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The integration of Digital Competences into the Primary Education Curriculum

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Abstract. *The imminent digitalisation of education in Romania is described and announced by the "Strategy on the digitalisation of education in Romania" (document in public consultation). This will bring a number of updates to primary education but, to analyze this transition, this paper sets out why the focus on digital education is needed, what will be left behind by the future update in the primary education curriculum and the prospects for updating it. The analysis of the actual curriculum indicates that only two of the competences specific to all subjects in primary education tangentially support the development of digital competence. This analysis was carried out under the common terminology used in definitions of digital competence extracted from European education policies as well as common reference tools at European and national level. For a more accurate correlation of the curricular projection with the targeted key competence were analyzed, based on the same terminology, even the learning activities suggested by school curricula, finding a low proportion of integration of digital competences in teaching. Therefore, tomorrow's school projections viewed through the "Strategy on the digitalisation of education in Romania", in relation to the data of this paper, are welcome.*

Keywords: *digital education, digital competence, curricular digitalisation, primary education.*

Introduction

The whole world is in a continuous change and this includes: environment, climate, technologies, human knowledge, learning etc. In the case of digital technologies, because they are at the forefront of technologies, changes are the most visible, the term update (updates) being part of the vocabulary of the digital age generations. These updates involve reconfigurations in the education process, which is also preparing for an update, the Ministry of Education and Research launching in public debate, at the end of 2020, the *Strategy on digitalisation of education in Romania 2021-2027*. This comes as a pressing need of synchronization with reality, of ensuring access to information adapted to the realization of education through a digitally accessible curricular offer[1]. The digitalisation of the curriculum implicitly responds to the need of developing students' digital competences, the *Strategy on the digitalisation of education in Romania* including even the primary education. To highlight the

[1] L. Nițulescu, C. Ispas, „Curriculum școlar: Managementul conținuturilor în spațiul virtual. Situații și experiențe de învățare online", în Ion Albulescu, Horațiu Catalano (eds.), *e-Didactica. Procesul de instruire în mediul online,* București, Didactica Publishing House, 2021, p. 63-90.

step forward, this material captures what will be left behind, at this level, by the next curricular update, which has already been initiated.

Definitions of digital competence

The concept of digital competence is explained in the *EU Council Recommendation on key competences* and outlined in the development profile of graduates, by educational cycles, found in the national education policy established by the *National Curriculum Reference Framework (Cadrul de Referință al Curriculumului Național)*, recently approved at the ministry level.

Thus, the EU Council, through the Annex *Key competences for lifelong learning. A European reference framework* explains the term digital competence as the attribute that an individual must possess, through which to "understand the general principles, mechanisms and logic underlying evolving digital technologies and know the basic function and use of different devices, software and networks"[2], to understand the significant contribution that digital technologies bring to their personal and professional lives, without neglecting the limitations and risks of these products/ services and to know the ethical principles and the consequences of deviating from them in the use of digital technologies.

The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp) delves into the concept of digital competence and highlights what makes an individual digitally competent. Thus, the latest version of this European reference framework, DigComp 2.1 of 2017, according to the authors Carretero, Vuorikari & Punie, presents digital competence structured on 5 areas of competence that develop 21 different specific digital competences, so[3]:

- Information and data literacy: 1.1 Browsing, searching, filtering data, information and digital content; 1.2 Evaluating data, information and digital content; 1.3 Managing data, information and digital content;
- Communication and collaboration: 2.1 Interacting through digital technologies; 2.2 Sharing throught digital technologies; 2.3 Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies; 2.4 Collaborating through digital technologies; 2.5 Netiquette; 2.6 Managing digital identity;

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[2] Consiliul UE, *Recomandarea Consiliului Uniunii Europene privind competențele-cheie pentru învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții (2018/C 189/01)*, 2018. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)&from=EN

[3] S. Carretero, R. Vuorikari, Y. Punie, *DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with eight proficiency levels and examples of use*. Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, EUR 28558 EN, 2017, doi:10.2760/38842

- Digital content creation: 3.1 Developing digital content; 3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating digital content; 3.3 Copyright and licences; 3.4 Programming;
- Safety: 4.1 Protecting devices; 4.2 Protecting personal data and privacy; 4.3 Protecting health and well-being; 4.4 Protecting the environment;
- Problem solving: 5.1 Solving technical problems; 5.2 Identifying needs and technological responses; 5.3 Creatively using digital technologies; 5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps.

Thus, digital competence is described by using the term "digital content" 5 times, also the term "digital technologies" 5 times and the term "digital identity" once. These involve various forms of data operation, information transfer and the use of computer equipment to manage these processes. Digital competence also refers to the programming of computers, the set of good practices for web security, as well as the finding and diagnosis of problems arising in the use of digital technologies.

Issues related to the creation of digital content and the use of digital technologies can be found in *National Curriculum Reference Framework*, recently approved by the Ministry of Education and Research, in 2020, which through these concepts outlines the profile of the primary education graduate on an elementary level of development of digital competence, expressed as follows[4]:

- manifestation of curiosity for accessing and creating simple digital content that meets specific learning needs;
- solving simple learning tasks using familiar digital devices and applications, which involve simple functions and rules of use;
- use of digital devices in compliance with simple rules aimed at physical and socio-emotional security;
- applying simple rules of communication and interaction in online communities.

At the same time, an elementary level of development of digital competence, in the vision of the specialists of the Institute of Educational Sciences and of the Ministry of National Education, expressed through the curricular policy document *Guidelines for designing and updating the national curriculum,* developed within the project *Relevant curriculum, education*

[4] Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, *Repere pentru proiectarea și actualizarea curriculumului național. Cadrul de Referință al Curriculumului Național*, Ordinul MEC nr. 5765 din 15 octombrie 2020 privind documentul de politici educaționale, 2020. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RS5JxtULhtbat4OezS4-obRDFXoDrooV/view

open to all (*Curriculum relevant, educație deschisă pentru toți – CRED), code SMIS 2014+: 118327* and subject for public consultation through the ministry's website, in fact the extensive basis from which the *National Curriculum Reference Framework* was started, involves the following knowledge, skills and behaviors[5]:

- appropriate use of simple functions and applications of digital devices in the immediate environment, with guidance, assistance or support from adults;
- compliance with basic rules and daily routine issues regarding the safe use of digital devices, applications and content;
- intuitive and spontaneous expression of emotional states experienced in interaction with digital applications and devices;
- intuitive recognition of the benefits and risks of using digital devices, applications and content on general health and well-being;
- intuitive modeling of personal preferences, motivations and knowledge interests in the use of digital devices, applications and content;
- intuitive and spontaneous identification of original ways to use digital devices, applications and content in video or audio format in solving simple and familiar problems;
- use of simple functions of digital devices and applications to express personal and original emotions, feelings, phenomena, specific life situations, in familiar contexts.

This extended list is a more complex form that describes the interaction with digital devices, applications, and content and was later summarized in *National Curriculum Reference Framework*.

Common terms that describe digital competence

The set of ideas registered above provides a general orientation for the analysis, development or successful approach, for training purposes, of the educational phenomenon in an institutionalized framework. As to the extent to which this competence is found in the national curriculum and whether it is an object of learning, these definitions of digital competence include a number of details that refers to a set of digital technologies involved in facilitating and adapting learning, along with the development of students, to the digital age.

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[5] Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, *Repere pentru proiectarea, actualizarea și evaluarea curriculumului național*, Document de politici educaționale, 2019 https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/DPC_31.10.19_consultare.pdf

Starting from these benchmarks, those specific competencies were sought, within all the study disciplines at the level of primary education, which are subordinated and aim, directly, at the development of the digital competence. In this respect, we looked for the vocabulary that describes and represents as accurately as possible the construct of digital competence. Thus, it was proceeded to the centralization of some terms that characterize the targeted competence, as it appears from its presentation in the analyzed documents. The terms, in the form of keywords, taken into account in the analysis of school curriculum and taken from previously studied definitions of digital competence, are: applications (in computer science domain), programs (including programming), devices, technologies (in the sense of new technologies), digital, internet, online, algorithm (computer science), software, informatics, media, computer and ICT.

Reflection of digital competence in the primary school curriculum

The common terms previously identified for the description of digital competence were sought within the competences specific to the whole package of subjects as a compulsory curriculum for primary education. No such direct relationship was found between specific competences and digital competence or the results are insignificant because the competencies provided in the school curriculum do not fully correlate with terms or synonyms for digital devices, applications or content.

From this package of terms, the digital term is the only one that appears twice in the expression of competences specific to primary education, but these are also cases where the digital domain is considered as an exemplary secondary alternative, with the semantics of an optional or secondary aspect, contained/ exemplified in parentheses. However, 28 learning activities were identified, proposed by the school curricula related to each discipline, which satisfy a concordance ratio: specific competencies vs. digital competence, by modeling discipline specific competencies, determining educational influences on digital competence. Thus, the path of learning activities - specific competences - digital competence, is a process of integrating digital competences in teaching. The learning activities are integrated in the education planning on various study disciplines, in order to develop certain specific competencies to be derived from the digital competence, depending on the affinity of the descriptors of the two competences. These learning activities, suggested

by the school curricula and which include the terms previously decanted as specific features of digital competence, are:

Discipline	Specific competence	Learning activities
Communication in Romanian (2nd grade)	1.4. Expressing interest in receiving oral messages in familiar communication contexts	- interactive applications in **computer** games with appropriate themes, in which instructions are provided verbally
	4.2. Write simple messages, respecting the basic conventions	- activities that involve using the **computer** to write short sentences/ texts
Romanian language and literature (3rd grade)	1.4. Manifestation of curiosity about various types of messages in familiar contexts	- watching children's shows (**online** or TV) on topics of interest for the class of students; - use of recorder, **computer** etc. to listen different texts; - listening to stories, happenings, using the tape recorder, **computer** etc.
Romanian language and literature (4th grade)	4.2. Write short functional texts on paper or **digital**	- correct completion of the recipient's data on an envelope / book as well as in **digital** format
Communication in a modern language 1 (2nd grade)	3.1. Manifestation of curiosity for decoding simple and short written messages from the immediate universe	- looking for greeting cards and bringing them to school (including **digital** greeting cards)
Modern language (3rd grade)	3.1. Recognize the meaning of common phrases typical to everyday life	- making simple **computer** commands (open, close, copy, paste, print etc.)
Modern language (4th grade)	3.1. Identifcation of details from simple texts that contain common information	- finding information on the **internet**
	3.2. Identification of important elements for spotting an event on a poster (including a **digital** poster) or other medium	/

Mathematics and environmental exploration (preparatory class)	1.1. Recognize and write numbers in the range 0-31	- recognition of numbers on a **computer** keyboard or other **digital resources**
	2.1. Orientation and movement in space in relation to specified landmarks/ directions, using phrases such as: in, on, above, below, near, in front, behind, up, down, left, right, horizontal, vertical, oblique	- the use of a simple **computer program** to view some movements in the plan;
	3.1. Description of simple repetitive phenomena/ processes/ structures from the immediate environment, in order to identify regularities	- exploring age-appropriate educational **software**
Maths (4th grade)	1.1. Explaining some models/ regularities, for creating one's own reasoning	- using the **computer** to make repetitive models, respecting given conditions
	3.1. Locating objects in space and symbols in various representations	- view plans and maps on the **internet** (for example, to locate the school in the community, to view the shortest route between two places)
Natural sciences (3rd grade)	2.2. Implement the given plan for conducting an environmental investigation	- collecting data useful for investigation from different sources (books, magazines, **internet**, movies, trips, simple experiences) for different stages
	2.5. Presentation of the conclusions of the investigative approach based on a given plan	- elaboration of informative materials to illustrate some results from the investigative approach (for example: posters, drawings, presentations with the help of **new technologies**)
Natural sciences (4th grade)	2.2. Implementation of the own plan proposed for conducting an environmental investigation	- collecting useful data for own investigation from various sources (for example: from books, movies, **internet**, simple experiences) for different stages
	2.5. Presentation of the conclusions about the own investigation	- promoting the results of the personal investigation with the help of various tools (for example: photos, drawings, posters, collages, leaflets, brochures,

		models, articles in school magazines, presentations with the help of **new technologies**)
Music and movement (3rd grade)	1.1. Receiving some songs from children's folklore, carols, some accessible works from the cultural heritage, noticing some differences between them	- watching shows, excerpts from concerts (in the auditorium or on the **internet**), for example, Prokofiev – Petrică and the wolf
Music and movement (4th grade)	1.1. Receiving some songs from children's folklore, carols, some accessible works from the cultural heritage, with noticing some differences of musical nature and body/ stage movement	- watching music and ballet performances (in the performance hall or on the **internet**)
	3.3. Improvisation of songs, associated with body movements	- creating simple melodic-rhythmic fragments, using **software**
Visual arts and practical skills (4th grade)	2.2. Making compositions of your choice, capitalizing on the expressive potential of plastic language	- making simple compositions using **computer applications**
	2.3. Creating unique, personalized and usable products, after performing predominantly manual, creative and playful activities	- making simple compositions using **computer applications**
Personal development (first grade)	3.2. Highlighting the importance of learning for oneself	- making collages about what the student likes and dislikes about learning at school, at home, on the street, in the park, on vacation, at the theater, at the museum, on TV, on the **internet** etc.
History (4th grade)	1.2. Location of historical events in space	- observation of **digital** maps and simulations of armed confrontations, using **ICT**

1.3. Recognizing people's concern for reporting to time and space	- making a "history of time measurement" based on information selected from printed or **online** encyclopedias
2.2. Apply simple source analysis procedures to identify various information about the past	- observation of **digital** maps and simulations of armed confrontations etc., using **ICT** - making portfolios on historical topics, using the **Internet** and encyclopedias in electronic format etc. as sources of information

Table 1. Centralization of learning activities in school curricula at the level of primary education, for the qualitative analysis of the influences that contribute to the development of digital competence (according to http://programe.ise.ro).[6]

Even if the development of digital competence is not directly aimed, the path to the development of specific competences at the level of primary education is, in fact, a favorable premise for the development of digital competence, being a previous experience that can be integrated to the next level of schooling and for studying the discipline *Informatics and ICT*. The information assimilated up to the 4th grade, if used in the planning of teaching-learning process, favors the triggering of the development of digital competence to pupils, starting with the 5th grade, where the curricular design offers possibilities of expression on this dimension. Therefore, the qualitative analysis of primary school curriculum does not identify a close correlation that integrates discipline-specific competencies into digital competence, but records the presence of some suggestions for learning activities involving the Internet, computer and other ICT tools and which we propose to evaluate quantitatively, referring to the total number of learning activities that the recommendations of the school curriculum sums up, in order to identify a symbolic value for the degree of their contribution in the development of digital competence.

