ethos. It can also be noted the cross-cultural attention to the ethical implications of music listening which suggests the great extent to which the relation between music and moral behaviour has received the attention of philosophers.

2. Middle Ages and Renaissance

Current thought in musicology would separate music written in Ancient Greece from Medieval thought by emphasising the appearance of rhythm and pitch with predominantly monophonic[8], vocal works. Going forward, Renaissance compositional techniques proposed polyphonic[9] music, both instrumental and vocal. However, these observations become even richer when considered in a socio-ethical discussion which is presented below.

2.1. Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages (approx. 500-1500 A.D.), the path from the direct sensation to rational truth was to be made by following the four-fold path comprised of arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy, in the view of Boethius (died 524/525). This way, Boethius used the quadrivium to reconcile the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and include it in the existing Roman educational system represented by Vitruvius and Cicero (Panti 2018).

The "likenesses and ethos theory discussed in Ancient Greece about the music – emotions dyad also inspired Boethius who developed the

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[8]   A single line of melody.
[9]   Multiple melodies being played simultaneously.

notion of *musica humana*" (Alperson 1994). This way, he was pointing to a similarity between musical features and the internal workings of the human soul. His five volumes *De musica* written for the King of Franks, Clovis, became the most important writings on music summarizing Greek thought which prevailed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In these writings, Boethius proposes that the ratios and numbers hidden in music have the power to link together the material with the immaterial in humans – body and soul. It follows that the sound of music can influence the judgement of the conscious mind, having effects on how humans act. In this way, Boethius emphasizes the feature characteristic to music only (from the disciplines making up the quadrivium), namely the power to influence morality. Humans are seen as "harmonic beings" and, hence, music can affect the relation between the mind and the body. The right, harmonious ratios can cure the mind and the body, while distorted ratios can result in bodily alterations and psychological disharmonies. In this manner, Boethius, following the teachings of the Greek philosophers and in accordance with teachings of Nichomacus and Ptolemy, reinforces a link between aesthetics, ethics, and politics.

Music was still regarded mainly as a sub-chapter of natural sciences, namely of mathematics, following Aristotle's belief that the good and beautiful cannot be disconnected from the science of numbers. Its properties, as presented by Augustine (354-430 A.D) in his "De Musica", can support an understanding of the perfection of creation. However, Augustine and Boethius diverged in the hidden aesthetic of the harmonic ratios, especially when it comes to beauty found in numbers. For Augustine, beautiful music is expressed by rhythm, an indication of the right numerical ratios. The examples connecting beauty with numbers and music he offers in his *On music* are plentiful, a view also found in Ptolemy who thought that the perceived real beauty in music is to be found in the correct mathematical patterns of the harmonic ratios. Boethius was more supportive of Aristotle's considerations on the origin of beauty in music. In his *Metaphysics*, book 13, Aristotle states the difference between the good and the beautiful: the first is relational, whereas the second is static. Music can be good, as it always implies a relation linking mind and body by using harmonic ratios. Moreover, the beautiful cannot be found in music, as this presupposes a unity achieved

when the ethical aim has been reached. There is only one type of beautiful music, and this is "the music of the Platonic soul of the world" (Panti 2018). It is made up by a perfect harmony of the animated principle that rules the universe, as Boethius remarks:

> "What Plato rightfully said can likewise be understood: the soul of the universe was joined together according to musical concord. For when we hear what is properly and harmoniously united in sound in conjunction with that which is harmoniously coupled and joined together within us and are attracted to it, then we recognize that we ourselves are put together in its likeness, for likeness attracts, whereas unlikeness disgusts and repels." (Inst. mus. I, 1, 179.20-180.10; *transl*. Bower-Palisca 1989, 2)[10]

It follows that 'material' music can never be beautiful as it can never reach a motionless state and it is this exact relational aspect which transforms it into a tool for manipulating moral/ethical acts. Music can be good or bad, according to the harmonic ratios used in its structure, but it cannot reach a unity necessary for achieving the ethical scope and true beauty. Interestingly, Boethius is adamant regarding how the relational aspect of music influences moral thoughts and acts. He proposes that reaction to music is not only restricted to its internal ratios, but also to the character, age, and attitude of the listener: people "who are rougher delight in the rather uncultivated modes", and those "who are more gentle delight in more moderate modes" (Inst. Mus. I, 2, 180-182).

Therefore, music itself is insufficient for predicting and understanding the moral attitudes of its listeners. Music is relational, therefore highly contextualized. Boethius does not discuss the socio-political environment as a feature intervening in this process but restricts his ideas to the individual psychological frame of mind. The balance of the mind and the body can be achieved when the right character meats the right harmonic ratios, a view also presented by Plato in his *Republica*. Cecilia Panti (2018) notes that "ratios involved in musical consonances and harmonic patterns as having a specific effect in moving the human soul

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[10] To be consulted the edition translated by Bower-Palisca 1989, 2.

to emotions, actions, and the good or bad dispositions of the mind, namely to psychological and physical affections that music can both evoke and heal". This is an important observation for the current investigation as it links music, its internal structure, external features, emotions, and moral acts in one paragraph, this being the main research topic pursued here. The fascinating co-variance of aesthetics and ethics in the realm of music has been qualitatively investigated for a long time, but never in a setting bringing together both statistically reproducible results which used both qualitative and quantitative data.

2.2. Renaissance

The major difference between music composed in the Middle Ages and music composed in Renaissance was the advent of the word in the latter stylistic period, an innovation deriving from the humanistic movement (Lowinsky 1954). In this regard, Virgil and Horace were the muses for the Renaissance composer who was well acquainted to the Ancient Greek writings on music. Vincenzo Galilei (1520-1591), the father of the renowned physicist, was an avid supporter of the primacy of words to music and proposed the immediate abandonment of counterpoint[11] (a compositional technique attaining a fantastic richness through the compositions of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina) and of the polyphonic[12] style. This very quickly gave birth to the opera (around 1600 through the works of Claudio Monteverdi) in which the supremacy of the text was paramount, and the harmonic support was provided by the instrumental accompaniment. In this way, the Greek ideal of music as a holistic experience (through the inclusion of words, dance and theatre) was re-enacted in the Renaissance

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[11] Counterpoint is a compositional technique in which two or more voices are juxtaposed, interdependent only harmonically (not rhythmically or by the melodic contour); the term derives from Latin meaning *punctus contra punctum*; a medieval composer was mainly focused on developing mostly rhythmic counterpoint, as opposed to the Renaissance composer who was interested with melodic (horizontal) relationships between the voices.

[12] A broader musical term referring to the use of at least two melodic lines being developed simultaneously.

composers determined to abolish the counterpoint technique which was reigning for more than 500 years.

The relation between music, emotions, politics and ethics described by the Ancient Greeks, in the writings of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, etc. were very present in the minds of the Renaissance composers who were trying to revive them with a modern touch. For the first time in history, though, music was becoming subjective and started moving from exclusively religious themes to peoples' relation to God, death, sin and suffering. The entire canon of medieval compositional techniques, including the *cantus firmus*[13] and the Gregorian chant, was being rejected and a new humanistic aesthetics was taking its place. The unparalleled enlargement of the tonal system (through the development of new modes such as the Aeolian, Ionian, etc. and the fabrication of new musical instruments covering a larger register than ever before), the introduction of chromaticism, harmonic modulation, quartertones, etc. favoured a stronger emotional reaction in the Renaissance music listeners. People started being focused in creating new bonds with the natural world, the inner workings of the human soul, especially through the words attached to music which offered an immediate meaning. The powerful relationship between music and poetry was even more intense in Renaissance music, as opposed to Greek music, through the enlargement of the tonal system (both instrumentally and harmonically) and its higher richness (chromaticism, quarter tones, modulations). Notably, it is during the Renaissance that due to the rapid development of the *instrumentarium*, instrumental music is starting to bifurcate from vocal music, an event which will have important consequences for compositional techniques of the Baroque period.

3. Music and Emotion in the Baroque

The ability of music to autonomously generate emotions, which assumes that listeners' emotional responses are solely contingent on its internal features, was the dominant thinking during the Baroque period when

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[13] The initial melody used for counterpoint development in the Middle Ages.

important musical treatises were published explaining how this compositional technique worked. "Der vollkommene Capellmeister" (1739 – "The Perfect Chapelmaster") by Johann Mattheson is a catalogue presenting the theory of musical aesthetics, widely accepted by late Baroque theorists and composers, which incorporated the proposition that music is capable of arousing a diversity of specific emotions among the listeners. He explains that sadness is caused by small intervals, while joy is caused by large intervals; anger can be stimulated by a coarse harmony combined with a lively melody; stubbornness is induced by the contrapuntal arrangement of highly autonomous (stubborn) melodies. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) and the Mannheim school were exponents of this doctrine. Interestingly, Mattheson refers to the philosophy of dualism of René Descartes (1596-1650) when describing the relationship between emotions and music, stating that a distinction is needed between the "sound forces" that influence listeners and their minds.

The very beginning of the 17th century saw the advent of opera with the establishment of Camerata Florentina changing the expectation in regard to the purpose of music, moving from the principle of creation and of shaping the ethical profile of citizens to the imitation of nature. This music (with lyrics) marked the shift of power from church to court and it was the precursor of the idea that musical tones could form a direct relation with certain feelings through the principles of rhetoric. Descartes' *Passions of the Soul* (1649) which described six "primitive" passions (wonder, love, hate, desire, joy, and sadness) became the source of inspiration for music theorists of the era such as Johann Mattheson (1681-1764). *The Passions* contained the mainstream philosophy of the time concerning emotions, also known as affections or passions, and interpreted them as "perceptions… of the soul", having a physical consequence on the body, such as "some movement of the spirits in the blood" (*The Passions of the Soul*, Article 27). It is interesting to note that this is a view shared by Mattheson, who declares that it is essential for music to evoke emotion in the listener, in a restrained manner, in order to be considered "virtuous". Attenuated emotions and virtue are considered equivalent terms by the author, who goes on to describe the role of the musician as a healer of sick and strong emotions considered to be harmful to moral actions. The composer's aim is to master the

moral aspects hidden in his music by stimulating a passion for virtuous music and a dislike for "bad" songs. Mattheson thus emphasizes the critical role of the composer in shaping the moral profile of a society. His music may incite aggression or, conversely, highlight desirable behaviours consistent with the group's existing ethical code of conduct. To this end, rhetoric was used in musical composition as a method of appealing to different emotional responses in listeners.

The aesthetic purpose of Baroque music was to generate stylistic unity by instilling a unitary affect. Here, affect is interpreted as a cognitive process, as opposed to the spontaneous emotional creativity emblematic of the Romantic period. Since the 17th century, the aesthetic necessity of most (if not all) Baroque composers consists in materializing in their compositions the representation of these affects, regardless of their nationality. In this stylistic period, composers were expected to evoke idealized emotional states in the listener, such as those identified by Descartes as the primitive "passions": wonder, sadness, joy, anger, etc. This was reflected by the intrinsic properties of the musical work – rhythm, harmonic structure, tonality, melodic line, shapes, instrumental colour and so on – and the listener was expected to rationalize all these aspects into the form of the meaning of music.

The *Theory of Affects* was therefore the basic compositional technique of Baroque music. Styles, forms and compositional techniques of this stylistic period's music were therefore always the result of this concept of affects. Thus, Descartes' work had the most decisive influence on the art of baroque music. His belief was that he had discovered a rational, scientific explanation for the physical expression of the passions and the objective, non-relational nature of emotion.

The attempt to attach emotions to specific types of music was already discussed by the ancient Greeks, especially Plato (428-348 B.C.), who believed that the types of music experienced by listeners should be limited to those that promote intellectual attitudes and moral and which do not cause aggressive or unstable moods. The ancient Greeks believed that music held an intrinsic, ethical force, or ethos, which was linked to the affects. This point of view was reconstituted at the end of the Renaissance in Florence, when the Florentine Camerata proposed to revive the ancient Greek tradition of musical drama, so as to increase the

expressiveness and therefore the emotional character of music, which was already disappearing due to contrapuntal compositions of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594).

At the beginning of the 18th century, Johann Neidhardt, in his work "Beste und leichteste Temperatur des Monochordi" (1709), proclaimed that "the aim of music is to make all affections felt by the simple tones and rhythms of the notes, as the best orator" (as cited by Mattheson 1981). This musical thinking persisted as the aesthetic philosophy of composers, musicians, and music critics for the rest of the century.

Therefore, it was during the Baroque that a direct connexion between musical parameters and felt emotions was investigated, following the relation between the seven modes (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian) described by the Ancient Greeks as connected to the moral behaviour of individuals.

4. Music and Emotion in the Eighteenth Century

The advent of the relation between music and emotion as a philosophical matter started in the 18th century with the First Viennese School comprised mainly by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. It was the first time when instrumental music was devoid of any immediate meaning, narrative or descriptive text (Kivy 2006). Music was no longer about something in the way that operatic music was.

For example, we know that Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* is about the Greek legend's descent to Hades and his failed attempt to recover Eurydice, his dead bride. Here music and lyrics provide a cohesive narrative informing the audience about what types of feelings are 'required' for a satisfactory listening and experience. We feel sadness for poor Orfeo who lost his bride, sorrow for the death of Eurydice, tension, and impatience about his descent into Hades and probably disappointment about the outcome. But what can be said about Mozart's *Piano Concerto no. 20 in D minor*? An average listener exposed to the minor-major duality of the Western canon of classical music might say that he feels sadness. However, a listener from the Far East might simply remain emotionally neutral, considering that he had limited exposure to Westernised music.

Additionally, a music connoisseur might know that this music was composed after Mozart's mother death, an event which had a large impact on him. So, he could feel sorrow, sadness, etc. because he can couple the minor tonality of the piece with the event that triggered its composition. He can build an overarching story informing him about the 'required' emotions. But, of course, the story about Mozart's mother death is an information which is not found in the music itself, therefore it cannot directly contribute to the emotional state it induces in the listener. Moreover, the major – minor tonality as an agenda for the happy – sad affective states generated in music listeners is culturally bound. In conclusion, we are a little puzzled on the emotional state this music can generate in the listener in the absence of lyrics, explanations or other culturally relevant information.

This generated a large influx of discussion on what content is music left with, in the absence of a conceptual or representational stance. Some scholars concluded that affect (an umbrella term used for both emotion and mood, (Konečni 2013) is the only reasonable candidate which led to an increased interest on how music and affect are related. Some philosophers, such as Hume and Kant, underlined the importance of music in analytic philosophy, but did not allocate much attention to the subject (Kant even compared music to wallpaper).

However, the classical style (generally thought to have been active between 1730 and 1820) soon began to impose a certain expected emotional response to its sophisticated use of structure and expressiveness, even if never to a full extent because of its lack of immediate understanding. For example, symphonies, sonatas, string quartets, trios, solo concertos were all following a given set of composition rules which created a permeable interface between music and the expected emotional attitude in the listener.

The sonata form, which was extensively used in other classical structures (first movement of a symphony, for example), was built using three main sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation. The first section (Exposition) presupposes the presentation of two contrasting ideas (theme 1 and theme 2) which are further expanded and explored in the second section (Development). The last section of the sonata form (Recapitulation) is restating the initial subject matters, but this time they are no longer antagonistic, but in agreement (meaning they are in the

same tonality). In this way, the sonata form became a guide to composers to plan their works, for interpreters to understand the syntax and meaning of a composition, and for listeners to comprehend the significance and emotional baggage of musical occurrences.

This was a trend which continued in the 19th century when Hegel suggested that the purpose of music was to symbolize feeling in the process of revealing the Spirit through the arts. Opposing Hegel's opinion who saw music inferior to poetry, Schopenhauer, in *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), considered it an ideal, making music distinguished among all the other arts. In his view, music is the essence of the Will itself, downgrading the rest of the arts as being mere copies of the Will. This had a major influence on the work of both Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche and on the entire Romantic era when musical expression became central to composers and music theorists.

Notably, the split view between the importance of self-expression advocated by Romantic thought and Kant's formalist view of music was transported into musicological realms (the music of Richard Wagner *versus* the music of Johannes Brahms) and analytic philosophy debates. Here, Peter Kivy's cognitivist approach (2006) came against Jenefer Robinson's expressionist account (2005).

Moving this debate in analytic philosophy to a scientific approach in music aesthetics was first done by psychologists at the end of the 19th century with the work of Edmund Gurney (1880) who covers the role of music in society, discussion on individual musical parameters, compositional techniques, etc. in his ground-breaking publication (*The Power of Sound*). Rollo Myers declares that "it is something of a paradox that what is possibly one of the most original and important treatises on musical aesthetics ever written should seemingly have won so little recognition" (1972, 36). What Gurney tried to achieve was to tie the "general elements of musical structure, and the nature, sources and varieties of musical affect". His conclusion was that what is relevant for musical expressiveness is not the understanding of large-scale structure (such as identifying the specific elements of a sonata form, for example), but the small-scale elements, the awareness of the immediate musical occurrences in melodic profiles.

The next step in the scientific method for elucidating long-standing debates in analytic philosophy in general and musical aesthetics in particular

was done by physicists, physicians and engineers who tried to simplify the experience of music to that of acoustics. The research done by Hermann Helmholtz (1862) and of William Pole (1879) was the precursor of a new discipline branch investigating music and emotions called cognitive science. This caught the interest of analytic philosophers of music too, giving rise to a hybrid, multidisciplinary approach in the understanding of how music elicits emotions. For example, in my dissertation (Ulmeanu 2020) I argue that because music is such a complex system engaging multiple processing mechanisms of the brain and present in such a high variety of forms in all our daily lives, this calls for understanding it from multiple points of view concomitantly. Therefore, I proposed Marr's three levels of understanding which ask: "what is the goal of the system, what is it for?" (2020, 19); "what is the appropriate algorithm to achieve that goal, which rules are used?" (2020, 19); "how is the algorithm implemented?" (2020, 19). The author goes on to suggest that this methodology would further clarify the "co-evolution of individual cognitive mechanisms and society-based interactions" (2020, 69).

5. Music and Emotion in the Twentieth Century

In this period, the individual and the group context become extra-artistic sources for the affective states generated by music in the view of Christopher Williams (1993). The author calls the process of music development in the last century as similar to Darwinism, reaching pluralism through purism. The centre of gravity in the relationship between music and emotions is moved to the cultural and ideological context in which it appears. As a result, musicological analyses should place great emphasis on the socio-political environment of which the musical work is a part, a fact all the more relevant for the tumultuous 20th century.

For example, this compromise in understanding the instrumental (pure) music – emotion relation achieved by the classical composition of the Eighteenth Century was lost in the Twentieth Century through the works of Avant-guard composers such as Pierre Boulez. He used the sonata form only for its very methodical and organized destruction through a few compositional strategies such as: the removal of external

reference points by intentionally ignoring classical gravitational centres (pitch and measure, for example), dissociating the interdependence of musical parameters, and equal attention to the complexity of motif cells and rhythmic cells. All these techniques indicate the rupture with classical methods of composition by using the very traditional elements that become the agents of their own destruction. The composition thus created gives the impression of disorder, of irrationality, of a continuous hysteria, in total opposition to the classical sonata. The contrast generated by the scientism of the composition technique (Boulez was also a mathematician) and the resulting sonority imbued in absurdity is a Boulezian specificity often encountered in his works. It can be argued that this apparent total rejection of the classical past is in fact an extreme form of Viennese classicism itself which was based on precisely this contrast of ideas in the sonata form. Beethoven seems to have influenced the young Boulez through the revolutionary vein conceived in the composition of Hammerklavier (1818).

Deliege and Paddison (2016) also highlight the high degree of fragmentation of the cultural context and the need to identify and explain these processes in a twofold way: on the one hand, by identifying the legacy of the musical material that underpinned this variety of musical styles (from the works of Schonberg, Webern, Berg, Stravinsky, Varese, Cage, Carter, Feldman, Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono, Berio, Pousseur, Kagel, Xenakis, Ligeti, Birtwistle, Ferneyhough, Finnissy, Lachenmann, Rihm etc.) and on the other hand, by the connection between compositional techniques of the last century and technological innovations and ideological diversity. The same authors claims that however autonomous musical structures may seem, they share their content, constituent elements and systematicity with society considered as a whole, considering the study of the points of confluence between them as vital.