In the following table there is a transposition of the qualitative analysis in quantitative terms, or in other words, the distribution of the learning activities identified and listed in the previous table, on a structure of disciplines and years of study,

[6] UCE, Programele şcolare care se aplică pentru învăţământul primar începând cu anii 2013, 2014, http://programe.ise.ro

Discipline / Class	P.	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade
Communication in Romanian	0	0	2	-	-
Romanian language and literature	-	-	-	3	1
Communication in the modern language 1	0	0	1	-	-
Modern language	-	-	-	1	1
Mathematics and environment exploration	3	0	0	-	-
Mathematics	-	-	-	0	2
Natural sciences	-	-	-	2	2
History	-	-	-	-	4
Geography	-	-	-	-	0
Civic education	-	-	-	0	0
Religion	0	0	0	0	0
Physical education	0	0	0	0	0
Game and movement	-	-	-	0	0
Music and movement	0	0	0	1	2
Visual arts and practical skills	0	0	0	0	2
Personal Development	0	1	0	-	-
Total	3	1	3	7	14

Table 2. Quantification of learning activities, within the school curriculum at the level of primary education, with significance for the development of digital competence

The total represented by 28 learning activities, relevant in the development of digital competence and listed in the qualitative analysis, were distributed on the study disciplines and the corresponding years of study, providing an overview of their presence in each stage of primary education.

A comparative analysis will be made by counting all the learning activities suggested by the school curricula at the level of primary education, then reported to the number of activities that have significance

in the development of digital competence. This counting and distribution of the total number of learning activities, by years of study and disciplines, is shown below:

Discipline / Class	P.	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade
Communication in Romanian	128	153	153	-	-
Romanian language and literature	-	-	-	57	62
Communication in the modern language 1	31	32	31	-	-
Modern language	-	-	-	27	33
Mathematics and environmental exploration	116	172	187	-	-
Mathematics	-	-	-	111	111
Natural sciences	-	-	-	34	42
History	-	-	-	-	82
Geography	-	-	-	-	51
Civic education	-	-	-	29	32
Religion	37	40	46	48	39
Physical education	30	26	26	55	48
Game and movement	-	-	-	14	12
Music and movement	25	27	32	21	29
Visual arts and practical skills	53	56	41	50	36
Personal Development	46	54	52	-	-
Total	466	560	568	446	577

Table 3. Quantification of learning activities suggested by primary school curriculum in Romania

According to the MEN Order No. 3371/12 March 2013 on the approval of the framework plans for primary education and the Methodology on their application, the core curriculum comprises 16 study disciplines, the curricula of which inspire teachers with a number of 2617 learning activities and which, distributed by years of study and by disciplines, is shown in Table 3. In order to see the level of influence of

these learning activities on digital competence, we aim at relating these values to those with significance for the key competence whose descriptors have been identified through the qualitative analysis previously performed. At the same time, the ratio between the total number of activities and those with importance for the digital competence dimension shows whether there is or not a tendency in focusing the school educational process, from primary education, on the development of this key competence. The relationship between the two values of learning activities, overall or per year of study, as well as the proportion between them, are presented in the following table:

Years of study	**P**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**Total**
Learning activities	466	560	568	446	557	2617
Learning activities conducive to digital competence	3	1	3	7	14	28
Percentage ratio	0.643%	0.178%	0.528%	1.569%	2.513%	1.069%

Table 4. The value of examples for learning activities that contribute to the development of digital competence, out of the whole examples of learning activities cumulated in the school curricula related to primary education

Thus, the percentages from the table provide the degree of closeness of learning activities, offered as examples through school curricula at the level of primary education, to objectives aimed at in the process of developing digital competence. The reporting between these examples was made both per year of study and in total, for the entire primary education. Therefore, the comparative analysis in Table 4 totalizes a number of 2617 learning activities suggested by the school curricula for all subjects from the preparatory grade (P) to the fourth grade. In order to estimate the degree of belonging of specific competencies, thus developed, to digital competence, were counted only those learning activities, at the level of primary education, which were integrated in the development of specific competencies for determining their derivation from digital competence, totaling 28 such examples in a period of 5 years of schooling. This report reveals the degree to which the learning activities exemplified in the school curricula are participating in the development of digital competence and this degree expressed in percentages is 1,069%. Therefore, the participation rate of the suggested learning activities in the development of this key competence is a little over 1%, a value at which the influences determined by them are not so significant. The distribution of the same elements of comparison, by years

of study, leads to similar scores where the lowest degree of harmonization of learning activities with objectives of developing digital competence is obtained in first grade, 0.178%, and the highest degree is found in the fourth grade, 2,513%, this being the interval in which the observed values vary. At the same time, the percentages per years of study reveals the influence with which the analyzed learning activities nurture and train the digital competence at the level of primary education. However, in order to take place for the lack of integration of digital competences in primary education, optional subjects in the curricular field of technologies can be introduced, Primary Education Framework Plan having allocated one hour per week[7] in this regard.

Quantitative analysis gives us an overview of the common contribution which the learning activities designed to achieve educational goals had on the disciplines of primary education, in the building of digital competence. These percentages are closer to the maximum values that these learning activities can take in the teaching activity, taking into account the fact that there are enough cases where the logistics infrastructure at primary education level does not have ICT tools to address the digital dimension in education. For this reason, the general values, at national level, may be even below the ones revealed by the quantitative analysis.

We obtained the graph of the comparative analysis which shows the maximum possible learning activities that can lead to the development and training of the key competencies through specific competencies, these values representing the total number of learning activities promoted through primary school curricula, as well as those values of learning activities that offer development perspectives for digital competence. The distribution of these elements of the analysis was made on the 5 years of study that comprise the primary education.

[7] Ministerul Educați iei Nați ionale, *Planul cadru pentru învățământul primar, aprobat prin OMEN 3371/12.03.2013*, http://programe.ise.ro/Portals/1/Curriculum/Pl_cadru-actuale/Primar/1_OMEN_3.371_12.03.2%20013%20%20privind%20aprobarea%20planurilor-cadru%20inv_primar%20si%20a%20Metodologiei%20privind%20aplicarea%20planurilor-cadru%20de%20invatamant.pdf

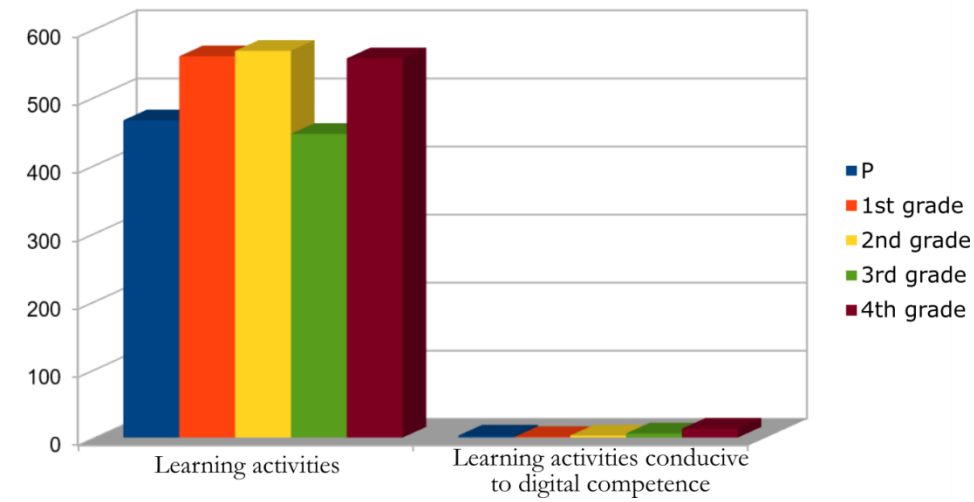

Figure 1. The distribution of activities conducive to the development of digital competence, in relation to the total number of examples of learning activities offered through school curricula at the level of primary education

An analysis, from a quantitative point of view, of the learning activities proposed through the current school curricula for primary education, shows that the opportunities that highlight and determine changes, in a positive sense, on the line of digital competence as an integral part of key competencies are insignificant. For the acquisitions of primary school students, in order to meet an elementary level of development on the dimension of digital competence, it is necessary for learning activities to include ICT tools and content in a higher percentage than the present findings.

In the given context, where digital education becomes an important element in the learning process, digital competence requires a special attention, especially since it has the ability to train and support the development of the other 7 key competences for lifelong learning.

Conclusions

The present offer for primary curriculum, as previously seen, participates to a small extent in the configuration of a profile of the primary education graduate, with an elementary level of development of digital competence. In this regard, the *Strategy on the digitalisation of education*

in Romania proposes necessary and welcome measures and actions, such as[8]:

- „the introduction in the primary education curriculum of some elements of compulsory and novelty character aiming the acquisition of digital competences, in accordance with the development profile specific to the level";
- „introduction of digital security elements in the primary and secondary education curriculum, inclusively through the development of the national optional curriculum offer";
- or „modules/ optional disciplines to stimulate creativity and innovation, as well as computational thinking, starting from primary education (eg robotics, 3D printing, RPA, IoT)";

In the context of the imminent digitalisation of education in Romania, this analysis of curricular documents outlines the need of focusing on digital education starting with primary education, what is left behind by future curricular updates at this level of education as well as school prospects of tomorrow viewed through the *Strategy on the digitalisation of education in Romania* (document in public debate).

[8] Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, *Strategia privind digitalizarea educației în România 2021-2027* (document în dezbatere publică), 2020. https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/SMART.Edu%20-%20document%20consultare.pdf.

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The Family - an Existential Topic

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Abstract. *The present paper includes an analysis of the contemporary family in relation to the complementary concepts of couple and marriage. It offers three key principles that support the fostering of these models today. The anchors presented have both a scientific and a religious fundament and articulate important pillars for the family building and children up-bringing. The decision of constituting a family should be axiologically funded and surpass the hassles of the postmodern contemporary society characterized sometimes by an uncertainty of values.*

Keywords: *Family, Couple, Marriage, Society, existence.*

Introduction

The today re-evaluation of a concept such as that of family is a challenge in itself. Given the today societal and axiological mutations, we are challenged to question the general understanding and our personal views on the idea of family, human relationships, on the way we look at ourselves, and to try to identify axiological benchmarks for the functional development of these relationships.

The way we relate to our own persona and with others will model the way we will structure our couple and family relationships. The family is in fact the mirror of our relational behaviors and of the values, believes, and understandings that lay behind them.

During the last two years, The Romanian Orthodox Church constantly promoted the concept of family as an existential topic, as the year 2020 was dedicated to family, parents and children, and was named the" The homage year of parents and children pastoral care". In the continuation of this line, 2021 was the year family was officially honored through a religious celebration established in the Church calendar as the Christian Family Sunday at the closest Sunday near the date of 15th of May. In the Catholic Church, the Pope Francis proclaimed 2021-2022 as the special pastoral care year dedicated to family, a year named" Familia Amoris Laetitia". All these initiatives help the spiritual, pastoral and cultural actions dedicated to supporting families that confront the challenges of our times.

These general topics such as the family are re-analyzed and discussed today in society and the Church takes part and involves in these processes, as there are times when the new meanings attributed to the traditional concept of family are opposing the fundamental Christian values. In response, the Church offers its own meanings for the construct

of family and parental roles and by this, it tries a return to the established values and to the normality.

There are also several publishing initiatives undertaken by the Orthodox Church in this respect, volumes which are recently published and demonstrate the major concern of the Church for the family regarded as a foundation stone for the Christian spiritual edifice. The first two volumes represent an analysis of the contemporary family and of the parental roles offered by the two esteemed bishops of the Orthodox Church: *Family, children, youth*, published in 2020 at Renaș terea Publishing House in Cluj-Napoca, author: His Most Holiness Archbishop and Metropolitan Andrei Andreicuț and *Parental Arms. On parents and children in the parable of the prodigal son*, issued in 2021, author: His Holiness Vicar Bishop Benedict Bistrițeanul. The third volume is a collective one and gathers works of different professionals: theologians, psychologists, specialists in educational sciences. Named *Contemporary Family: Challenges, principles and values*, the volume was issued in 2020 and offers scientifical views that are convergent with the religious ones on the today family and parenting approach.

Conceptual re-significations

The very initiative for the publication of the above-mentioned volumes is very significant for the actual need to revisit our own believes and understanding on what family (still) represent today. The fact that we need to reflect on family is in itself not a special act. It is in human nature to periodically ask existential questions: Who we are? What is our purpose?... What family is? The premise we start form is that the family topic is an existential one because the family is one of the vectors that define our life. For most of us, the family is the universe in which we spend the most valuable time of our existence, where we expect to find support, motivation, a space where we regenerate our resources and invest in meaningful relations, thus capitalizing emotions and feelings.

In close connection with the concept of family there is the concept of the couple and that of marriage. There are the three concepts that reciprocally relate. It is only natural that the family represents the accomplishment of a couple that decided to reciprocally decided to devote the life to each other and unify their destinies through marriage.[1] This linear model represents the traditional route for a relationship

[1] A. Băran-Pescaru, *Familia azi. O perspectiva sociopedagogica*, Editura Aramis, Bucureşti, 2006; A. Bacus, *Cum să aveți autoritate în fața copilului,* Editura Teora, București, 2009; Ion Albulescu, Adriana Denisa Manea, Iuliu-Marius Morariu, (eds.), *Education, Religion, Family in the contemporary society*, Saarbrucken, Lambert Academic Publishing, 2017.

accomplishment. In a strict sense, family represent a complementarity between a man and a woman, expressed in all aspects of life. In this sense, couples are associated with the biological, emotional, anthropological matrix that result from the union of two different partners, based on affective connections and reciprocal support.

Marriage, on the other hand, represent the essence of the kinship and the primary source of the social capital and of the positioning in the social reference group/groups. The marriage equally represents a legal contract, a financial partnership, and a sacred promise in front of the God for a permanent reciprocal dedication to each other. It is a personal and affective union and the starting point of a future family. The question is to what extent the pathway: couple – marriage – family is still a necessary or relevant path today? The three concepts are interconnected. The impulse to create a couple is based on the natural need to look for and to constitute a relationship, to share emotions and feelings, the need for a valued social status. The marriage is the act that gives the couple stability and transforms it into a family. So, it is only natural that a couple should ask themselves what kind of family they wish to build.[2] This is because the family is not a given state in itself, but a state the couple builds by a constant and continuing effort. In this logic, the founding of the family is the beginning of this continuing effort.

Three pillars of the family

The complexity of the epistemological configuration of the concept of family is increasing in the nowadays society. It is rather appropriate to determine the extension of the term then to try a single definition. While making the task of defining the concept more difficult, the multiple perspectives undertaken usually in the effort to understand the construct - social, anthropological, religious, economical, juridical – offer us essential elements in understanding its extension. The family has proved to be the oldest and the most stable form on human cohabitation, insuring the perpetuation of humankind, evolution and continuation of life. Family remains a social phenomenon that develops and modifies along with the evolution of the society, thus having an accentuated historical character.[3] Consequently, the question Why having a family? Represents an ever-topical question. Apart from the inherent answers related to the need for following a natural course of life, there are more

[2] C. Glava, (co-author), *Familia contemporană:provocări, principii, valori,* Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2020.

[3] R. Laub Coser, *The Family: Its Structure and Function*, New York, State University of New York, 1965.

objective reasons. The families constituted by marriage have certain socially valued features and advantages that make the marriage desirable. The marriage involves the two in a long-term contract, a fact which facilitate the emotional investment, thus developing the relational capital. The marriage relationship becomes an investment, From the financial perspective, the marriage involves the sharing of the economic and social capital for ensuring the couples stability and sustainability.[4] Another advantage of married couples is the improved relationship they get to have with the Community. The society includes a large majority of individuals that are in their turn involved in marital relations and tend to accept and valorize persons found in similar situations.

Family is a personal micro-universe: coherent in itself, with own laws and values, private and withdrawn from the exterior to some extent, having a certain interior dynamic. In the following, we will analyze three of the elements that build the identity of this universe which is defining our existence.

The first fundamental element is an axiological one: the family reflect certain values we believe in and thus has certain functioning principles. The consequences of this principle are:

a. One should be conscious of the values that are important for her even before the marriage is constituted and consider them as fundaments for building her future state and existence.
b. One should be flexible in applying the principles and values by sometimes being ready to redefine them in a particular form, relevant for own family, according to the family evolution and with the changes in the socio-cultural context one live in.
c. It is important to have the capacity of developing this repertoire of personal values and believes, by adding new ones, by deriving and nuancing the existing ones. There are moments when the derived values would give the couple the reasons for continuing, like being flexible, trying to preserve a balance, accepting that for the moment the relationship is challenged and looking for ways to work for the good of the family.[5]
d. One should permanently remember that her relationship is based on marriage and stat from this premise.

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[4] P. Iluţ, *Familia. Cunoaştere şi asistenţă*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Argonaut, 1995.

[5] L. J. Waite, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financia*, Chicago, Doubleday, 2000; J. Twenge, *Generația internetului,* Bucureşti, Editura Baroque Books and Arts, 2020.

The first lesson on the bases of this first pilon is: To look for answers at the question: What are the values in the spirit of which I want to build my family?

The second fundamental element is given by the fact that the family should be a personal universe which I only partially share with the exterior.

The consequences of this principle could be the following:

a. To be interested in creating a personal, intimate milieu that family members enjoy being part of, with family customs, traditions, micro-behaviors, with shared activities that give satisfaction to all members of the family and with exclusive family time.
b. To work for creating a secure milieu. This involves mutual respect and trust. The check-up key question could be: How do I want my partner to be or to become? How do I want my child to be? Self-confident? Courageous? Calm? I can have a contribution to this through my own relational behavior. On the other hand, being sincere and supportive are necessary. Being aware of how we express our affection, care, availability and being aware on what are our believes on what being a child, evolving and becoming mature represent for us can also inform our couple and family behaviors.

The second lesson could be: Understanding that the family is something I can build up, and that involves making the best use of what I have with what is given to me.

The third essential element: the once constituted family is not frozen in time, it has an interior dynamic, it constantly evolves. The couple must understand and accept the constant evolution as natural and that this implies a constant construction effort. The partners evolve as personalities. Moreover, the child up-bringing is a challenge in itself, with its inherent hassles such as the ones given by the changes of society and by the natural generations gap. In front of these touchstones, the family becomes a team that works for the common good. As parents, it becomes a must to stand by our children, to constantly support and offer help, to hope and pray for them. The example of Blessed Augustine who prayed her whole life for her husband and son return to the true faith must be taken as a guiding model.

The third lesson we may capitalize is that the couple should be willing to pay efforts for building up the family the whole way trough. The instruments in this respect could be: reciprocal support, acceptance and tolerance, accepting and embracing the good and the limits, the willingness to continue as a family.

We have the favorable chance of living in a society where the traditional values are still respected and relevant, in which instances such as the Church and cultural and academic institutions are still relevant, where the model of Christian family is still supported and promoted. It is a duty to try to foster them further for the next generations. In this respect, the Church can offer genuine benchmarks in the continuing search for family identity in the nowadays context.

Child-centered Paradigm in Early Education

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Abstract. *The focus on the child in early education has been promoted for a long time by the pedagogical literature. Modern didactics has been concerned on the way children are learning, seen as active subjects of their own training, highlighting the educational benefits associated with active involvement. The quality of their knowledge experience depends not only on the quality of teaching, but also on their own effort and how they contribute to the teaching process. This means that teachers have a vital responsibility in facilitating effort, involvement, interaction and active learning. In the process of acquiring knowledge, it is obvious to shift the focus from its external determinants to the endogenous determinants, those coming from within the individual. The emphasis on the subject, on its interiority, must be understood not only as an organization that responds specifically to certain influences, but also as an organization that models the influences, so as a system of self-organization, which does not ignore external influences on learning, but configures them in a more profound context in order to be explained. In this context, focusing on the child becomes both a condition of quality and efficiency of the educational process, and one of the most convenient ways to solve the many difficulties encountered: insufficient motivation, lack of attractiveness in content, low level of children involvement in learning, mechanical and reproductive approaches, routine or monotony in the training process.*

Keywords: *child centered education, early education, New Education, pardigm, contemporary society.*

1. Historical and curricular premises

The opening of early education towards child centered education was promoted by the representatives of the New Education movement, somewhere between the 19th and 20th centuries. Although theorists of this trend sought to provide solutions to the problems that the training process is facing in their own country, the sources of inspiration were actually in the work of J.J. Rousseau, whose principles are found in the conceptions of all the representatives of this pedagogical current. In the opinion of R. Cousinet, the creator of the new education was Rousseau, because this pedagogical current "did not exist before 1762; it only exists after this date, and Emil includes the essence of the new education"[1].

Within the same current is the pedagogical conception of John Dewey, who contributed decisively in promoting the focus on the needs of the child by dealing with innovative issues, related to supporting children actuation, taking into account their interests, respecting individual particularities, linking theory to practical life or the importance of teachers' creative and innovative activity. He also states that "concretely, the value of recognizing the dynamic nature of the

[1] R. Cousinet, *Educaţia nouă*, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1978, p. 7.

interest in educational development lies in the fact that it takes into account the individuality of children, with their specific abilities, needs and preferences"[2].

Starting from this outlook, Ed. Claparède, develops the theory of functional education, which is based on the principles of functional psychology and which proposes that type of training which is based on the children needs, "his interest in achieving a goal; this being the natural stimulus of the activity we want to awaken in him"[3]. According to his theory, "the typical example of an activity carried out in order to satisfy a need is the child playing scene. It satisfies the natural tendency towards activity of the human being in his first years of development"[4]. Based on such a reason, the training activity must be based on internal impulses and on the direct or mediated satisfaction of the child's natural interests that will ensure his involvement in a spontaneous activity performed with enthusiasm.

In the opinion of Maria Montessori, the child's freedom of expression is the fundamental premise of training, so his theory advocates ensuring an organized environment in which the child is free to manifest, a context that ensures his mental development and physical development. "The unmistakable merit of Maria Montessori is that she knew how to give the preschooler the educator he needs - close as a mother, endowed with a lot of patience and delicacy, able to forge his intervention on long observation, who knows how to impose through a supple authority"[5]. Although O. Decroly is another important representative of the new educational trend, his pedagogical conception distances itself from the line already given by M. Montessori, so that he proposes a theory that "goes beyond the child-environment antinomy, antinomy expressed by the two opposite pedagogical theories: one that sets the act of education on the satisfaction of the child's needs, and the other one, on his subordination to the exigencies of society"[6].

The method that O. Decroly proposes is not an analytical one, but a global one, influenced, probably, also by the spirit of the new school of gestalt psychology, which considered that first is perceived the form (gestalt) and then the parts.

Promoters of new education have reconsidered the educational phenomenon under the influence of developments in experimental psychology and based on new theories of learning, according to which the child, as a partner of the teaching process is not a simple beneficiary, but must be considered at the same time object and subject of education, so that his involvement in the training process can be actively achieved. Greater emphasis is placed on the

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[2] J. Dewey, *Democraţie şi educaţie. O introducere în filosofia educaţiei*, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1972, p. 113.
[3] *Ibidem*, p. 11.
[4] I. Gh. Stanciu, *Şcoala şi doctrinele pedagogice în secolul XX*, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1995, p. 76.
[5] *Ibidem,* p 73.
[6] *Ibidem,* p. 81.

holistic development of the child, which analyzes all the factors that contribute to the preparation of children for both school and life.

According to M. Ştefan[7], focusing on the child is a didactic requirement, more precise to put the child at the center of the training process, and not the subjects included and to start from the interests and needs of the child.
This approach involves a reconfiguration of the relations between the two agents of educational action from the perspective of shifting the emphasis from teaching to learning. Therefore, the child, as the beneficiary of the educational activity, is the one around whom all the steps of designing and implementing the training must be circumscribed, correlated as adequately as possible with the real life. As such, the training process must design didactic situations that meet the child's needs, situations that will generate stimulating learning experiences for his potential, will allow free expression and will trigger epistemic curiosity.