Additionally, the connection between music and society was described by Max Weber (1968) as coming from the period of bureaucratization of the Roman Catholic Church responsible for many musical conventions related to musical notation, harmony, choir, ensembles, instrument construction, etc. The same author notes in his writings the impact of culture (of music, for example) on society and the reverse relationship, in line with the views of Theodor Adorno, who stated that "a sociology

of music should be inspired by the social structures that influence music and life musical" (2002, 145).

In conclusion, the music – emotion discussion becomes even more stringent in contemporary thought, calling for a reconsideration of their interaction. Understanding how they influence each other is of paramount importance as we are immersed in organized-sound contexts every day, and this has a major effect on how we think and act in social environments.

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PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW SOCIO-POLITICAL TRENDS AND MIGRATION OF CITIZENS

GYULNARA I. GADZHIMURADOVA[1]

Abstract. The article analyzes the role of education and the challenges faced by the domain of philosophy of education nowadays. Civilization owes its existence to the development and formation of education. The philosophy of education considers the most general foundations of education, its development and functioning. The main aim of this article is to critically undertake the value of education and analyze how it has developed from ancient times up until nowadays along the philosophy of education. One of the major challenges is represented by the increased costs assigned to education, which has become one of the most expensive and most valuable commodities and, consequently, has affected the development of countries. In fact, one of the major premises of this study is that educational resources, rather than economic ones, definitely impact the raise and evolution of a nation. A particular focus will be devoted to the correspondences and contrasts between different European educational traditions and some Russian paradigms reflected by the philosophy of education. The European liberal understanding of the philosophy of education and its reception in the Russian philosophical thought have both differences and common aspects. Both support the idea that the philosophy of education has a pronounced interdisciplinary character which should be kept as such. A special place in the field of education is occupied by the international market of educational services, which is designed to improve the demographic situation and positively influences the labor market of recipient countries, as well as contribute to the development of the general level of education of the nation. A second argument that will tailor the current research will plea for accepting the competition of talents in the modern world, which is designed to attract educational migrants. The export of education requires freedom of movement, which underlies the free competition of educational services and the worldwide exchange of knowledge. Thus, the free exchange of knowledge and its transfer will contribute to maximize innovations in the field of education, which consequently

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[1] Head of the Department of Demographic and Migration Policy of MGIMO MFA of Russia, Associate Professor, Russia; Leading Researcher, Institute for Demographic Research, Federal Centre of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Email: <gadzhimuradova7@gmail.com>.

will directly support both the modernization of the educational systems and the preservation of national educational traditions.

Keywords: philosophy of education, educational migration, talent competition, demography

> "Education is the most powerful weapon with which to change the world" (Nelson Mandela)

1. Introduction. Knowledge transfer and education

Modern philosophy is a part of the social life of our society; therefore, it is implemented as an active force, both in society and in education. Education, in turn, as a form of knowledge transfer and a rational activity for the ordering and structuring of experience, plays a key role in the development of human civilization and, consequently, represents an enduring universal value (see Fokina, Logunova 2021).

At the end of the 20th century, up until the beginning of the 21st century, education was increasingly becoming a strategic domain for modern societies. Since it was a fundamental condition for a person to exercise their civil, political, economic and cultural rights, education was considered a core factor in the development and strengthening of the intellectual potential of a nation, but also a tool invested in supporting its independence and international competitiveness (Bryzgalina, Kurbanov, Sungatulina 2012). Currently, the philosophy of education is a domain with a dynamic development, independent from the field of scientific knowledge, closely evaluating the functionality of various theories applied in different educational systems.

For this reason, education offers the main resources for what we call the world economy. For a long time, it has been the most expensive and valuable commodity, and played a key role in tailoring the development of various societies. The problems reflected by the philosophy of education concern the role of education in the system of social values, the foundations and methodology for assessing the educational results, the quality of education at various stages of educational practices, and the particularities of subjects revealed throughout and by educational interactions.

The foundations of the Western European educational tradition were laid by the system of educational institutions of the ancient Greek *polis*, which had a serious impact on how pedagogical issues were solved. A special place in its formation belongs to the sophists, who tackled education as a special sphere of human activity, aiming to form citizens of the *polis*, free from the "shackles" of the past. They subordinated the task of "knowledge transfer" or teaching, to the needs of a particular person, thereby grounding the principles of a humanistic educational paradigm and, subsequently, of a powerful pedagogical tradition. Sophists educated their students in order to train skills of dialogical communication and oratory, which, in their opinion, was a necessary condition for a successful political career as an independent person and a full member of society. However, there was also an enlightened side of sophistry: the most famous sophists of the "golden" generation, Protagoras and Gorgias, taught their students not only the skills of the practical art of rhetoric, but also matters of philosophical nature.

It can be said that the sophists were the first to put forward and justify a new ideal of a free person, depicting the individual as capable of doubting, without worshiping the generally accepted ideas and norms of morality. Following them, Socrates, Plato, Epicurus, and Aristotle also noted the value of education as an opportunity for the formation of a full-fledged personality. Due to the clash between sophistry and the Socratic attitude of disinterested knowledge for the love of truth, problems of education and questions related to the extraordinary relevance of education in the life of the ancient *polis* raised a conflict in which the resources of what we call philosophy of education are deeply rooted (see Kryuchkova 2013).

It is impossible to deny the fact that throughout the entire development of mankind, the study of the education phenomenon and the methods of education themselves occupied a large place in the works of not only philosophers, but also scientists of various fields. Acquiring knowledge is a constantly self-developing process that requires searching for answers to questions. Even Descartes, an outstanding mathematician, physicist and philosopher, noted that doubt leads to the search for the right solution, for which additional knowledge is needed. In his treatise, *The Origin of Philosophy (lat. Principia Philosophiae)* Descartes (1983) tried

to comprehend knowledge as such and noted that doubt is a first step in shaping a reliable method to understand the world.

For the founder of German classical philosophy, I. Kant, "the concept of education plays a central role in answering one of the fundamental questions of philosophy: what is a person? Education is a means by which the rational abilities that define our humanity are actualized and cultivated" (Kornilaev 2021, 1077). For, according to the great philosopher (Kant 1980), only through education a person can fulfill their potential as a human being.

The philosophical German tradition was flourishing in regard to the philosophy of education. One of the most important scholars in this field was Hegel, who argued that the comprehension of an object occurs through the operation of "analytical understanding," a process which will be completed only if the subject will have the capacity to isolate the object from empirical reality. Previously, Kant explained the purpose of education as the ability to make public and private use of our reason, a process that implies a certain freedom, which, according to Kant, owes its causality to immutable laws – the laws of morality (see Kant 1997). And this is absolutely true, because independent judgment is impossible without the courage to think critically. At the same time, a decisive step in education occurs when the individual apprehends the object of study from the point of view of abstract rationality, performing what is recognized as theoretical knowledge (see Hegel 1959). Heidegger summed up this tradition, advancing the perspective that education is an eternal process, which is characterized by its incompleteness, its constant formation, dynamics and development (see Heidegger 1993).

In the Western modern neoliberal philosophy of the second half of the 20th century, most philosophers began to interpret the philosophy of education as applied philosophy, whose task was to clarify the goals, content, methods and dissemination of education appropriate for a suitable modern society (Hirst 1974). Knowledge is divided into "knowledge for myself" and "knowledge for society," *e.g.*, "I want to become an engineer or a doctor, so I need knowledge in certain areas, not in any general field" (see Entwistle 1990).

When it comes to the Russian tradition, the founders of the philosophy of education are V.V. Rozanov and S.I. Gessen. According to Beregovaya,

> "The intensive allocation of education problems as a special subject of philosophical research in Russia started at the end of the 20th century, which was associated with the reform and modernization of the educational system and the needs of domestic science in the philosophical understanding of education." (Beregovaya 2017, 32)

This shift coincided with the beginning of perestroika and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Russian philosophy of education is characterized as it follows:

> "A problem-aspect approach, where the aspect approach is associated with a multifaceted understanding of education as a sphere of theory and practice, a public institution, the sphere of personality formation, whereas the problem-solving approach allows you to build conceptual schemes and theoretical models, which are centered on one or another educational problem." (Beregovaya 2017, 34)

A high level of development registered in the field of education, facing the challenges of modernity, complements the progress of modern society, in which high-quality education contributes to the formation of a stable political culture and constructive overcoming of social contradictions, also being one of the basic conditions for the creation and multiplication of the so-called "human capital." Modernity depicted philosophy of education as an area of interdisciplinary research, where the main principle and condition for its construction and development is the interaction of related scientific disciplines. At the same time, "the philosophy of education is not only a theoretical field of study of education and its problems, but has also turned into a practice-oriented science" (Mikhalina 2009, 104).

As rightly noted above, the philosophy of education has a pronounced interdisciplinary character, since it utilizes the achievements of various fields, such as the philosophy of psychology, philosophy of history, philosophy of culture, anthropology, mathematics, as well as issues of ethics and social philosophy. Therefore, the philosophy of education at the present stage should focus on the application of a socio-cultural

approach to philosophical problems of education, paying attention to cultural, humanistic and psychological, methodological and other aspects.

The philosophy of education aspires to a certain type of thinking and is based on the most general and essential laws and dependencies of modern educational processes in historical and socio-cultural contexts. Based on this, the philosophy of education is designed to reveal the ontological foundations of education as a socio-cultural phenomenon and its functions within the framework of social institutions of education of a certain type of human subjectivity.

2. Contemporary challenges: talents in educational systems, resources in educational markets

In modern socio-political realities, any national education system should be considered as the most important component that determines the prosperity, security and future of a country, a strategical important tool which increases welfare, a main factor in the development and strengthening the intellectual potential of the nation, its independence and international competitiveness in the context of globalization. Globalization, the rapid development of the post-industrial and informational society, natural and climatic changes, intercultural societies and the human capital required in its formation sharply marked the need to identify new ideological foundations and guidelines in the world educational system, in order to train people to answer properly to all these challenges. This matter is relevant as long as we accept the hypothesis that "an individual develops his political and social point of view within the framework of his inner consciousness or identity and projects it onto and through political and economic institutions" (Gadzhimuradova 2020, 134).

By the end of the 20th century, a significant branch of the world economy was formed – the international market of educational services, where the annual volume of education exports overcomes tens of billions of dollars, whereas the number of students overcomes several million people from all over the world.

It is difficult to deny that "at the present stage of the development of the world economy, countries confront a deep competitive struggle

for qualified labor resources. The possession of scientific and creative potential becomes a strategic value of states" (Voronina 2018, 158).

Nowadays, the export of education performs not only the function of increasing the overall level of human capital, filling the shortage of qualified personnel in the post-industrial economy, thus saving educational and social costs in countries that host educational programs, but it has equally become a powerful tool in improving the demographic situation in the recipient countries.

The UN report "World Population Prospects 2019" states the demographic aging of the European population and "as a result, the reduction of the population and qualified personnel. Elderly people (aged 65 years and older) today make up the fastest growing age group in the world. Worldwide, for the first time in 2018, there were more elderly people than children under the age of five, and by 2050 there will be more elderly people than teenagers and young people (aged 15 to 24 years)"[2] (2019, 16).

However, contemporary trends reveal that most of the so-called developed countries, despite the background of demographic and migration crises, are in dire need of qualified specialists in many areas of their economy. Their own educational systems cannot cope with the challenge of reproducing a sufficient number of resources in the labor market. Even the hope to welcome immigrants from Africa and the Middle East, for their ability to fill vacant positions requiring certain qualifications, has not been a sufficient trigger for offering a viable solution to this matter.

Therefore, for many developed countries of the world, it is more urgent than ever to preserve and increase migration channels, such as professional and educational migration, business migration, experts and qualified workforce migration, as societies already confront a social crisis raised by infertility or demographic stagnation, elements that, according to the UN predictions, will continue to represent a major concern, until the middle of this century.

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[2] See https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Highlights.pdf; https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2019/10/un75_shifting_demographics.pdf (last time accessed at November 12, 2022).

According to the 2019 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) report, global inequality in talent competitiveness is rapidly growing, as the talent gap between rich and poor countries is also fluctuating from one year to another.

Policies and practices that lead to increased talent competitiveness in more developed countries are less susceptible to political and socio-economic fluctuations, and these countries have the opportunity to invest in lifelong learning to strengthen skills, and attract and retain talent from around the world. European labour markets have become increasingly accessible to foreign workers because of increased global migration and the implementation of international labour mobility agreements (see Alecu & Drange 2019).

At the same time, the influx of highly qualified specialists has revealed a problem such as discrimination in the national labor market or the inability to obtain a vacant position in accordance with their qualifications, *i.e.*, the problem of top-down qualifications (see Przybyszewska 2021) or overqualification (see Mukomel 2020), which ultimately leads to the depreciation of higher education or academic degree received by immigrants. Constantly, immigrants who cannot find a job that corresponds to their high academic and professional qualifications lose the right to claim a privileged status based on their skills, knowledge and qualifications. In addition, it often happens that highly skilled migrants who get a low-skilled job that does not correspond to their level of education are likely to lose previously acquired skills and thus devalue their qualifications and waste previous professional experience (see Niraula & Valentin 2019).

Megacities have returned to the talent scene today, as large cities (mainly due to their higher level of resources) have adapted better to the challenges associated with COVID, which partly explains why they generally occupy higher positions in GTCI than in 2019.

The Global Talent Competition (GTC) includes a special section dedicated to cities. The rationale for this particular focus has remained unchanged since 2016 and stems from the recognition that innovative talent attraction strategies are emerging in all parts of the world; cities play an increasingly important role in these strategies. Such strategies affect all aspects of talent competitiveness, including education, professional development and retraining, attracting external talent and promoting

collaborative creativity within local spheres, as well as encouraging imported (or returning) talent, accommodated to contribute to the achievement of long-term local goals. By competing for talent, cities gain key advantages over nation-states, primarily reflected in economic growth rates that can be significantly higher than the average national growth rates in their correspondent countries. Cities and regions continue to play an increasingly important (and sometimes leading) role in shaping talent policies and strategies, as well as in trying and adapting creative ways in which talent can be grown, attracted and retained locally.

The top cities in 2021 are still dominated by the USA and Europe, and San Francisco takes the first place. Two other US cities, Boston and Seattle, are in the top 10; while the other remaining 7 are located in Europe (Geneva, Zurich, Luxembourg, Dublin, London and Helsinki). Singapore is the only Asian city included in the top 10, as it follows:

Table 1

Global City Talent Competitiveness Index – GCTCI – 2021. Top 10 Ranking)[3]

Rank	City
1.	San Francisco (USA)
2.	Geneva (Switzerland)
3.	Boston (USA)
4.	Zurich (Switzerland)
5.	Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
6.	Dublin (Ireland)
7.	Singapore (Singapore)
8.	Seattle (USA)
9.	London (UK)
10.	Helsinki (Finland)

* Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2021 – Top 10 rating

The globalization of higher education and the growing number of international students have turned international student migration into a daily phenomenon.

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[3] See the online source available at:: https://www.insead.edu/newsroom/2021-global-talent-competitiveness-index-fostering-green-and-digital-jobs-and-skills-crucial-for-talent-competitiveness-in-times-of-covid-19 (date of application: October 20, 2022).

Statistics show that there is a demand in the world not just for education, but for quality education. Moreover, demands are not limited to certain countries or universities. We can agree on general facts related to the global dimension of the philosophy of education. Nonetheless, it is necessary to understand that only in conditions of openness and trust can the basic principles of the philosophy of education be implemented in raising particular forms of success. By gaining access to new concepts of the philosophy of education adopted and imposed by other universities, the students are introduced to new forms of knowledge that help them to develop a better understanding of the world and to set new goals for their personal and societal becoming. Prohibitions, ideological frameworks, policies of double standards, forms of sanctions that reflect political relationships between states affect all forms of scientific cooperation, students exchange, and professional networking—in this sense, we shall reflect on how European universities will retake their partnerships with Russian universities in due course.

3. Conclusion

Modern education is the historical result of the development of education, culture, and civilization. Education, being the most important component of social networking and knowledge transfer since the beginning of human civilization, has always been at the heart of philosophical reflections. The modern stage reached by our mankind in its civilizational development – in a time of deep significant historical transformations – is characterized by global industrial, technical, socio-cultural transformations at a civilizational scale. Education is, especially nowadays, the epicenter of many political, economic, spiritual, moral and other problems of life. Considered through the lens of specific social practices, education is progressively understood as a domain larger than a service area for sectors of the economy and patterns of the social structure of our world.

In recent years, after the migration crisis, but even before the outbreak of the pandemic, which brought an economic downturn doubled by a high rate of unemployment, the European Union has set an ambitious goal – to increase the demand and supply of qualified specialists in the

labor market (see Potemkina 2021). Global competition for highly skilled migrants has significantly intensified along with the increasingly demanded role of highly skilled migrants in supporting the growth of the economies of developed countries. From a human capital perspective, the countries belonging to the so-called Global North benefit from professional skills of individuals from other parts of the world, in which they were reticent to invest, at least in the beginning. As time passed by, many national governments started targeting highly skilled migrant programs to attract and retain talent (see Bailey & Mulder 2017).

To put all in a nutshell, the value of education in the modern world is not easy to estimate when it responds to social and economic needs of different countries; however, it is necessary to use educational resources to support the development of societies facing contrasting working trends.

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ISLAM AS A POLITICAL PROJECT IN POST-INDEPENDENT AZERBAIJAN

BOGDANA TODOROVA[1]

Abstract. The development of Islam in Azerbaijan is a dynamic process shaped by both historical and contemporary events. The policy of state atheism during the Soviet period contributed by strengthening the role of religion. The article aims to highlight the role of Islam and its affirmation as a viable political project and as a resonator of everything happening in Azerbaijan. Alongside the historical approach an anthropological one has been applied – open to more qualitative studies and sensitive to internal differences, especially towards details usually treated as insignificant, but important for the overall analysis of religion. The ending summarizes how the perception of Islam is transformed not only as social phenomenon, but also as a factor of political change.

Keywords: Islam, Azerbaijan, re-sacralization, policy, social dynamics

1. Introduction

The development of Islam in Caucasus, in particular in Azerbaijan, is a dynamic process that takes shape under the influence of both historical and contemporary events. A long-term dominance of Shiism can be deduced as a basic trend, in contrast to most countries of Central Asia, where Sunnism is widely represented. Shiism constantly competes with it and the various Salafi groups and movements (activated as a result of Russian influence in the country), which play an important role in forming power structures of a new type. In recent years, Sunnism (Turkish Sunni Islam), which started attracting both young people and more followers in general, has gradually gained the upper hand in this internal competition.

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[1]   Professor at Institute for Philosophy and Sociology – BAS. Email: <bonytodorova@gmail.com>.

The policy of state atheism during the Soviet period of rule contributed to strengthening the role of religion. The political liberalization resulting from the formation of an independent state led to a revival of the sense of religious belongingness. Religious identity represents one of the components of national affirmation. The return of religion in social practice and public life does not necessarily result in rejection of secularism, society and individuals (Peyrouse 2004, 74).

Religious identity serves as one of the essential components of national affirmation – necessary to legitimize power. The government uses the non-radical, apolitical model as "soft power" and promotes dialogue between religions. At the same time, it fully controls religious institutions and activities, in order to prevent unwanted risks and influences. The established Council of Religious Affairs controls all denominations and emerges as the sole authority representing Islam, despite the absence of a centralized institution within Islam itself. It must stop the more modern and universalist, but at the same time more fundamentalist, Islam penetrating from the Arab world. Locally, moderate, national, traditional Islam is favored as a counterbalance to global fundamentalist movements. Part of this direction is the promotion of the cult of saints and support for Sufi practices, treated as a moderate version of Islam, in harmony with national traditions.

In contemporary public discourse, Islamic pluralism is represented as an opposition between "traditional" and "fundamentalist" groups, with "traditional" being associated with following local cultural traditions that preserved the traditional social system. "Fundamentalist" is seen as synonymous with "Wahhabi" and is associated with those Muslims who reject the religious and social status quo.

In Azerbaijan, there are no Islamist movements similar to IMU (Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan) and Hizb al-Tahrir (with the most opportunities for Islamization of society)[2] or PIR, in Tajikistan[3]. The ideal of a caliphate and a united Muslim nation is not on the agenda.