From the perspective of focusing on the child, organizing the didactic activity is a complex process that requires calm, patience and time from teachers, because it requires knowing the potential of each child perceived as individuality and capitalization of this potential by respecting individual learning styles. This premise is one of the priorities of the Curriculum for early education in Romania, an official and mandatory curricular document that has as a priority the child-centered teaching and offers the teacher involved in the teaching process with miscellaneous age groups, flexibility in approaching the school content. According to the same document, early education is focused on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children, respectively on the early remediation of possible developmental deficiencies and differences. Both skills and acquired knowledge in early ontogenesis favor the development of others in later stages of development, and knowledge and skills deficiencies produce, over time, greater deficiencies, failed learning opportunities or impossible to exploit.

The stake of focusing on the child is the uniqueness of the human being, the fact that the human individual is unrepeatable from a genetic perspective, and this premise becomes a priority in the case of organizing the training process. The paradigm of focusing on the child involves the transition from the emphasis on the teacher, as a person who provides knowledge, to the situation in which the child becomes the active promoter of the process of his own development. In this way, we ensure the child's right to diversity, his individuality is respected (age differences, those related to his own style, intellectual work rhythm, memory capacity, volume, cognitive flexibility, etc.) also both his equity is assured and equality in training by capitalizing on the cognitive potential of each student in a personalized way and by recognizing and respecting hereditary, social, economic, racial differences, etc.

Creating a specific environment, selecting child-centered materials, identifying strategies to place the child at the center of the teaching activity, by individualizing learning experiences, encouraging children to express their

[7] M. Ştefan, *Lexicon pedagogic*, Bucureşti, Editura Aramis, 2006.

choices and involving families in children's education are approaches that facilitate focusing on each child. It contributes to building the unique interests of children, their growing needs and offers the possibility of active learning.

Child-centered education in the context of interaction with the natural and social environment requires a holistic approach to human development, and priorities become: building exploratory skills, cultivating autonomy and responsibility.

Supporting, promoting and organizing a child-centered training process in early education in the case of mixed groups, must have as its initial premise the knowing about child personality in accordance with age and individual characteristics. In this way, teachers will accept the idea of differences, sometimes significant, between the potential of children with different ages, will act accordingly by conceving differentiated teaching tasks, depending on the individuality of each child, which will trigger significant learning experiences in order to make progress.

One of the pedagogical principles underlying the development and implementation of the *Curriculum for early education* is the *Principle of child-centered education* that requires teachers to have a good knowledge of children's age, to respect each person learning and developing particularities and to identify the needs and requirements of the child. Consequently, focusing on the child in the training process specific to early education leads to approaching development from a global perspective, recognizing the importance of all areas of development and providing learning situations that will lead to the full development of the child.

Another teaching principle that supports focusing on the child's needs is that of free choice. This principle recommends the teacher to appeal to the children's ability to choose their favorite activities from the educational offer, meaning those that correspond to their own interests and need of affirmation. The psychological foundation of this principle is found in the specifics of the teacher's attitude towards the proposed activities, towards the different forms of play adopted, but also towards the organization and development of the learning process. This attitude can be graded, "from total acceptance, pleasure of involvement and sustained motivation, to that of formal acceptance (out of respect for educators, obedience, obey), to non-acceptance, rejection or indifference (in the position of spectator, the child does nothing or anything else but not what it is proposed to him)"[8].

From the perspective of organizing teaching in heterogeneous groups, the *Curriculum for early education* has a major advantage. Therefore, the curriculum has a two-level age structure and, in the context of child-centered learning, encourages heterogeneity (abandoning the chronological grouping system). According to such an approach, building a strategy appropriate to the interests of children and their level of development (child-centered) is from this

[8] E. Voiculescu, *Pedagogie preşcolară*, Bucureşti, Editura Aramis, 2003.

point of view a continuous challenge and a permanent effort of didactic creativity from the teacher.

Child-centered instruction is complex and requires the teacher to be well informed about the child's psychological profile so that he or she can make appropriate decisions about how to organize the environment and choose the right materials.

The paradigm of focusing on the child in early education consists in reviewing the attitude of teachers towards the needs of the child and translated into enthusiasm, optimism, admitting errors and impotence specific to age, hesitations, changing the rules of the game if the situation requires it, so that childhood will be seen as: a period of insecurity given by the lack of complete *equipment* from a cognitive, affective, motivational, volitional and social perspective.

2. The roles of the teacher from the child-centered perspective in early education

From the perspective of focusing on the child, the role of the teacher who carries out the teaching activity with mixed age groups is transformed from that of a source of information distribution to that of a learning facilitator. In this sense, it has the role of guiding, stimulating, negotiating the responsibility of learning with children and creating a more secure environment for them. Although the emphasis is on the self-directed role of the child's learning, the teacher's responsibility cannot be minimized, because he is the one with the greatest responsibility.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of child-centered learning, the teacher must know the child so as to identify the most appropriate methods to facilitate the development of the personality, to make it possible to initiate cognitive, socio-affective, behavioral or motivational acquisitions, in accordance with the needs generated by a certain stage of development, but also taking into account the internal and external factors of learning (age, family, environmental change, health, motivation, degree of concentration, type of memory, etc.).

The teacher can focus on the development of academic skills, subsequent to the development of socio-emotional, an approach that contributes significantly to the full development of the child's personality and its preparation to deal with a more fluid, more transactional, more linear world[9].

The role of the teacher is not limited to observing and identifying particularities or individual training needs, but must make individual training plans, in accordance with the educational objectives, to respect the individuality of the human being, to actively involve the child in planning, carrying out and evaluating the teaching activities, so that the learning experiences lived by the child are positive and allow their transfer from the formal context in non-formal and informal circumstances. Such an approach involves a constructivist

[9] J. Shapiro, *Noua copilărie. Cum să ne creştem copiii în lume digitală*, Bucureşti, Editura Humantias, 2021.

adaptation of the training contents, but also the identification of interactive teaching strategies (methods, procedures, forms of organization and teaching aids) that facilitate child-centered education and maximize the individual potential of each.

Focusing on the child in the context of early education also involves a designer-type thinking from the teacher. Thus, the teacher must achieve an instructional design that involves the creation of innovative, dynamic and flexible teaching situations that respect the principle of intuition, according to which, in order to make significant acquisitions in the training process, it is necessary to ensure a concrete, sensory basis. to facilitate children's access to direct, direct knowledge, through analyzers of objects and phenomena of reality. In this context, the child is placed in the situation of direct exploration of the reality that surrounds us.

Focusing activities on the uniqueness of each child involves valuing and accepting diversity, so obvious in addressing heterogeneous groups. From this point of view, the role of the teacher is to know and promote different models of learning and development, which suggests openness to expand social experiences in relationships between children from the perspective of heterogeneity and from the perspective of very different backgrounds like social, economic, religious or cultural ones. It is recommended to appreciate and support the different models of life (traditions, customs, etc.) specific to the communities where the children come from, so as to ensure the emotional foundation of the feeling of belonging to a particular community, but also to assume with dignity the social and cultural identity. to each child.

Child-centered education focuses on child well-being in all areas. The present approaches to child-centered care must reflect the realities of the times in which our children live. The current generations of children are preparing from an early age to join elite teams. Expectations towards them are focused on results, not on the process by which they are reached. It is important for teachers to be aware that activities guided by the child's interest are the way we can help them develop their critical thinking skills[10].

The core of child-centered education is to help the child become independent, responsible and confident as it engages them in an active learning process that facilitates the formation of a positive self-image and gives them self-confidence.

Another role of the teacher is to pay more attention to interactions between colleagues, but also to cooperation or collaboration through group or team activities. Thus, the teacher has the task to organize the space, to prepare the materials necessary for the development of games and other types of activities. The teacher should also guide, support and interact with children in a motivating manner that facilitates the development of children's skills.

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[10] C. Terebush, *Educaţia integrată a preşcolarilor. Cum să le stimulăm minţile aflate în dezvoltare*, Bucureşti, Editura Trei, 2020.

The teacher has another important role, that of organizing the environment according to the child's needs. The environment is the basis for stimulating the independence of its choice, for exploring and training the skills necessary for its full development. This space should be very diverse, so that children can find the full range of land relevant to the culture in which a person develops. It would be advisable to explore not only the kindergarten spaces, but to have the possibility of incursions in the forest, in the fields, on the waterfront, in shops, in museums, wherever they want according to their interests, of course taking the necessary precautions [11].

From a child-centered perspective, it is important for educators to continually encourage preschoolers, even when they are wrong, to provide them with opportunities to explore reality in accordance with their potential, to do research, to build their own world, as they see it, and not as we see it. Situations that create unnecessary time and monotony should be avoided, so that learning experiences, but also playful ones make sense for children.

In reality, the observance of the individual potential, of one's own rhythm, of the particular needs of children becomes the sources of pleasure of playing and learning by satisfying the innate natural curiosity that human beings have.

3. The role that gamification plays from child-centered education perspective

There are many studies whose evidence is indisputable regarding the contribution of games to the development of the child's personality in early ontogenesis. According to C. Terebush[12], children are better able to concentrate and control their behavior when playing, being attracted to some games for hours, just for the simple fact that their game world is full of princesses and princes, superheroes or dolls, and in the context of combined groups the rules of the games they create are easily negotiated by the older ones, with the younger children.

Playing games in heterogeneous age groups has advantages for all the people involved. Thus, the little ones can learn and be inspired from the big ones for the games they will also play, even listening to them and watching them play, how they relate, how they express themselves, what language they use or how they negotiate. In this way, they have a clear image of how a game should be played. Younger children do not exactly imitate older ones. They look, reflect on what they have seen, and assimilate what they learn in their own way, so that even the mistakes of the older ones can provide positive lessons for the younger ones. For older children, interaction with the younger ones helps them to gain more compassion, security and protective instincts, but also good leadership skills of small groups. Even in competitive games, which are usually

[11] P. Gray, *Liber să înveţi. De ce eliberarea instinctului nostrum de a se juca îi face pe copiii noştri mai încrezători şi mai pregătiţi pentru viaţă*, Bucureşti, Editura Herald, 2021.
[12] *Ibidem,* p. 10.

provoking conflicts, the pride of adults is non-existent, moreover, the presence of younger children in the game, inspires adults to identify strategies as creative as possible. This is also explained by the fact that there is no big stake, because the big ones do not have the desire to dominate and defeat the smallest and most inexperienced, and the small ones do not aim to defeat the biggest ones in the game, so the game facilitates both parties to develop their own skills depending on the individual's psychological potential.

Studies show that in educational institutions where the teaching activity takes place with children of different ages, in the games they play there is no aggression, and the little ones are not afraid that the older ones will aggress them in any way [13].

The socio-relational climate created in the games played with children of different ages is much more relaxing, motivational and more fun than in the case of homogeneous age groups. Such an atmosphere favors the creation of a true playful context characterized by joy, well-being and optimism.

According to P. Gray[14], the major benefit of playing games in groups of preschoolers of different ages is that, in this context, the game can highlight children who have the same skills or play preferences, even if they are different ages. Moreover, a child who is lagging behind in terms of skills or has better-trained skills than his colleagues of the same age has the chance to identify a partner in the game according to his abilities, either among the youngest children or among the oldest.

This situation respects the focus on the child's needs, because they can choose independently with whom to relate, either from older colleagues or from younger ones like them, and this position is ideal for meeting their own needs, but also for creating a real playful mood that contribute decisively to the harmonious development of their personality.

In conclusion, child-centered education takes place when teachers know very well his psychological profile, age characteristics, type and level of intelligence, predominant learning style, previous experiences, etc. This knowledge supports the teacher in designing integrated activities based on constructivist theories of learning, which involve interactivity, meaning and discovery, in creating a secure, equitable, stimulating and dynamic educational environment whose stimuli ensure emotional balance, facilitate group communication and unconditional acceptance. Regarding this didactic aspect, the child is provided with multiple roles that turn him into an active and responsible subject of his own development, taking into account the fact that in the *Curriculum for early education* the child-centered paradigm provides the basic for educational approaches that imply acquiring fundamental behaviors necessary for the development of key abilities specific to future training profiles.

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[13]B.B. Whiting, The genesis of prosocial behavior, în *The nature of prosocial development: Interdisciplinary theories and strategies*, D.L. Bridgemn (Ed.), New York, Academic Press, 1983, p. 221-242.

[14] *Ibidem,* p. 11.