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[2]   It is made up mostly of Uzbeks and targets the middle social classes, which are the basis of Islamism.

[3]   Organized around acts of violence, including two attempted invasions of Kyrgyzstan in the summers of 1999 and 2000. Their strength lies in a specifically regional context. See Olcott & Babajanov 2003, 31-40.

Most members of Islamist movements are motivated by local conditions and act more pragmatically rather than theologically. In general, they are not broadly well-known in the respective areas. Therefore, applying such a dichotomy to Azerbaijan does not work.

The existing religious pluralism approaches that of classical Islam in the past and includes local religious minorities, also extremely heterogeneous – strongly religious Shia communities (embracing a conservative, liberal, or reformist discourse), and strongly religious Sunnis, who subsequently differentiate themselves as Sufis, Turks, or those inspired by the Salafi interpretation of Islam in Arab countries.

The influence of atheism and the secular project of modernization, combined with the unstable geographical area in which the country is located, reinforce the process of desacralization of the political space.

The perception of Islam as a threat and a political challenge (from an individual marker of identity to be transformed into a social phenomenon and a factor of political change) conditions the authorities strong commitment to it, as well as its attempts to prevent external religious influences (religious education abroad, foreign emissaries to teach in madrasahs, religious proselytism).

2. Argument on the political insights of the public discourse on Islam

Along with pragmatic measures to stop Islam from entering public discourse (banning the use of loudspeakers for the call to prayer, wearing the hijab in school, closing mosques with large numbers of visitors), Azerbaijan's political establishment has demonstrated "symbolic violence"[4] regarding Islam.

Five interrelated discursive lines can be traced, according to Ismayilov:
1. Maintaining a narrative linking the rise of the religious with the rise of Islamic "extremism" as a threat to the country's security and stability, especially if religious practice leads to increased public activism by religious groups or individuals (Islam is transformed from an individual marker of identity into a social phenomenon);

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[4] The term "symbolic violence" was introduced by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to denote processes in which "order and social constraint are produced by indirect, cultural mechanisms rather than by direct, coercive social control" (Jenkins 2002, 104).

2. A clear formed contrast between the Islamic fundamentalism of neighboring Iran, (a growing trend of insecurity and destruction globally) and the entirely secular nature of the Azerbaijani state, with its stability and security;

3. Associating growing religiosity with poverty, illiteracy, backwardness will automatically generate exclusion (marginalization);

4. Attribution of foreign religious influence (direct sponsorship by foreign agents, especially those from Iran) to local social activism, claiming that Islam is being used to radicalize Azerbaijan's domestic politics;

5. Highlighting secular nationalism and multiculturalism as an alternative ideological vision around which to mobilize society[5] (Ismayilov 2018, 342).

The government pursues two complementary goals:

1. To position itself in the eyes of the West and the local population, as the only power that can and is willing to contain the growing political influence of Islam in the country, in order to preserve its secular character, *характер*[6]. Such an effort demonstrates the elite's commitment to Islam, laying the groundwork for the endogenization of Islamic discourse.

2. At the local level, the goal is to discredit any other influence that could potentially mobilize the population. A kind of prevention against the growing influence of the opposition (often accused of contacts with Islamist networks as well as Iran's special services), which in turn reinforces the West's belief in the presence of repressed minorities.

The rise of the Movement for Muslim Unity under the leadership of the charismatic Shiite cleric Taleh Baghirzadeh and his reconciliation with some secular opposition forces (especially those who are part of the opposition bloc of the National Council) caused a dramatic change[7].

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[5]   See also Corley & Kinahan 2012.

[6]   Such an effort became a feature of the elite's commitment to Islam – the regime became increasingly authoritarian, and its governance model began to attract increasing criticism from the West.

[7]   See I. Abbasov, "Azeri Muslims Protest Theologian's Arrest", April 9, 2013, goo. gl/4zjV6v; "Who is Taleh Baghirzade?" *Azadliq Radiosu*, April 3, 2015, goo.gl/g8fdVZ; *E. Mamedov,*

The Muslim Unity Movement can serve to politicize certain segments of the apolitical Shia and Sunni groups, so that even those who do not support Taleh Baghirzadeh's anti-government cause do so (it is about representatives from across the religious spectrum who do not support political Islam as a future project for the development of the country). This emerging dynamic could be the 'soft power' helping to bridge the Shia-Sunni divide and find expression in a government strategy to increase the number of mosques attended by both Sunnis and Shias.

At the macro level, the secular society in the country, together with the opposition, seeks to maintain ties with various religious groups, the reasons for this being different: fear of losing financial and political support from the West, against the background of the ongoing ideological divergence[8].

In 2013-2014 the disappointment with the West's ability to promote democratic changes in Azerbaijan is gradually increasing. The secular opposition ever more relied on domestic forces for support[9]. Furthermore, religious groups began to distance themselves from overtly aggressive criticism of the West (without abandoning an anti-Western attitude as such) and embraced the idea of a universal struggle against imposed authoritarianism, focusing more on establishing a democratic state with leaders elected by the people, and not with the establishment of an Islamic Republic[10]. Bagirzadeh admits that the Azeri society is not ready

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"Whither Azerbaijan's Islamists?" *EurasiaNet*, August 12, 2015, goo.gl/2i6Aoc.; M. Runey, "Azerbaijan: Show Trial Ends with Harsh Sentences for Islamic Activists", *EurasiaNet*, January 26, 2017, goo.gl/Ny13Vb). See also Alchina и Ilham, "Four Months Imprisonment Decision for Taleh Baghirzade," *Cebhe.Info*, December 2, 2015, goo.gl/PlD4Ub; Islam Azeri, "Taleh Baghirzade and 13 People Arrested, Some Died", November 26, 2015, http://goo.gl/ Kiwe8S; F. Majid, "Defendants in 'Nardaran Case' Received from 10 to 20 Years in Prison," *Caucasian Knot*, January 25, 2017, goo.gl/xFjGrn; "Taleh Baghirzade's Prison Term Extended," *Meydan tv*, March 7, 2016, goo.gl/euNMp1; A. Raufoglu, "Nardaran Violence Sparks Fresh Concerns About Authoritarian Rule," *Meydan tv*, December 1, 2015, https://goo.gl/ MCs8Vm; "Azerbaijan Deepens Crackdown on Shi'ite Stronghold," *Радио Свободна Европа*, December 1, 2015, goo.gl/bzTFS4.

[8] See "Azerbaijan: Repression of the Islamic Movement," *5Pillars*, July 19, 2014. http://goo.gl/YdpHm7.

[9] See Fuller & Bakir 2007; Geybullayeva 2007, 112-113.

[10] See "The National Council Held a Rally, Two People Detained," *Azadliq*, May 30, 2015, goo.gl/Riut43; "Taleh Baghirzade: 'Now, I Am in the Large Prison,'" Azadliq Radiosu,

for the establishment of an Islamic State and that in a democratic state, the population will have a chance to elect a president with a political platform that they support, and when the demographic conditions in Azerbaijan show the readiness of the society for an Islamic State, then the majority will quite naturally vote for a president embracing an Islamist agenda. MMU's mission is to help transition from Soviet-style secularism to true religious practice rather than the imposition of the Islamic State.

Ilgar Ibrahimoglu[11] shares Bagirzadeh's idea of electoral democracy as a key mechanism for solving the question of the future of the country's political identity and the place of Islam in it. It is also concerning the establishmend of a democratic process in the country, holding elections, formulating common rules, and the right of believers to identify themselves. For both, just like for the Islamists throughout the Middle East "democracy is not an end, but a means."

Thus, practically silently, a large part of apolitical religious people will be socialized into a post-democratic Islamist agenda. This will not happen without a dramatic societal polarization of the religious-secular divide and an increase in civil conflicts, which will highlight the question of the political and ideological support of power.

July 30, 2015, goo.gl/CbRTae; "There is No Basis nor Prospects for the Establishment of the Islamic State in Azerbaijan," *Islamin Sesi*, August 10, 2015, http://goo.gl/1grq8g.

[11] Imam Haji Ilgar Ibrahimoglu, the man around whom the other center of Shiism gravitated and led the Juma Jamia in old Baku until 2004. He was educated in Iran. He studied Shiite theology and philosophy at the University of Tehran and Qazvin, where he became acquainted with the moderate interpretations of Islam by Ayatollah Motahari and the philosopher Soroush. He brought to Azerbaijan an updated interpretation of the conduct of some rituals, including Ashura (traditionally the custom is connected with self-flagellation, blood and weeping-mercy). His companions began to donate blood for children suffering from thalassemia, believing that in this way they were truly fulfilling Imam Hussain's vow. His followers are members of International Human Rights Organizations that appeared in the country in the first years of independence. Haji Ilgar is the head of the Islamic Association for Human Rights and the Azerbaijan Section of the Christian NGO for Human Rights, in the International Association for Religious Freedom of the United States. Cooperation with international Christian associations that advocate against violations of freedom of conscience created a winning image of Haji-Ilgar as a modern and open to dialogue Muslim politician, which he successfully used.

The dividing line lies between those who support the current political establishment and those who oppose it (this leads to a natural alliance of secularists and Islamists against authoritarian rule). If the opposition wins, the fundamental division will be between those who pursue the Islamic cause and those who oppose it. At a later stage, Ibrahimoglu pointed out that Azerbaijan's Constitution should find a way to include Islam as the leading state religion, which effectively challenges some of the state's secular foundations. Musawat, one of the two opposition parties (the other is the Popular Front), takes a rather cautious position towards the Islamist movement in the country. The pro-Western Republican Alternative (REAL) is also opposed to an alliance with political Islam, based on the idea of the incompatibility of Islam with democracy and the need to ban Islamist parties in secular democratic societies, thus resulting in reducing Islam down to individual practice.

What does the resacralization of the political space and the normalization of Islamic discourse in the public space portend for the future of Islam in Azerbaijan: in the context of the broad exogenous changes related to the social dynamics, as well as the country's international politics and commitments ?