Teacher Self Evaluation - Indicator of Quality Management in Education

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Abstract. *Professional and social success in postmodern society focuses on self involvement, self determination, self assumption, self accountability, the role of free will being decisive. Teachers' professional self evaluation has become a key element in educational innovation and the increase of educational management quality. School units, given the autonomy they are granted, represent institutions in which learning occurs and which generate learning. This way, they instill the need for long term autonomous learning to the members of school communities, teachers and students at the same time, by locating self assessment at the core of the teaching process. Theremore, quality management in education aims at increasing school performance based on self monitoring and self assessment of performances for a proper identification of the fields and areas that require improvement.*

Keywords: *self evaluation, professional standards, quality in education, management of quality.*

Self evaluation- terminology guidelines

Self evaluation in education, according to the Law of quality[1] must be read as internal evaluation that represents a process of measuring results, followed by the identification of improvement measures that are demanded, being thus located at the basis of any quality improvement process. Teachers` self evaluation represents the process of generating value judgment over the efficiency and knowledge they hold, products or effects, in order for them to be improved or refined. This type of self evaluation represents a formative assessment process, which is implemented by every teacher in view of developing/ improving their professional skills, a process which is observed, analysed and adapted according to one's progress and the encountered obstacles.

Self evaluation allows therefore the assessment of one's own merits, establishing the value of one's activity, and it is made possible and necessary as it allows for self knowledge and for the development of self-awareness, essential aspects for lifelong learning, which call for the individual to become part not only of their own self development, but also in the act of evaluating one's development in support of self-improvement. The role of systematic self evaluation consists in ensuring that the teaching act is permanently improved. Self assessment is conducted based on structured and organised evidence within a portfolio or eportfolio. At the same time, it

[1] Law no. 87 from April 13th 2006 for the approval of the Government's Emergency Act no. 75/2005 regarding quality assurance in education

is essential to understand that the self evaluation endeavour, unlike didactic evaluation, is often guided not only by the level of objective-based performance, but also by the level of potential individual performance.

From the perspective of how the act of professional self evaluation is structured, there are both operational aspects (level of professional and pedagogical training, level of knowledge, abilities and skills) and personal aspects (the ideal self awareness). Moreover, professional self assessment regards evaluation from the perspective of the practical result of one's work as well as potentialities. The former refers to assessing accomplishments and to reflecting appreciation or lack of appreciation, whereas the latter proves professional abilities, personal effort to have and use the skills necessary for socio-professional performance. An isolated treatment of self evaluation or regarding it as a mere internal self delibertaing mechanism and completely autonomous leads to serious distortions in understanding and explaining this process. The triggering, development and effects of self evaluation are inherently contextualised.[2] We thus consider it is essential to approach the self evaluation endeavour not only from the perspective of its internal process-like nature, but also through the filter of its external dynamics. The self evaluation process is not conducted entirely under the auspices of internal determiners, but also related to particular external contextual factors, such as: evaluation conducted by school management, or workmates' opinion regarding value. The efficiency of any assessment process requires a doubling through self assessment.[3] Self evaluation is a dimension that is also present in the evaluation process of digital portfolios, given that tracking of, validation or ongoing improvement of contents while teaching is implied.[4]

Self evaluation ensures development through self-regulation and self- correction, whose usefulness function does not imply the role of sanction. Accurate assumption of results leads to an optimisation and review of individual and group functionality, which implicitly relates to efficient management in quality of education.

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[2] Cristian Stan, *Autoevaluarea și evaluarea didactică*, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, 2001.

[3] Cristian Stan & Adriana Denisa Manea, „The Divergent Relationship between Assessment and Self-assessment," in *Higher Education. Procedia - Social and BEhavioral Sciences,* 2015, p. 497-502.

[4] Cristian Stan, Adriana Denisa Manea, & Constantina Catalano, (2020). „Teoria şi practica evaluării educaţionale - o perspectivă globală," în I. Albulescu & H. Catalano, *Sinteze de pedagogie generală. Ghid pentru pregătirea examenelor de titularizare, definitivat, gradul II,* Bucureşti, Eikon Publishing House, 2020, p. 491-499.

Numerous studies detail the benefits of self evaluation, while, at the same time. Mentioning the need to generate the suitable context for such an endeavour.[5]

Teacher self evaluation process- tools and contents

In the context of innovative changes regarding the contents of teachers' professional training that envisage a skill-based approach there are specific key concepts that must be referred to:

- self evaluation – self analysis process, consisting of self assessment and self appreciation techniques, which can be applied to any activity or professional behaviour, to indicate the strengths and weaknesses and to maximise self improvement opportunities;
- quality assurance – ongoing and progressive process (examination, monitoring, guarantee, maintenance and improvement) of quality in education;
- standards – important reference framework applied in the self evaluation of teachers' performance levels;
- evaluation criterion – basic rule according to which the level of professional competence is appreciated;
- indicator – tool that provides a measurement means in view of reaching or exceeding the targeted standards and which reflects the features of a particular standard of professional ability;
- descriptors – system of actions/deeds that define the essence of an indicator and that enable an estimation of one's level of professional ability.

Professional ability standards cover the entire teaching-learning activity and are structured on the following five primary domains of competence: didactic planning, learning environment, educational process, professional development, educational partnerships. For each competence area there are targeted standards to be reached/completed. Therefore, for the didactic planning area, the standard is the teacher projects the educational endeavour from the perspective of the curriculum theory; for the learning environment area the standard is: the teacher provides an enriching learning context; for the area called educational process the standard is that the teacher ensures a qualitative educational process; for the professional development domain the standard is: the teacher manages his/her own lifelong professional learning; for the educational partnership

[5] Otilia Clipa, „Roles and strategies of Teacher Evaluation: Teacher perspectives," in *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 2015, p. 916-923; Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Elevi sălăuani în primele promoţii ale Gimnaziului Grăniceresc Năsăudean", in *Astra Salvensis,* II (2014), no. 3, p. 63; L. Leach, „Optional self-assessment: some tensions and dilemmas," in *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 37 (2012), no. 2, p. 137-147; M. Taras, M. „Student self-assessment: processes and consequences," in *Teaching in Higher Education,* 15 (2010), no. 2, p. 199-209.

area the standard is: the teacher ensures collaboration and respectful relations with the family and community, by developing various partnerships.

Each standard is further developed in multiple variables, indicators that show which actions teachers should take in order to improve them. For the field of didactic planning, the following indicators are derived: designs the didactic endeavour according to the curriculum needs of the school subjects, designs the evaluation of educational process and results. The indicators that derive from the standard of the learning environment area are the following: it creates a trust, solidarity and respect climate, based on the principles of equality and tolerance, it provides class management and students' behaviour, organises and reasonably uses the physical space. The indicators corresponding to the educational process domain are: management of the class educational process, showing efficient didactic communication, stimulating motivation, autonomy and making learners accountable for their own learning, making use of time, material and human resources, evaluating and providing connections in view of increasing performance. For the professional development field the following indicators are established: edification of one's professional identity according to the roles defined by the teaching position, projection of one's professional development trajectory, monitoring of the personal and professional development process. The last domain establishes the following indicators: permanent communication with the members of the family/ legal representatives and members of the community with regards to learners; activity and educational progress, integrating family and community members in the educational process, enabling children's/ students' participation in community projects and volunteering actions.

In the context of professional competence standards, the indicator represents a characterisation of an action or a set of interconnected actions, specific to particular aspects. Indicators will be measured through descriptors, which represent a procedure description, specific to a particular aspect. Descriptors are used for measuring the qualitative manifestation of the specific indicator. Indicators represent the source of information or the proofs regarding the functionality and efficiency of the particular standard, but also the source of elaborating difference evaluation/ monitoring tools for the teacher's actions/ activities, according to the professional skill standards. There are various means and verification tests to validate whether standard requirements were met: direct observation of the activity, analysis of documents, survey/ interview of all interest factors, portfolio examination etc.

Professional skill standards for teachers in primary and secondary education are applied both by teachers in view of self evaluation of their own activity and design of their professional development trajectory and by external evaluators, in order to determine the level of quality in education, to elaborate evaluation tools and recommendations for teachers' professional upgrade.

At the same time, the institutions that are empowered to conduct initial and lifelong professional learning for teachers, to design learning plans within professional development, to elaborate the curriculum support for the specific activities are guided by the same array of professional skill standards.

The variety of approaches regarding the didactic skill issue leads to a diversity of criteria based on which teachersţ activity is evaluated. Literature review indicates several typologies of the didactic skills system: professional-scientific skills (the set of necessary skills for scientific knowledge, for comprehending a school subject and being open to self improvement in the specific field of practice), psycho-pedagogical skills (capacities and abilities to estimate the level of difficulty for the learning material and to ensure that it is properly taught, to facilitate comprehension regarding learner's knowledge abilities, to enter the realm of his/her inner world; creativity and innovation in educational practice by generating learning scenarios for special needs students), psycho-social and relational skills (skills and abilities that are necessary to optimise human interactions and to take responsibilities, to make a positive influence and make proper use of power and assertive communication; management skills (skills for organising, guiding and leading the group of students, establishing a proper work environment, conflict management and decision-making process); digital skills (skills to use technology)[6].

The self evaluation process requires teachers to fill in the self evaluation chart, which includes data referring to their own activity based on criteria such as: didactic and professional activity; research and artistic

[6] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Trening of the competencies. An exploratory study," in *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai Psychologia–Pedagogia,* (LI) 2015, no. 2, p. 21-29; I. O. Pânișoară, *Profesorul de succes; 59 de principii de pedagogie practică,* Iași, Ed. Polirom, Iași; Adriana Denisa Manea, „Competențele managerului școlar," in *Lucrările Conferinței Științifice Internaționale Perspectivele și Problemele Integrării în Spațiul European al Cercetării și Educației, vol. 2,* Cahul, Universitatea de Stat "B. P. Hașdeu", 2016, p. 122-126; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Elevi sălăuani la Gimnaziul Grăniceresc Năsăudean în timpul Primului Război Mondial", in *Astra Salvensis,* IV (2016), no. 8, Salva, 2016, p. 144; Adriana Denisa Manea, „Innovation in the Management of Educational Institutions," in *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 209 (2015), no. 12 (3), p. 310-315.

creation; validation and impact of activity. The specific instruments used in the professional self assessment process are the following:

- ✔ *observation charts* that are completed at the end of each class (consisting of lesson *planning aspects*: syllabus-based teaching, clarity and opportunity of operational objectives, correlating didactic strategies with the particular age features of learners; *class management*: ensuring there is a proper learning and teaching environment, management activities, use of time, proper optimisation of learning means, scaffolded teaching activities and tasks, the level to which students are engaged, various forms of organising activity; *content and strategies*: relation contents- operational objectives, logical presentation of taught content, knowledge systematisation, scientific value of content, use of proper and age-adequate language, creative approaches and stimulating learners' creativity, use of interdisciplinarity while teaching, practical-applicative character of taught content, capitalisation of active-participative strategies; *evaluation*: evaluation strategies, capitalisation of grading functions; *relation aspects*: suitable teaching style, student-teacher and student-student interactions. There are performance indicators for each category, each indicator being evaluated on a grading scale indicating insufficient, satisfactory, good and very good;
- ✔ ***the self reflection chart*** , which is completed at the end of the day, is structured according to the SWOT analysis model. It is meant to identify positive and/or negative aspects regarding the level of providing material resources, maintaining discipline, activating and motivating students, following a time schedule, identifying the causes that generated negative aspects as well as solutions for overcoming difficulties. It is important to elaborate conclusions and display them in the footer of the chart and to grasp the relevant aspects that may be used or improved;
- ✔ ***the reflection chart*** refers to the type and level of interactions and it concerns relations between both teachers and students and students and other students. The level of interaction can be appreciated with Likert scale indicators: not at all , a little, a lot, very much;
- ✔ ***the assessment questionnaire*** supports the self reflective process and it allows teachers to choose the option "yes" or "no" in items regarding time management, quality and efficiency of teaching materials, volume of input data, number of applications, relation objectives- tasks. In doing so, teachers will get an overall picture that

allows them to improve those aspects that have been appreciated with the answer "no"

- ✔ ***the checklist*** regarding the meeting of performance indicators may contain a set of short questions, regarding the teacher's own activity, but also regarding learners' activity.
- ✔ ***the reflective journal*** is an evaluation strategy meant to develop metacognitive abilities, consisting in having the author reflect on his/her own professional development process. The reflective journal can be focused on the following aspects: conceptual development occurred from a particular activity/ context, mental processes and developed professional skills, feelings and attitudes;
- ✔ ***the logbook*** consists of certain entries and records of facts, descriptions of events, without any personal comments or remarks.

The above presentation indicates that the self evaluation instrument represents a constitutive element of the method, through which the teacher becomes familiar with the self assessment duty. Critical reflection is an ongoing learning ability. Reflection over practical activities and gathered experiences allows teachers to support a proper evaluation of the professional skills they hold. Reflection charts represent forms that were created in view of researching each field, standard and group of indicators, which consist of: self evaluation criteria, measurement scales for meeting the indicators and conversion scale for how indicators were met according to the frequency of the indicator. The evaluation/ self evaluation criteria are elaborated based on the indicator or standard and are meant to unify the evaluators' requirements. Using a measurement scale means ticking a Yes/No next to each item. Sometimes, these may facilitate the correct and holistic assessment with indicators such as: "often", "sometimes" or "rarely". Reflection charts exclude the possibility of guessing or randomly choosing the frequency with which a certain indicator occurs. Therefore, based on self evaluation, in the context of hybrid education contextualised at the level of the pandemic reality, doubled by technological revolutions[7] Teachers can identify the domains of professional skills they should focus on throughout their careers, they may project the individual professional development plan and further choose various forms of development: literature review, ongoing and lifelong learning courses, exchange experience, attending scientific lectures etc.