In many ways, the revival of Islam aims to foster a new contextual reality in which antagonism towards Islam is increasingly equated with antagonism towards society as a whole, rather than as a means of internal social legitimation. The more the population identifies with Islamic groups and their struggle, the harder it will accept attacks on religion or appeals to Islam as a threat and a tool in the hands of foreign powers. A reality, that gradually led the authorities to abandon the use of Islamic extremism as a tool for internal legitimation. They use the newly formed movement to align the politically active Shia and the secular opposition in order to form religious groups on a secular basis to gain power. In this way, the role of Shiite Islam as a factor influencing the political dynamics in the country will be minimized. The rulers do their best to guarantee the success of such a religious project, which would otherwise fail. This is made possible by the fact that Islamic groups that tactically reject the Islamist element of their agenda associate themselves with the secular environment and define themselves as pro-democracy movements. Conditions are being created for political Islam to establish itself as a viable political project.

Additionally, while such religious-secular dynamics may create tension for an elite in its pursuit of Western trends and broader national legitimation, this is not a problem for Azerbaijanis, who are shifting their focus from Western power structures to anti-Western, anti-globalist ones. Power constellations with the Global South (see Ismayilov 2015, 10-11; Ismayilov 2014, 79-129) and a relative (if still ambivalent) normalization of Iran's relations with the West (see Baczynska 2016; Friedman 2014). President Aliyev has used the narrative of the rise of Islamophobia in Europe to secure support for a new course of opposition to the West- a stance that some analysts say shows the West has lost its "moral authority" in the eyes of Baku (see Gassanly 2017).

Furthermore, there is an increased engagement of the elite alongside the Muslim world, with the aim of domestic legitimation and economic survival. This is a new trend through which a large part of the population is gradually socialized in an Islamic discursive environment. This is likely to lead to an inevitable and irreversible sacralization of society, thus gradually reordering the external and internal dimensions of the elite's quest for legitimation and survival and their positioning within Islamic structures.

While Azerbaijan continues to receive substantial loans from the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank, and its commitment to the Islamic Development Bank, which supports the country's efforts to strengthen the non-oil and other sectors of the economy, is also increasing significantly. mainly in the fields of transport, trade, agriculture and energy, as well as private sector development and banking[12]. This cooperation, although still in its infancy, aims to introduce Islamic banking in Azerbaijan[13] – a measure

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[12] See N. Abbasova, "Azerbaijan Sign Grant Agreement," *Azernews*, January 18, 2017, goo.gl/ cFVSnv; A. Hasanli, "Azerbaijan Offers to Invest in Car Manufacturing," *Trend News Agency*, January 18, 2017, goo.gl/Q3Em3K; A. Hasanli, "May Consider Participation in North-South Project," Trend News Agency, January 31, 2017. goo.gl/c890JQ; A. Mammadov, "Islamic Development Bank to Review Irrigation Project in Azerbaijan," *Trend News Agency*, April 16, 2015, goo.gl/TjZrdu; "Azerbaijan and Islamic Development Bank Ink Grant Agreement," *Report News Agency*, January 18, 2017, goo.gl/azy2qv; "Islamic Development Bank Mission Arrives in Azerbaijan," *Report News Agency*, November 22, 2016, goo.gl/qK2esC; "Azerbaijani President Meets with President of Islamic Development Bank Group", *Trend News Agency*, April 6, 2015, goo.gl/uRH0iKл

[13] See: Abbasova, "Azerbaijan Sign Grant Agreement;" "Islamic Development Bank Takes Next Step in Supporting Islamic Finance in Azerbaijan", *Hurriyet Daily News*, February 10, 2015, goo.gl/vFdPto; Report.Az, "Azerbaijan and Islamic Development Bank…".

which, if implemented, will surely serve as a means for a larger part of the population to step into the discursive field of Islam *исляма* [Aliyev] 2015, 3-6).

The regime in Baku is also working to expand bilateral ties with a number of Muslim, countries, including Iran (a decision was made on joint car production and pharmaceutical cooperation)[14] and Pakistan within the field of military cooperation (ballistic missiles with a range of 500 km)[15].

The dynamic intensity and increasingly strategic nature of the partnership with Turkey over the past few years is also significant, given Turkey's geographical proximity and its progressive shift towards an Islamist discourse since the "Justice Party"[16] government came to power.

In relation to its humanitarian commitments to the Global South, the Azerbaijani government provides training courses for civil servants in the administration of a number of Muslim countries (especially Afghanistan). Such is the Caspian Basin Studies Program, run by Ada University since 2011[17], which "offers a unique opportunity for foreign diplomats and government officials to explore and study the Caspian Basin region in depth" (Ismayilov 2015, 96).

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[14] See N. Abbasova, "Foundation Stone Laid for Azerbaijan-Iran Pharmaceutical Plant," *Azernews*, January 16, 2017, goo.gl/rmV5nu; Abbasova, "Azerbaijan, Iran Eye Implementation…"; A. Karimova, "Azerbaijan, Iran Finalize Deal on Medicine Production", *Azernews*, April 22, 2016, goo.gl/tBkusn; A. Karimova, "Azerbaijan, Iran to Invest Initially 35M Euros in Medicine Plant Construction", *Azernews*, March 14, 2016.

[15] See E. Mamedov, "Azerbaijan: Marching in Lockstep with Turkey in Cracking Down on Gulen," *EurasiaNet*, August 9, 2016, goo.gl/v3q9VJ; F. Shahbazov, "Azerbaijan's Growing Military Cooperation with Pakistan," *The Diplomat*, January 13, 2017.

[16] Among the most dramatic and consistent reforms carried out by Erdoğan's Party is the lifting of the ban on headscarves in public and in institutions (October 2013), public schools (September 2014) and the military (February 2017 .); introduction of compulsory religion lessons in primary schools (grades 1-3); drastically increasing the number of religiously oriented schools within the state system (the so-called Imam Hatip Lyces); See also: S. Arsu and D. Bilefsky, "Turkey Lifts Longtime Ban on Head Scarves in State Offices," *The New York Times*, October 8, 2013, goo.gl/VxvDGb; R. Smith, "Why Turkey Lifted Its Ban on the Islamic Headscarf," *National Geographic*, October 12, 2013, goo.gl/yxR3aB; C. Tee, *The Gulen Movement in Turkey: The Politics of Islam and Modernity* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), pp. 59-61; "Turkey Lifts Military Ban on Islamic Headscarf," *The Guardian*, February 22, 2017, goo. gl/9NOOwg.

[17] Before 2014, the university was known as Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy.

The government has also generously provided full scholarships for students from the Global South, many of whom are practicing Muslims, to pursue a full undergraduate or graduate degree at Ada University since the latter launched its first degree program in 2009. These efforts continue to expand and facilitate the opening of more public platforms for the practice of Islam. Azerbaijan is actively working to open a broad debate on hot conflict points, while also aiming to attract the attention of organizations from the Global South. On the initiative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in April 2016, a contact group was established in Ankara regarding the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan[18]. At the suggestion of the Non-Aligned Movement, the final document of the meeting in Tehran in August 2012 included a call for a "negotiated settlement of the conflict within the framework of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan"[19]. Thus, for the first time, "the issue of Karabakh became the subject of widespread recognition by governments, apart from the political problems of the South Caucasus or post-Soviet Eurasia" (Strakes 2013).

In view of the need for internal legitimation and more successful external recognition, the elite emulated the Soviets in their attempts to minimize Islamic practices and attitudes in territories inhabited by indigenous Muslim populations, so as not to foster transnational ties of Islamic solidarity that would threaten secular politics and ideology. At the same time, the spread of so-called "folk Islam" is encouraged, which is seen as promoting sub-national identities, maintaining patriarchal social structures, and therefore posing less of a threat while facilitating governance in traditionally secular Muslim areas (Ismayilov 2015, 7-13).

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[18] The contact group, whose first meeting under the chairmanship of OIC Secretary General Iyad bin Amin Madani was convened on the sidelines of the 71st regular session of the UN General Assembly in September 2016, includes seven countries: Turkey, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Gambia and Djibouti. See "Contact Group on Aggression of Armenia Against Azerbaijan Convenes Its First Meeting," *Azertag*, September 20, 2016, goo.gl/lm9gbS).

[19] Final Document in the Summit of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, August 26-31, 2012, para. 391, p. 104, http://namiran.org/16th-summit.

Therefore, the Islamic discourse, promoted by the elite as a means of domestic and international legitimation, is ssequentially transformed into a coherent and homogeneous one, shared by an increasingly large part of the population, and gradually begins to be understood as a conscious practice of faith.

At least two vectors can be distinguished regarding the dynamics of resacralization of public space in Azerbaijan.

First, the growing intensity of Azerbaijan's relations with Israel, which is a possible external obstacle to deepening Baku's engagement with Islam. Azerbaijan's third largest trading partner as of February 2016 – Israel has enjoyed a truly strategic partnership with Baku over the past decade, particularly in the military and internal security areas. Israel is critical to Azerbaijan's efforts to diversify its economic dependence on oil, helping to boost the country's high-tech and agricultural capabilities[20]. Finally, Israel occupies a key place in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, traditionally lobbying for Baku's relations with Washington[21]. This leads to the development of several scenarios – the elite may choose to pursue a positive policy towards Islam that will not correspond to the idea of resacralization of public space, an approach that would also require finding an alternative, legitimating strategy. The elite may choose, in the short term, a combination of local repression and an ongoing conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh to maintain local nationalism as the main legitimating mechanism capable of competing with Islam and a tool for popular mobilization. In the long run, however, since such a strategy is socially unsustainable, the elite will have to work towards the formation of genuine economic transformation to further maintain its national strategy, legitimacy and to ensure loyalty.

Secondly, the transformation in the dynamics of the religious-secular relationship and the normalization of Islamic discourse in the evolving field of (political) Islam in Azerbaijan.

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[20] See N. Abbasova, "Azerbaijan, Israel Keen to Expand Cooperation," *Azernews*, November 8, 2016, goo.gl/GdnUOI; "Azerbaijan and Israel Aimed at Increasing Mutual Trade Turnover," *Contact.az*, December 15, 2016, goo.gl/VKTmKD.

[21] See C. Liphshiz, "Netanyahu Scores Diplomatic Home Run in Iran's Backyard," *The Times of Israel*, December 17, 2016, goo.gl/aoDfac.

3. Conclusion

The Islamic discourse in the last two decades is not confined to an intra-societal (within society or elite) dialogue and does not reflect major cultural changes or changing moods, perceptions and self-perceptions in the country's social landscape. Rather, it has formed and evolved as a continuously fluid function of exogenous effects and the tactical pursuit of domestic and international legitimation of power. In particular, on three exogenous factors: striving for survival, after the declaration of independence; the geographical area of the country and the related threat of religious radicalization brought by the neighbors; an elite incorporated into a Soviet political-cultural environment, but striving for Western (and wider international) recognition.

The evolution of the place of Islam in post-independent Azerbaijan also unfolds as a contingent product of dialectical tension between different motivational players within the hybrid intentionality underlying the elite's quest for survival.

From this point of view, the specific dynamics in Azerbaijan during the third decade of the country's independence is related to the change towards resacralization of the political space.

With Islamist groups emphasizing their commitment to civil rights, justice, the overall anti-authoritarian struggle and striving for democracy, and the secular opposition not shying away from making references to Islam and Islamic concepts (thus highlighting the religious segment of their identity in their narrative of common struggle and unified opposition to the current political regime), the two groups, previously at opposite poles of socio-political resistance, today find themselves gradually moving towards a convergence of discourse in regard to religion and politics.

Islam is strengthening its place in public discourse, and Azerbaijani society has a historic opportunity to develop, in its own internally evolved way, its individual idea of the place that religion should occupy in the socio-political fabric of the state, thus transforming the dynamics of Islamic discourse from an exogenously (contextually) determined dialectical function of the elite's drive for self-preservation (and therefore unstable) into an endogenously determined linear (and therefore more stable) evolution.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE OLD ROOTS OF THE NEW AESTHETICS

DRAGOŞ GRUSEA[1]

Review of CORNEL-FLORIN MORARU, *The scientific turn of contemporary aesthetics. Avant-garde research in the fields of neuroscience and artificial intelligence*, Eikon Publishing House, Bucharest, 2022, 345 p.

Individuals with an inclination towards the great tradition of European culture do not want to take note of the scientific-technological evolution of the last decades, and scientists do not want to know of the existence of a cultural tradition that preceded them. The contemporary intellectual landscape seems to be marked by a massive split between two apparently irreconcilable attitudes. For all their differences, both sides believe that the contemporary evolution of technology has overturned the fundamental concepts that have permeated European culture from Homer to Heidegger. The difference lies in the value emphasis placed by each on this situation: for some it is a catastrophe, for others a liberation. Within this oppositional model, however, there is also a narrow path that leads to a paradigm of organic continuity, which can be seen, for example, very clearly in Constantin Noica's book *Twenty-seven Steps of Reality* (1969). The Romanian philosopher starts from a hypothesis that is as simple as it is plausible: "Human thought could not fail to be in solidarity, deep down, with itself; it could not conceive something for 2000 years and suddenly discover something else." (Noica 1969, 6)[2]

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[1] National University of Arts, Bucharest. Email: <dragos.grusea@unarte.org>.
[2] *My emphasis*.

Cornel-Florin Moraru's philosophical program is part of this paradigm which presupposes, in a Hegelian way, the fundamental agreement of thought with itself or, in the author's words "the continuity in dissonance of paradigms" (Moraru 2022, 36). The great ideas of the philosophical tradition, but also myths "not only trace an influence of time immemorial on us and the society in which we live, but predetermine our ideas and ideals in a way that transcends the worldview of the age in which we find ourselves." (Moraru 2022, 233-234).

This seems to be the case if we consider the concept of the wave, which for Noica brings together all the traditional categories of philosophy. But everything seems to get complicated when we turn to disciplines and phenomena that have emerged in recent decades: DJing, Facebook, neuroscience, artificial intelligence. For an individual with a classical education, the mere mention of these names signifies a complete break with the old tradition. What could Facebook or Djing have in common with Greek mythology? Cornel-Florin Moraru takes up these avant-garde concepts to make their genealogy and build a bridge between the two worlds. For example, the DJ, as someone who plays music without singing, could only appear in a culture where the archetype of Dionysus exists, a god who is the patron of dance and music without being a musician himself (see Moraru 2020a). Social networks were born against the backdrop of the god Hermes, who not only instantly sends messages over distance, but also knows everyone's hidden secrets (see Moraru 2020b).

In this book, a revised version of his PhD thesis defended in 2021 at the National University of Arts in Bucharest, Cornel-Florin Moraru turns to the newest developments in aesthetics: neuroaesthetics, information aesthetics and database aesthetics to show that, far from invalidating traditional aesthetic thinking, these new disciplines actually provide experimental evidence for hypotheses that were considered impossible to be empirically tested. By putting aesthetic ideas under the lens of experiment, this volume contributes to strengthening the recent ideal of experimental philosophy. The methodology is innovative: by extrapolating the conceptual presuppositions of avant-garde scientific disciplines, the author shows at the same time how these philosophical concepts are verified by scientific research. From a methodological point

of view, therefore, we can find a double grounding: on the one hand, science is placed within the theoretical and cultural presuppositions that it ignores; on the other hand, these philosophical ideas are not detached from scientific research, but on the contrary, the author shows how they are experimentally confirmed within the framework of scientific research itself. The philosophical concept makes science possible, and the latter confirms the concept *in concreto* – this is the circle of the double foundation that forms the methodological twist of this volume.

Far from denying traditional philosophy, recent scientific research confirms it to the highest degree. Let's take the fundamental concepts at work one by one.

1. Science and art

Since the main purpose of the volume is to demonstrate that the scientific turn of aesthetics "does not change the essence of aesthetics" (Moraru 2022, 17), the author begins by clarifying the evolution of the relationship between science and art in Western culture. In the Homeric epic poems, we find the mythical craftsman Harmon, the ancestor of harmony, a concept that "underlies both the aesthetic and the cognitive" (Moraru 2020, 52). The common origin of science and art means that the two concepts initially have close meanings. The word for science, ἐπιστήμη comes from ἵστημι meaning "to make something stand". But the same is basically true of art (in the broad sense), for "the ability to make a thing stand before the mind's eye was seen as the same as the ability to make a thing stand before the physical eye" (Moraru 2022, 52). Art and science were equivalent, both being "bound together by the same human impulse to bring things to stability, to give configuration (μορφή) – whether mental or material – to the entities around us" (Moraru 2022, 52). In the archaic period art functioned as the primary term, and scientific knowledge developed by borrowing from art's own vocabulary. With Plato, however, a reversal took place that was to prove decisive for the subsequent development of Western culture: "whereas before science was defined in the territory of art, now art becomes the secondary term" (Moraru 2022, 57). This does not make the aesthetic

dimension disappear. Starting from the Platonic term τύπος (translated as "stamped image") the author stresses the aesthetic dimension of the cognitive in Plato and Aristotle. Forms, Ideas and Paradigms have an inherently aesthetic side, because they presuppose a certain plasticity and resort to the image to relate things situated in profoundly different realms of existence. The author's thesis is that "the common ground between science and art is that both produce images. Therefore, both are, in a certain sense, <<plastic>>" (Moraru 2022, 65).

The affinity between science and art presupposes an aesthetical dimension of exact knowledge[3], but also the existence of an epistemological foundation of art, a foundation sought by contemporary neuroscience, information aesthetics or artificial art. In conclusion, the idea of a "science of art" simply updates the old intertwining of the two disciplines. Bringing together these two apparently opposing elements does not cancel them out but, on the contrary, places them in the original matrix from which they sprang. Having laid the foundations, the following chapters will set out to demonstrate *in concreto* the alliance between science and art by analysing the basic concepts of aesthetics. The structure of each chapter repeats the methodology of the double foundation mentioned above: first, the fundamental concepts of traditional philosophy which trace the path of the scientific approach are introduced, and then the scientific confirmation of these founding concepts is sought.

2. Imitation. From mimesis to mirror neurons

In the first two sections of this chapter, the author presents the main similarities and differences between the ancient concept of imitation and the modern one. In a first phase, the essential attributes of the concept of *mimesis* as it appears in Aristotle's *Poetics* are outlined, the aim being twofold: on the one hand to circumscribe the ancient understanding of *mimesis*, on the other hand to establish those elements that will ensure the trans-paradigmatic continuity of the concept of imitation. There are

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[3] See for example Stewart 2008, quoted several times in this volume. One can also think of Hermann Weyl's (1952) perspective.

two senses of Aristotelian *mimesis*: imitation that reproduces what already exists, but its more important function is that it "completes the order of things", which is why "the idea of innovation is inherent in art as imitation" (Moraru 2022, 96). The art-nature isomorphism constituted by the common finality (the Good) towards which both art and nature tend, makes the products of τέχνη complement nature, not oppose it. Which means that "imitation links the human spirit to nature as an analogue" (Moraru 2022, 96). But imitation is not only related to production, but also to aesthetic contemplation, "as if contemplation were a kind of mental 're-creation' of the work of art" (Moraru 2022, 97). Third, mimetic capacity creates empathy and "constitutes a pre-reflexive dimension of intersubjectivity, mediated by the work of art" (Moraru 2022, 97)

Further, analysing Charles Batteux's classic treatise[4], the author shows that "the three essential features of Aristotelian imitation remain, even if the meaning of the terms has changed profoundly (110), the cause of these changes being the placing of all concepts under the idea of subjectivity. In other words, imitation is "cartesianized": "the sentence 'the arts are the imitation of beautiful nature' has axiomatic value, it is to the system of the fine arts what 'I think, therefore I am' is to Descartes' metaphysics…" (Moraru 2022, 108). Thus, Aristotelian φύσις is replaced by *belle nature*, by subjectivized, spiritualized nature. Notwithstanding the differences, Cornel-Florin Moraru argues convincingly for the trans-paradigmatic invariance of "imitation" as an aesthetic idea, whose fundamental notes he will find even in a discipline as new as neuroaesthetics.