[7] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Features of educational activities in the contemporary society," in *Astra Salvensis,* 6 (2018), no. 12, p. 255-260.

Another self evaluation tool is the ***portfolio***. This is a necessary instrument in the process of professional development.[8] It functions as support for accurate evaluation/ self evaluation of the teacher's professional skills. The portfolio stores evidence for professional development: certificates, articles, methods, didactic projects, evaluation charts, reflection charts, etc. The portfolio is an instrument meant to improve the teacher's work because: it allows the keeping and organisation of materials so that they are operational; it ensures support for qualitative activity, for professional responsibility and rigor; it generates opportunities to show initiative, creativity in completing, reorganising and updating portfolio materials; it grants a reasonable support that is necessary for decreasing levels of stress, often caused by managerial visits and evaluations; it allows the internal or external evaluator (school manager/ principal, methodologist, school inspector, school expert) to get an honest appreciation of the evaluated actions.

The eportfolio is perhaps the most widely used option of evaluating in recent times. This is " personal digital collection of data that describes and illustrates knowledge"[9]. The eportfolio, just as its traditional variant, is a complex product, designed throughout a longer period of time. This can be made according to a particular purpose, a specific theme, a concept, based on information sources that are carefully selected and assumed, consisting of products that occurred as a result of personal experiences. An eportfolio is not a software package, but rather a combination of process (a series of activities) and product (the finite result of the eportfolio process). Presentation portfolios can be created using a variety of instruments, both static, desktop type and online[10].

Developing a self evaluation capacity can be supported throughout the specific self awareness, self analysis and self assessment strategies.

Self awareness refers to one's capacity to reunite in a holistic, integrative and non-adversarial manner the whole set of data, opinions and beliefs regarding oneself, in view of a more accurate and realistic self definition. This process entangles the collection and processing of information coming both from one's subjectivity and one's external world, given that the individual combines self awareness with knowing the other. We thus define self awareness as an activity that evaluates one's self, one's

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[8] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Coordinates of Lifelong Education," in *Astra Salvensis,* 5 (2015), no. 10, p. 168-171.

[9] Horaț iu Catalano, *Procesul de învățământ: direcții epistemice, pragmatice și experiențiale,* Bucharest, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, p. 114.

[10] H. Barett, „Balancing the Two Faces of E-Portfolios", 2011, available at http://electronicportfolios.org/balance/balancingarticle2.pdf , accessed 11. 09. 2019.

skills, actions and intentions. an activity that is individually and socially conditioned, more or less organised and systematised, but always oriented towards organising and optimising personal behaviour[11].

Self analysis is, just as self awareness, a process based on self observation and on comparison with others, a process that has the objective of obtaining an accurate and genuine image of one's self. In comparison to self awareness, self analysis does not refer to the whole cognitive, affective-motivational and behaviour system that students have, but only to certain aspects, which are submitted to analysis from the perspective of an imminent encounter with a particular school task. Self analysis is a fundamental component of the self awareness process.

Self assessment is a deliberative process, mainly oriented towards two essential objectives: on one hand displaying the strengths and weaknesses regarding the plan for professional skills, for abilities and attitudes, and on the other hand, placing oneself within a system of values within the comparison with others.

By pursuing a reflection period, by gathering valid evidence and having the capacity to support professional accomplishments will avoid a subjective evaluation/ self evaluation and will be able to critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats occurring within his/her professional development, drafting a real professional development plan that is built and focused on: self evaluation (gathering data about one's self); exploring opportunities (recording data referring to one's career from within and outside the organisation, taking decisions and establishing targets- on a short or long term); planning (establishing ways and means of carrying out the targeted objectives as well as identifying the actions necessary for completing these objectives); pursuit of reaching the objectives (keeping track of success and failure sequences according to the set objectives).

Conclusions

The knowledge society characterised by information overflow and technological input requires permanent adaptation and readaptation.[12] This way, it is essential that teachers become aware of the need to eliminate the imperative *must* and replace it with the verb *want*. Hence the approach regarding self involvement, understanding responsibilities they take by way of *self empowerment, self determination, self assumption*. The self evaluation process

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[11] L. Antonesei, *Paideia. Fundamentele culturale ale educatiei,* Iaș i, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1996.

[12] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Educational values within the scope of the technological revolution," in *Astra Salvensis,* 7 (2018), no. 14, p. 31-37.

becomes a necessity while seeking performance, evaluation conducted by the teacher being focused on what he/she has achieved and/or his/her behaviour.

By using the principle of subsidiarity, quality control of the pedagogical act within school units is made through evaluation instruments, being the joint responsibility of the educational leader and the staff of teachers along with a direct participation of the beneficiaries.

Teachers allocate time during educational actions in order to train students to gather self evaluation skills[13], to encourage them to self assess by presenting the importance, the positive aspects of such endeavour. It is equally important that the teacher supports the self evaluation of his/her own teaching act, by allocating time to improve their own performance and implicitly to reach the objectives of the educational system. Therefore, teacher self evaluation represents a key element in ensuring quality and in obtaining performance.

The importance of self evaluation resides in the opportunities provided by the teacher after having identified the weaknesses of his/her own activity, its causes, and potential solutions to improve the particular issues. Self evaluation will not only impact one's activity, but it will bear an impact upon the entire school institution, as teacher self evaluation supports organisational development, this being an integrating part of strategic and operational planning, and not as a separate activity.

It must also follow the regulations in the school unit regarding quality assurance, report to national reference standards and have in view the possibility to generate competitiveness at inter institutional level. Continuous improvement of quality in secondary education services is a necessary measure that can produce important benefits for all learners and educators. To do so, clear efforts are needed in order to support and encourage participation in teacher self evaluation process.

[13] Ioana Mudure-Iacob, „Digital Literacy: From Multi-Functional Skills to Overcoming Challenges in Teachign ESP," in *Astra Salvensis,* 7 (2019), no. 14, p. 59-70.

Attitudes Towards School and Learning. Analytical Perspectives of Students and their Parents

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Abstract: *The study describes a research based on the application of two Likert scales on a sample of 698 students from all schooling years starting with the 4th grade and ending with the 12th grade, respectively by the parents of these students (550 subjects). This research tracks students' attitudes and, comparatively, parents' perceptions of students' attitudes toward school in general and toward learning in particular. The main aspects are related to: learning motivation (generated by ambition, desire to get good school results from intrinsic or extrinsic needs and reasons), learning dynamics (boredom at school, ease of learning and the objective of learning), and climate classroom learning, measured from the perspective of students' trust in their teachers. The research results indicate existing vulnerabilities of the Romanian educational system, specifically of the teacher-student and teacher-parents relationship. Learning motivation, teaching interactivity of and classroom climate decrease gradually during schooling years, recording some increases only due to test results and in proximity of national exams.*

Keywords: *attitude towards school, learning motivation, school performance, trust, class climate.*

Introduction

In contemporary research in education sciences, there is a permanent and active epistemic interest in investigating the problems faced by Romanian education, thus seeking to generate solutions to lead to innovation and development of strategies and methods applicable in school and extracurricular activities. In this sense, we aimed to conduct a complex research aimed at investigating both students and parents of their attitude towards school, in general, and towards learning, in particular

Theoretical framework

As an acquired psychic disposition having a social character, the attitude is a manifestation of the position in relation to the objects, actions and social phenomena that we perceive and evaluate, being marked almost exclusively by the sociocultural environment. This influence takes place both on group and individual attitudes[1].

[1] P. Iluţ, *Psihologie socială şi sociopsihologie. Teme recurente şi noi viziuni.* Iaşi, Editura Polirom., 2009.

The attitude towards learning involves motivational aspects and is manifested by the interest for this activity. The underlying reasons, the vision of how effective learning should be produced, as well as the trust in teachers are strong predictors for students' school performance and personal development[2][3], increasing their self-efficacy[4], self-determination, intrinsic motivation, psycho-cognitive development and well-being[5]. Therefore, these were the predictors, on which we built our general premise from which we started this research.

During the school years, various complex elements of psychological anchoring can determine success or failure through a transactional process that takes place during learning. In understanding these influencing factors, the interactive or transactional model was developed[6] which explained how the interactions between the individual and his environment take place, in response to the situations in which he is engaged. Extrapolating the model to the topic of this study, it can be stated that students participate as active agents in school, influencing the learning process through various emotional, cognitive and behavioral strategies, depending on their abilities to apply these strategies. This process involves rationalizations and emotions, which will shape the motivations and generate attitudes towards school (as a psychosocial environment) and learning (as an individual activity, but mediated by the interaction with the other actors of the educational system / environment), outlining a class climate[7]. As a background of the research, this study provides an image of this climate.

Research methodology
The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude of students and their parents towards school and learning. Based on the results obtained, we will later develop a series of techniques to optimize the positive engagement of students in the school environment and to improve the educational climate - in the classroom activities - on various dimensions

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[2] P. Senge, *Școli care învață. A cincea disciplină aplicată în educație*, București, Editura Trei, 2016.
[3] D. Andronache, M. Bocoș, V. Bocoș, C. Macri, „Attitude towards teaching profession," in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 142 (2014), p. 628-632. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.677.
[4] A. Bandura, *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*, New York, Freeman, 1997.
[5] E. L. Deci, R. M. Ryan, „Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being," in *American Psychologist*, 55 (2000), p. 68-78.
[6] R. S. Lazarus, S. Folkman, *Stress, Appraisal and Coping*, New York, Springer, 1984.
[7] A. E. Woolfolk, *Educational Psychology,* 5th edition, Ma: Allyn and Bacon, 1993.

(cohesion, communication), aiming to promote performance through cooperation and group competition.

The objectives pursued by this research were the following:

- Investigating the students' learning motivation from 4th to 12th grade;
- Investigating the dynamics of learning motivation throughout the school years;
- Investigating the way in which parents identify and perceive their children's learning motivation;
- Investigating students' perceptions of the efficiency and attractiveness of the teaching-learning process;
- Identifying the extent to which students trust in teachers;
- Identifying the extent to which parents trust in teachers.

Research tool

In order to be able to capture the relevant statistical trends and report the results to the assumed objectives, it was decided to apply a standardized questionnaire to as many respondents as possible. The theoretically selected sample was heterogeneous by gender, environment of residence and age category (school cycles) given the suggestions in the methodological literature in the sciences of education[8] anchored for the purpose of research.

Two questionnaires were used which include dichotomous Likert scales (with YES or NO answer), a variant for students and one for parents, respectively. The elaborated scale has ten items, these being constructed in such a way as to correspond to the specific objectives in order to study the dynamics of the attitude towards school and learning from the perspective of several variables. The elaborated scale has ten items, these being constructed in such a way as to correspond to the specific objectives in order to study the dynamics of the attitude towards school and learning from the perspective of several variables like: *learning motivation, perception of the degree of interactivity of teaching-learning, perception of learning difficulty, perception of learning objectives, trust in teachers.* The scale was constructed following the rigors suggested by the literature[9]

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[8] L. Cohen, L. Manion, K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, 2007, available at: http://books.google.com/books?id=iYKKgtngiMC&pg=PR1&dq=Cohen+Manion,+Morrison+2007&lr, 21. 08. 2021.

[9] A. Bryman, D. Cramer, *Quantitative data analysis with SPSS 14, 15 and 16: A guide for social scientists,* New York, Routledge, 2008.

Description of the research sample

A total of 698 students and 550 parents were involved in the research, distributed according to the descriptive tables below.

Descriptive statistics of the student sample

Out of the total number of students involved in the research, 309 (44.3%) of them were boys and 389 (55.7%) were girls. The number and their percentage are presented in the table 1:

Table 1. Distribution of the sample of students by gender

Gender	**N**	**%**
Boys	309	44,3 %
Girls	389	55,7 %
Total	698	100 %

Regarding the distribution by class of students in the research sample, there is a relatively uniform distribution of them (noting a higher number of students in 9t^{h}, 10th, and 11th grade) according to the table 2:

Table 2. Distribution of the sample of students according to the grade

Grade	**N**	**%**
4th	67	9,6 %
5th	54	7,7 %
6th	45	6,4 %
7th	49	7,0 %
8th	55	7,9 %
9th	125	17,9 %
10th	115	16,5 %
11th	115	16,5 %
12th	73	10,5 %

Total	698	100 %

We also considered it important, related to the pursue the research objectives, to include in the research sample both students from urban and rural areas. Their distribution is presented in the table 3:

Table 3. Distribution of the sample of students according to the area

Area	**N**	**%**
Urban	485	70 %
Rural	213	30 %
Total	698	100 %

Descriptive statistics of the sample of parents

Regarding the sample of parents, the research aimed to involve both mothers and fathers of students, their total number being 550. Of their total number, 169 (30.7%) were fathers and 381 (69.3%) were mothers. Their distribution is presented in the table 4:

Table 4. Distribution of the sample of parents according to the gender

	N	**%**
Fathers	169	30,7 %
Mothers	381	69,3 %
Total	550	100 %

Another variable that was considered, in the case of describing the sample of parents, was their level of education. As can be seen in the table and diagram below, most of them have secondary education - 253 (46%) and higher education - 208 (37.8%) and the fewest attended vocational school – 89 (16.2%).