The author's thesis is that the imitation thematized by neuroscience, "structurally resembles the ontological approaches" of traditional philosophy (Moraru 2022, 116). At the heart of the analysis are mirror neurons, *i.e.*, the mirroring mechanism of the human brain. In short, the latter mechanism "transforms a sensory representation of an action into a potential action of its own" (Moraru 2022, 119). Specifically, experiments have shown that mirror neurons are activated both when the subject performs an action and when he observes the same action performed by someone else. This type of neurons do not determine the action, but rather recall it, and are especially active in the absolutely primordial act

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[4] *Les Beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1746).

of raising one's hand to the mouth. Their purpose is "to form a link between perception and action for concrete purposes" (Moraru 2022, 131). Put briefly, "observing action involves simulating action" (Moraru 2022, 141). The inter-subjective dimension of Aristotelian *mimesis* also makes its appearance here because these neural structures, which allow for the mental simulation of actions, make possible empathy, *i.e.*, the imitation of the other's action at the level of one's own mind. This simulation is reflected in expressions such as "I couldn't *do* that" or "how can you *do* that?", because "by saying these words we are already mentally simulating at an unconscious level the actions" of others (Moraru 2022, 138). Looking at a contemporary work of art many of us say "I could *do* that too", because the mirroring mechanism "imitates" the action necessary to produce the perceived work. Thus "aesthetic phenomena (…) are a form of intersubjectivity mediated through the work of art" (Moraru 2022, 139), a conclusion structurally similar to the third feature of Aristotelian imitation. Therefore, neural activity of simulation makes inter-subjectivity, and thereby aesthetic experience, possible. The consequences for aesthetics of these experiments are important. It is precisely this "bodily simulation", *i.e.*, the translation of an external action into one's own neural activity, that explains the difference between abstract art and computer-generated art. Faced with two almost identical paintings, one executed by an abstract painter and the other by a computer, the subjects chose the human version precisely because they could "simulate" the action that led to the creation of the work. It is precisely the nuances and imperfections that made the human painting so gratifying to viewers, leading the author to formulate a paradoxical conclusion: "in an artificial world, it is possible that what will differentiate us from algorithms will be precisely the 'scratches', 'imperfections' and 'contingencies' of the human condition that cannot yet be algorithmically generated" (Moraru 2022, 272). This observation can be important for the future of anthropology. We can imagine the emergence of a future anthropology of imperfection, which would see in the contingencies of humanity the condition of a higher perfection than the mere perfection of computation.

Returning to the process of "simulation", it is interesting to note that the discussion about translating the work of art into "neuro-motor

equivalences", *i.e.,* the simulation in a neural context of the artist's actions and intentions, carries forward a project formulated by expressionist painters in the 1920's. The painter Adolf Hölzel sketched a quasi-scientific aesthetic programme based on the laws that guide the functioning of the visual apparatus. For the German artist, a painting was primarily a form of the eye's movement. An artist can "scientifically" create beauty if he puts into his work exactly that movement which will induce in the eye a path that generates aesthetic pleasure (see Hölzel 1901). Some of the intentions of this programme were developed by Paul Klee in his lectures at the Bauhaus in the 1920s (see Klee 1961, 143-196; 358-392).

Talking about the effect that the contemplation of the work of art has on the functioning of the brain, C-F. Moraru points out that in such a situation the neural simulation is no longer accompanied by inhibition mechanisms, which transforms it into an action. This explains the grimaces that involuntarily appear on our faces during an aesthetic experience. However, the reproduction of action at the neural-motor level changes its meaning in the case of aesthetic experience. A scene representing pain should give rise to a sensation of pain, but the opposite is true. Experimental science thus asks the Aristotelian question: "why does a scene that should cause pain cause pleasure?" The answer given by scientists "is essentially the same as the one Aristotle gave more than 2400 years ago: the realisation that we are dealing with a simulation and not a real situation." (Moraru 2022, 153)

In conclusion, the three main characteristics of the Aristotelian concept of *mimesis* are taken up both in modernity and in neuroscientific research. The latter, through neural *mimesis* called "bodily simulation", puts the human spirit in relation to nature, as it is the case in Aristotle, "only that, in an age of science, nature is seen as biological datum, not in the ancient or modern sense" (Moraru 2022, 160). Then, just like Aristotle's *mimesis*, imitation as bodily simulation makes both creation and aesthetic contemplation possible. And finally, imitation of the neuroscientific kind underlies intersubjectivity, as it does in the Aristotelian *Poetics*.

3. Genius, between depersonalization and neural hyperconnectivity

In the chapter devoted to the idea of genius, the author begins by outlining the main features of this concept, which we can already identify in the aforementioned treatise by Charles Batteux. Thus, artistic genius is a faculty of the soul that cannot be activated on purpose, as it is independent of personal will. We can readily agree that "we cannot intend to have a moment of genius" (Moraru 2022, 177). Batteux seems to suggest a neurological view of genius when he locates this faculty of the soul in "the area of bodily passions, that lies beyond consciousness and will" (Moraru 2022, 179). Independence from individual will results in depersonalisation at the moment of creation, *i.e.*, that forgetfulness of self by which genius detaches itself from the sensible world in order to contemplate the prototypes of things. These traits will be taken up by Schopenhauer, who will deepen the perspective on genius. The novelty brought by the German thinker consists in the explicitly neurological interpretation of genius and in situating this concept in the area of anomaly and madness. After exposing the paradoxes that scientific research is faced with when trying to understand rationally something whose essence is absolute irrationality, the author reviews the main results attained by the neuroscience of genius, underlining the continuity with the ideas put forward by Batteux and Schopenhauer. Thus, neuroscientific research suggests an intimate connection between certain forms of madness and creativity. For example, neural hyperconnectivity, which makes unexpected associations of ideas possible, is also present in schizophrenia. However, the author also highlights the need for an appropriate historical context for an individual's potential genius to manifest itself. Returning to the neural dimension of genius, the author distinguishes between two types of genius: experimental genius, which manifests itself explosively later in life (Cézanne), and conceptual genius, those geniuses who systematically pursue the realisation of an intention throughout their lives.

However, genius poses a problem absent in the case of imitation: neurological research cannot generalise findings from animal brain analysis. There is no such thing as genius in animals. This is why Einstein's brain presented a unique opportunity for those who wanted

to understand the neural mechanisms of genius. The trials and tribulations the German physicist's poor organ went through are summarised by the author, and then the conclusions drawn from the research of his brain are presented. The Einsteinian brain is neither larger nor heavier, and had no more neuronal connections than an ordinary brain. There is, however, a notable difference that consists in the presence of glial cells in the neocortex. In layman's terms, the Einsteinian brain communicates with itself at a much faster rate than a normal brain. Different parts of the brain could communicate at a distance making possible what some researchers have called "synthetic thinking" (Moraru 2022, 223) or in Schopenhauer's language, the intuition of the Whole. Thanks to this high-speed communication of different parts of the brain, Einstein possessed the neural capacity to transform abstract concepts into highly concrete images, which is essential to the kind of scientific theory he founded.

To sum up, neurological research on genius confirms the ideas set out in the first part of the chapter: genius implies a form of depersonalisation, it is involuntary, it is capable of perceiving prototypes. In the conclusion of the chapter, the author again confirms his hypothesis with data by stating that "the treatment of genius in neuroscience converges on the same features of genius in traditional philosophy" (Moraru 2022, 228).

4. Informational aesthetics and the generative principle of art

In the last part of the book, Cornel-Florin Moraru turns his attention to the relationship between aesthetics and artificial intelligence. The author's hypothesis is that this type of intelligence was made possible only after "the incorporation of human existence into what we call the reality of the digital and virtual environment" (Moraru 2022, 240). After an exposition devoted to the concepts of digitality and virtuality, which have much deeper origins in classical culture than may appear at first glance, the author outlines the main ideas Max Bense's informational aesthetics.

Bense places his program from the outset in the paradigm of traditional philosophy, seeing artificial intelligence as a new manifestation

of objective spirit. The technological aspect of spirit must be taken out of the strictly utilitarian realm, because spirit always tends, even in this manifestation, towards non-pragmatic ends. The objectification of spirit, however, will take a different form at this stage of its evolution, since it is no longer placed within the framework of an organicity as theorized by Kant and Hegel. The nature of the technical version of spirit is of the "arithmetical-informational" type (Moraru 2022, 262). In other words, information will become the ladder by which spirit descends into the world. How can spirit meet itself and become art in its informational form? To answer these questions, the Stuttgart School, founded by Max Bense, wants to let spirit in its informational manifestation reach itself. In other words, it explores the possibility of art created by algorithmic intelligence alone. This will lead to the so-called "generative aesthetics", which is in search of a creative principle of original aesthetic structures. The first works of art created by artificial algorithms, although rudimentary, lay the foundations for what is happening today, when artificial intelligence can create absolutely original works in any artistic style.

It is again interesting to note that this mathematisation of aesthetics fulfils a wish already formulated by artists. In his theoretical work, *The Non-objective World*[5], the great Russian painter Kazimir Malevich sets out to identify the generative principle of each artistic current. The artist's conviction was that each artistic style starts from a certain formula containing a precise relationship between straight and curved lines. The first artistic images created by artificial intelligence closely resemble the visual formulas introduced by Malevich.

Database aesthetics advances the idea of a totality of all creations "because databases already offer all available creative possibilities, and the artist must find, in terms of generative aesthetics, only the syntax by which these possibilities can be realized" (Moraru 2022, 285). Again, I would add, the new aesthetic brings to fruition the conceptual projects thought up by the great artists. Paul Klee postulates the existence of "a hyperdimensional foundation" (1961,59), which contains in latency all possible works of art, the task of the artist being to descend into this "database" of all possible forms in order to bring them out of concealment.

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[5]   *Die Gegenstandslose Welt*, Bauhausbücher Nr.11, Albert Langen Verlag, München, 1927.

The Swiss artist's emphasis on pictorial syntax can also acquire new meanings in the context of database aesthetics.

5. Conclusions

Despite its inter-disciplinary nature and large volume of information, the book is an easy read, being written for the non-specialist who wants to understand the new world of neuroscience and artificial intelligence at its core. Finally, it must be said that Cornel-Florin Moraru's attempt contributes to denouncing and overcoming a paradox. The humanities often renounce their own tradition in the name of exact science, while science itself recovers this very tradition. We could sum up the whole volume in a dialectical sentence: the old is new and the new is old. This mutual rapprochement between avant-garde science and the old tradition acts as a calming influence on the more conservative individuals, demonstrating that the spirit of classical culture has not died with the digital revolution, but has been affirmed in a new form. And those inclined exclusively towards science and technology can take note of the deeply cultural and even mythological dimension of their own concerns.

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