Table 5. Distribution of the sample of parents according to the education level

Level of education	**N**	**%**
Secondary education	253	46 %
Vocational school	89	16,2 %
Higher education	208	37,8 %
Total	550	100 %

Research findings. Descriptive, comparative and inferential analysis

Learning motivation (generated by ambition, desire to achieve good school results and intrinsic or extrinsic needs)

Regarding the learning motivation, the data analysis was done for all the educational levels, in general, but also for each level. In this case we followed both perspectives: students and parents.

In a general data analysis, it is observed that for the fewest students, respectively only for 215 (i.e. for 30.8%) the learning activity is motivating and for a very large number, it is not.

Analyzing the same variable, we were interested to evaluate the parents' perception about their children's learning motivation. Thus, after the analysis it is observed that the data are significantly different from the statistical point of view. So, there is a very large discrepancy between the vision of students and their parents. Therefore, 410 (i.e. 74.5%) of the parents involved in the research notice that their children's motivation is increased and only 140 (respectively 25.5%) consider the opposite.

Comparing students' answers with those of their parents, it becomes extremely obvious that parents overestimate their children' learning motivation, which may also show that they do not know well enough the reasons why their children learn.

To identify if there is a statistically significant difference between students' and parents' opinions, we used the *t* test. The results of this test are set out below:

Table 6: *T* test for the differences between the sample of students and the sample of parents regarding the learning motivation

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Variable: Learning motivation	Equal variances assumed	2,572	,111	-4,076	548	,000	-1,2772 8	,21022
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,062	543,29	,000	-1,2772 8	,21070

According to Table 6, it is found that after questioning the two groups involved in the research (students and parents), the average results of parents' perception of their children's learning motivation are significantly higher (t = - 4.076, df = 548 , p bidirectional = 0.000) compared to the average results of students' self-perception.

Another aspect of the research was to identify the evolution of learning motivation over the study years. Analyzing the obtained data, it was found that if in the 8th grade the percentage of students who self-assess as motivated for learning was 88%, this percentage decreased gradually until the 5th grade, where only 52% were self-assessed as learning motivated. We present the obtained data obtained the table below:

Table. 8: The evolution of learning motivation from the 4t^{h} to the 12th grade

Grade	**Learning motivation**	

	YES Answers	**NO Answers**	**Total %**
4th	88%	12%	100%
5th	76%	24%	100%
6th	76%	24%	100%
7th	73%	27%	100%
8th	84%	16%	100%
9th	54%	46%	100%
10th	46%	44%	100%
11th	48%	42%	100%
12th	52%	48%	100%

As can be seen in table 8, it is noted with concern that students' learning motivation decreases during the study years. Also, a deep data analysis, shows that there is a slight increase of learning motivation in the grade where students have national exams, respectively in the 8th and 12th grade. This increase cannot be considered a significant one and could be explained by the imminence of the exams. So, we can conclude that students do not learn mainly to develop their skills but to pass the exams or. So, for most of the students the purpose of learning is not learning itself, but assessment.

As we presented above, in general parents consider their children more motivated to learn than they are, but even in this case, this perception is changing over the years of study.

From the presented data, during the school years there is a decreased value of the learning motivation both from the parents' perspective and from the students' perspective. It is possible that in these years of school parents are seeing that students make an effort in learning in the perspective of national exams (8th grade for national testing and 12st grade for Baccalaureate).

Learning dynamics

Our aim was to study the extent to which students' activation, interactivity and dynamism are ensured as learning facilitators, therefore we analyzed the answers offered by the students, regarding school boredom, ease of learning and purpose of learning.

Analyzing the data obtained it is found that most students consider that the learning activities in which they are involved are not dynamic and interactive. Thus, 63% of all students consider that the teaching-learning activities tend to be boring and less challenging for them. We also consider that it is possible that because of this aspect, the learning activity is perceived as difficult (58% of students gave this answer) and without concrete purpose (71% of students referred to this issue).

Table 9: Perception of learning

Variable	**Percent**
Teaching-learning activities are boring and little challenging	63%
Learning is hard	58%
Learning at school lacks concrete goals	71%

Therefore, considering the data described above as well as their corroboration, it is pertinent to state that students consider learning as difficult/ hard because they are not involved in interactive activities, which facilitate learning in a pleasant and attractive way. Thus, the data obtained on the Pearson correlations established between the variables *learning interactivity*, *learning difficulty* and *learning finality* are presented as follows:

Table no. 10: Pearson correlations between the variables learning interactivity, learning difficulty and learning finality

Variables		**Learning interactivity**	**Learning difficulty**	**Learning finality**
Learning interactivity	Pearson Correlati on	1	-0,822**	0,765**
	Sig. (2-		,000	,000

	tailed)			
	N	698	698	698
Learning difficulty	Pearson Correlation	-0,822**	1	0,125**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000
	N	698	698	698
Learning finality	Pearson Correlation	0,765**	0,125****	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	
	N	698	698	698
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

It can be seen from the analysis of these correlations that between all three variables, there are statistically significant associations both positive and negative (p <0.001). Therefore, analyzing the Pearson correlation table presented in Table 10, we can formulate the following conclusions:

- The level of learning interactivity correlates negatively, statistically significant, with the perception of learning difficulty at a r = -0.82. Therefore, *the better the interactivity in learning, the less difficult it is for students to learn.*
- The level of learning interactivity correlates positively, statistically significant, with the perception of the purpose of learning at an r = 0.76. Therefore, *the better interactivity in learning is ensured, the more students are aware of the purpose / purpose of their own learning.*
- The level of perception of learning difficulty does not correlate significantly with the way students perceive the finality of learning (r = 0.12). Therefore, it cannot be said that the perceived difficulty of learning influences in one way or another the awareness of students of the purpose of learning. In other words, students can

be aware of the purpose of their learning regardless of the degree of difficulty of the learning tasks.

The learning climate in the classroom

Another aspect that we considered relevant for investigating students 'attitudes towards learning was the learning climate in the classroom, measured from the perspective of students' trust in their teachers. This aspect was analyzed through the perspective of two dimensions:

1. the trust to ask for help when they have a learning problem
2. trust to seek help when they have a problem in general.

Thus, according to the data obtained, 56% of students trust their teachers and can openly express their difficulties in learning. Therefore, it can be considered that these students ask for feedback from the teacher and he can help them in regulating their learning. On the other hand, in terms of the trust that students show in their teachers when it comes to other categories of problems, with the exception of learning (problems with colleagues, problems with parents, disappointments, etc.) here the trust is significantly lower (37%). To highlight the data obtained, we present it in the table 11:

Table 11: Students' trust in teachers

Variable	**Percent**
Trust - exposure to learning problems	56%
Trust - exposure issues in general	37%

Given that there is a significant percentage of students who declare that they trust their teachers and ask for their support when they have learning difficulties, we can conclude that in most cases *teachers create an optimal climate for classroom learning, thus generating an climate of trust.* However, it cannot go unnoticed that students do not show a general trust in their teachers, who only declare in a proportion of 37% that they talk to teachers about other types of problems they have, like problems with classmates or various problems with parents. This fact leads us to note that *the role of teacher as a counselor is quite low and the possible crisis situations of students may remain unknown to most teachers.*

Out of the desire to identify whether there is a connection between the two dimensions of the manifestation of teacher trust, we resorted in this

case to the calculation of the Pearson correlation index. The data obtained for this purpose are presented in the table 12:

Table 12: Pearson correlations between the dimensions of trust in teacher

		Trust – exposure to learning problems	**Trust – exposure issues in general**
Trust – exposure to learning problems	Pearson Correlation	1	0,783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	698	698
Trust – exposure issues in general	Pearson Correlation	0,783**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	698	698

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant positive correlation between the two variables ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, according to the Pearson correlation index, we can conclude that the level of trust that students have in their teachers, in terms of exposing learning problems, correlates significantly positively with the level of trust in terms of exposing problems in general to a $r = 0.78$. In other words, *the more a teacher will ensure a climate of trust in such a way that students are exposed to learning difficulties, the more the general trust of students in their teachers will increase, thus having the courage to ask for help for other types of problems, not only for learning.* Given this, we encourage teachers to create the optimal framework and climate of general trust in and out of the classroom.

We were also interested in identifying the dynamics of students' trust in their teachers (from the perspective of the two dimensions) over the years of study. We noticed that the trust in teachers decreases as the years of study pass. The biggest drop occurs during high school. If in the 4th grade the trust in teachers is very high (95% in the learning dimension and 80% in

the general dimension) it decreases during the gymnasium (where it is relatively balanced at 60% in the learning dimension and 50% in the general dimension) and decreases even more throughout high school reaching an average of 31.5% (41% in the learning dimension and 22% in the general dimension).

Given that the trust in teachers is an important aspect from the perspective of parents, the research collected data in this regard as well. Following the analysis of the parents' answers, it was found that they, compared to the students, have a significantly lower trust in teachers, both from the perspective of solving learning problems and from the perspective of solving problems in general. Also, in the case of parents, the level of trust decreases during the school years.

Therefore, the conclusion that emerges from the analysis is easy to formulate *parents have less trust in teachers compared to students*. Beyond the fact that this conclusion can be easily formulated, in our opinion the low trust of parents in teachers is an important alarm signal and schools must identify the fastest and most effective strategies to develop better collaboration with parents of students and so to increase their trust in those who take care of their children's education.

Conclusions

According to the statistical data presented and analyzed above, the following research conclusions can be formulated:

- Students' learning motivation is low, and it is noted with concern that it is further decreased during the study years;
- Students do not learn mainly to develop their own skills but, to pass the exams;
- Parents overestimate their children's learning motivation which may even show that they do not know enough why their children are learning;
- Students consider learning to be difficult because they are not involved in an interactive teaching process;
- The better is the interactivity of teaching, the easier is for students to realize the purpose of their own learning;
- The role of teacher as a counselor is quite low and the difficulties of students may remain unknown to most teachers;
- If teachers will create for students a climate of trust, students will expose their learning difficulties, the trust and the courage will be increased;
- Students' trust in teachers decreases with the school years;

- Parents have less trust in teachers compared to students.

Therefore, several issues can be identified regarding the attitude that students and their parents had towards school and learning. We consider that each school must be aware of these issues and identify the most effective, relevant and functional strategies in the short, medium and long term to optimize the relationship with students and their parents, in fact to facilitate the cognitive and emotional-emotional development of the students.

Aspects of Using Drawings as an Expressive Way of Understanding the Children

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Abstract. *Drawing has an important role in the activities performed by children of preschool and early-aged children. In most cases, the immediate appreciation of the children's drawings is an aesthetic one, relevant for identifying the creative potential. Besides those, it is important to keep in mind that beyond this aspect of a work, we can find other information about the child's personality, about their cognitive and emotional development or maybe what concerns them by trying to decipher the messages that the children choose to convey to us, somehow indirectly, through their drawings. In our paper we will point out some of the ways and directions of interpretation of children's drawings and we will explain five projective tests, in a way accessible both to teachers for primary and preschool education, and to parents concerned with this subject. Our study aimed to draw attention to drawing as an expressive (non-diagnostic) way of understanding the child, which can be used by teachers in the class or group in any school or preschool environment, without requiring an initial psychological training, but a minimum of knowledge about the analysis and interpretation of children's drawings.*

Keywords: *to draw, children's drawings, projective tests, understanding, children.*

Introduction

Drawing plays a major role in the lives of preschool and early-aged children. Children draw in kindergarten or school, at home or when they visit someone, even when they are bored. As a general rule, parents offer the children some pencils and sheets of paper, knowing that this activity will keep the child preoccupied for a short time.

It is better to get children used to drawing when "they have nothing to do" than to sit in front of a screen, therefore young children will tend to grab a pencil rather than watching TV.

Why do children draw? There are several possible answers to this question. It might be that they want to create something beautiful, it might be that they want to repair something that they consider wrong, from what they have seen. It might be that they are told by the adults to draw or finally they feel the need to communicate something for which they do not have the verbal tools to do it.

As we can find drawing everywhere in children's lives, we strongly believe that drawing is a means of understanding early school-aged children.

Directions in interpreting children's drawings

We delimit three main directions of interpretation for children's drawings:

⇒ *measurement of children's intelligence* (F.L. Goodenough, C. Pârlog, U. Șchiopu, M. Gârboveanu)[1]

⇒ *children's understanding through psychoanalytic interpretation of drawings* (M. Klein, F. Dolto and partly R. Davido)[2]

⇒ *understanding children as a whole*, from an emotional and intellectual point of view and with some psychoanalytic references (G.L. Luquet, M. Prundhommeau, J. Boutunier, C. Enăchescu)

The first perspective for interpreting children's drawings is the *psychologist-intellectualist* one. It assumes the follow statement made by F.L. Goodenough that the nature of children's drawings in early childhood is conditioned by the children intellectual development[3]. The author develops a relevant test (later famous) for the study of the development of the child's intellectual level, which consists in drawing a l man by the child-subject, telling him "Draw a man, how well you know!".

The test can be applied to children between 3-13 years old, each age corresponding to a certain type of little man. Goodenough applied the *Draw-a-man test* to 97 children of different ages and nationalities, establishing 18 criteria totalling 51 points, the subjects being graded according to the presence or absence of the elements required by the criterion, then establishing their IQ.

Figure 1. Evolution of the "Little man"- The drawings of a girl at 3, 4,5 and 6 years old (personal archive)

[1] U. Șchiopu, M. Gârboveanu, *Studiu asupra unor aspecte ale creației artistice în desenele copiilor,* in Culegere de Studii de Psihologie, vol. IV, București, Editura Academiei, 1962.

[2] M. Klein, *Povestea unei analize de copil,* Cluj-Napoca, Editura Sigmund Freud, 1994.

[3] F.L. Goodenough, *Measurement of inteligence by drawings,* New York, N.Y. and Burlingam, Brace&World, 1954.

The differences between these four drawings gives us information about the cognitive development of the child, about her attention to details and so on.

The Romanian psychologist C. Pârlog studied the evolution of drawing in children according to their stages of intellectual development. Thus, he establish the following phases:

⇒ *Scribble phase* (2-5 years old) with preliminary stage (2-4 years old) and cell stage (4-5 years)

⇒ *Schematic phase* (5-9 years old) with the transition stage (5-7 years old) and the stage of complete representation (7-9 years old)

⇒ *Realistic phase* (9-15 years old) with the stage of transition to profile (9-15 years old) and the stage of complete representation of the profile (11-15 years old)

The author criticizes the drawing after a model, especially the geometric one and promotes the frequency of free drawing.[4]

The second perspective of interpreting children's drawings is the *psychoanalytic analysis*. M. Klein is one of the most frequent appearances in the children's psychoanalysis literature. What we want to highlight here is the fact that M. Klein uses drawing a lot in his therapies with children. The analyst focuses a lot on the colours used by children in drawings, the objects represented by them and less on the shapes, which in turn can be analysed to capture a broader picture of the subject.

F. Dolto is another personality of child psychoanalysis, she studies especially the free drawing of children and the representation of the human figure in drawings concluding that the drawings displayed colours and shapes are already spontaneous means of expression for most children and they like to *tell* what their hands have translated from their phantasm.[5] It is interesting how both authors prefer free drawing and do not discuss projective drawing tests.

The third direction presented brings a *global approach*, capturing aspects of the child's personality, of his intellectual development, but also leaves room for interpretations of a psychoanalytic nature, where appropriate. First of all, we consider it absolutely necessary to appoint one of the initiators of the interpretation of children's drawings, G.H. Luquet, who claims that drawing is a way for children to have fun, being a game like any other and that it is practiced especially by children with a melancholy temperament. He proposes a general rule by which children

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[4] C. Pârlog, *Psihologia desenului,* Cluj, Editura Institutului de Psihologie al Universităţii din Cluj, 1932.

[5] F. Dolto, *Psihanaliza şi copilul,* Bucureşti, Editura Humanitas, 1993.

represent in their drawings everything that is part of their own experience, everything that was given to perception and that the intention to draw a certain object comes from the fact that at that moment that element has an exclusive place and is mainly in the spirit of the designer. But it also says that past events can determine the drawings, through the possibility of reliving that moment.

Luquet's fundamental contribution is the identification of the evolution stages in children's drawings. The classification is made from the perspective of realism in drawings, which the author considers present in children's drawings up to 8-9 years-old. These steps are as follows:

⇒ *The fortuitous realism* or the scribble phase
⇒ *Missed realism* or the tadpole phase
⇒ *Intellectual realism* (the drawing offers the attributes of the represented elements, but has no perspective)
⇒ *Visual realism* (graphic narrative phase).[6]

Figure 2. Evolution of stages in children's drawings, according to Luquet, of a girl at 2, 3, 4 and 6 years old (personal archive)

Reviewing the works of this child, we can appreciate the evolution of realism at the time in this girl's drawings. It's a visible difference between the third and the fourth stage, for exemple. Correlated with other information we can easily establish the cognitive and emotional evolution of the girl, her latest preoccupations and so on.

A few years later, also in France, another researcher appeared interested in the issue of interpreting children's drawings. It is about M. Prundhommeau, who proposes a test of intellectual evaluation of personality and behaviour of children through drawings. This is called the "drawing sheet" and involves copying the drawings presented on a sheet by the child, in spaces parallel to the boxes containing the model

[6] G.H. Luquet, *Le dessin enfantin*, Paris, Libraire F. Alcan, 1927.

drawings. While the child fills in the empty boxes on the paper sheets, his behaviour is noticed and noted.[7]

A contemporary author who subscribed to this type of approach (which is from our point of view the most reliable of those we mentioned) is R. Davido. She supports the use of projective and intelligence tests, using both variants in the investigation of her subjects. In addition, the author proposes a projective test consisting of the elaboration of four drawings, called by Davido- Childhood Hand that Disturbs (CHaD).[8]

In Romania, C. Enăchescu considers projective testing by drawing an expressive technique, appreciating each drawing as a "creation", which depends on the typological structure of the respective personality, with the necessary individual variations.[9]

In conclusion, we argue that the interpretation of children's drawings must be viewed from a multifaceted perspective, because once made, a drawing can give us intellectual, emotional, personality or psychoanalytic information about the subject who made the drawing.

Projective tests - short presentation

Projective tests may bring in addition to psychometric tests some information about the personality and area of concern of the subject. *Projection* is an "operation by which a neurological or psychological fact is displaced and located outside and by which the subject expels from himself and locates in another in another person certain qualities, feelings and desires that he does not know or reject in himself."[10]

The tests we propose for the study of preschool and young children are the following:

1. *The Family Drawing* test - was proposed by Porot and Corman. It has two phases: in the first drawing, the child is asked to draw a family, without giving additional explanations. The second drawing consists of representing one's family. The idea is that the first family drawn is the image of the ideal family, as the child imagines it. In this drawing the child projects his desires, which he expects from the real family. The child will produce the second drawing of his/her family as it is and

[7] M. Prundhommeau, *Le dessin ches l'enfant*, Paris, PUF, 1947.

[8] R. Davido, *Descoperiţi-vă copilul prin desene,* Editura Image, 1998.

[9] C. Enăchescu, *Elemente de psihologie proiectivă,* Cluj-Napoca, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1973.

[9] C. Enăchescu, *Elemente de psihologie proiectivă,* Editura Ştiinţifică, Cluj-Napoca, 1973.

[10] *Dicţionarul de psihanaliză,* Bucureș ti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1997, p. 271.

where the relations between its members can be identified. This test can be applied from 5 years of age up to adolescence.[11]

2. *The Kinetic Family Drawing* test *(KFD)* - was elaborated by Burns and Kaufman in 1970. The child is asked to draw each member of his family while doing something. This test aims to reveal intra-family relationships, harmony or family tensions.[12]

3. *Draw-a-Man* test - was initiated by Goodenough and later analysed by J. Boutonier who adds the comment that the little man's drawing would be the projection of his own person[13].

4. *The Tree Drawing* test - was developed by E. Juckev in 1928, but has undergone many changes over time. The standard tree test was standardized by Charles Koch in 1957. The instruction given to children is usually: "Draw a fruit tree the best you can." For younger children, the simple formula is also recommended: "Draw a tree", without other adjacent comments. R. Stora[14] exchanges the instruction with it: "Draw a tree, any tree except the fir tree". The elements of the drawing that can be interpreted are: the placement of the tree on the page and its size, the type of tree drawn, the soil line, roots, stem, crown, branches, flowers, leaves, fruits and landscape.[15]

5. *Childhood Hand that Disturbs (CHaD)* is a new projective test developed by R. Davido involves four different drawings made by the child.

1) The childhood draw (C)- drawing that the child made more frequently when he was younger.
2) The hands draw (Ha)- drawing random hands, in any position.
3) The Hand that Disturbs (D) the child must draw a hand that is disturbing for him.
4) The free draw- the child is asked to draw anything he wants.

By analysing these drawings we can appreciate the emotional development of the child and any possible abuses, claims Davido[16].

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[11] https://virtualpsychcentre.com/family-test-what-is-it-and-how-is-this-projective-test-used, accessed 10. 06. 2021.

[12] *Ibidem.*

[13] J. Boutonier, *Modalităţi de exprimare la copil şi desenul,* on M. Daubesse in *Psihologia copilului de la naştere la adolescenţă,* Bucureș ti, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1970.

[14] https://insightandcoaching.com/2016/03/draw-a-tree-but-not-a-pine-tree, accessed 09. 08. 2021.

[15] A. Rozorea, M. Sterian, *Testul arborelui,* Bucureș ti, Editura Paidea, 2000.

[16] *Ibidem,* p. 8.

Additionally *The house* drawing, which is not exactly a test, can provide key information for understanding children, because drawing a house is supposed to be an effective means of revealing the child's personality. The interpretation takes into account the house as such, but also the environment. "The design of the house is emblematic for the world in which the child lives, for the interactions with his own family and for the ability to interact with the outside."[17]

Also, *free drawing* - is used to reveal the current concerns of the child or to bring up to date previous experiences. Here the child is asked to draw what he wants in a limited time.

The elements pursued in the appreciation and analysis of each drawing that we propose would be:

- ⇒ *Graphic space* - to what extent did the child use the space of the drawing sheet, on which part of the sheet he focused etc.
- ⇒ *Shapes* - the type of lines used, the outline of the represented objects or beings.
- ⇒ *Arrangement* - arrangement in the sheet, order on the drawing sheet, details.
- ⇒ *Colour* - colours, tones, shades etc.
- ⇒ *Execution mode* - realism or imaginary representations, additions or omissions in the drawing, transparency or perspective.

Figure 3. Some random drawings of the same girl at 4, 5, 6 years old (personal archive)

All those details give us information about many aspects of the child's cognitive or emotional development that may sometimes be ignored because of the focus on the declared behaviours and abilities.

We consider that these tests are quite accessible and easy to interpret by teachers without an initial psychological training, without

[17] E. Crotti, *Desenele copilului tău - interpretări psihologice,* Bucureș ti, Editura Litera Internaţional, 2010, p. 169.

claiming a psychodiagnosis, but as guidelines for identifying landmarks on children's personality and revealing their concerns. Moreover, we propose tests on the child's relationship with their family and also some tests that may help in understanding the personality of the preschool and young school child.

Conclusions

Our suggestion to approach the projective tests, in a non-diagnostic way, by the teachers from the group or from the class, does not replace the presence of a psychologist in the institution, but can partially supplement the concerns in the direction of additional information about the children they work with.

It will be useful for the teachers of primary and preschool education to have minimum knowledge on the application, analysis and interpretation of projective test data, so they can increase their effectiveness in intervening concretely in building the profiles of children in their classes.

We suggest that drawing as an expressive way of understanding the children should be used in, as many school and preschool environments as possible, to help the children express themselves, considering that teachers' access to children's "after school" life may only bring benefits in the current teaching activities and why not, in the lives of the little ones.

In addition to the fact that children's drawings could give us (teachers or parents) valuable information about their cognitive and emotional evolution, it has a great benefit, that of supporting the development of their creative potential and creative imagination. It is important for both parties, parents and teachers, to get additional information on their kids for finding the best way to relate with them, for a good relationship and for better long term communication.

Using Project-Based Learning in Online University Seminars

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Abstract. *Project-based learning encourages students to interact, to communicate and collaborate while actively solving problems. Students can manage their work, share information and present their results to colleagues as a base for further discussions within the context of online teaching and learning. The teacher's role in this context is more advisory than authoritative, having the responsibility to establish the inquiry-based assignments for his students and to offer them significant feed-back. The present paper focuses on the use of teaching and learning strategies based on the project method within online seminars in the subject of Fundamentals of Pedagogy. The students involved in the present research were in the first university year, studying this subject during the second semester within the module for teacher training. This module is not mandatory for all students, being optional for those students, who take into consideration a possible teaching career. The project-based learning was used in the online seminars in order to help students deepen, clarify and complete the knowledge acquired during the online courses at the same subject and also in order to facilitate the creation of an interactive online learning environment and increase students' satisfaction and motivation in the context of conducting online activities at this subject.*

Keywords: *project-based learning, online seminars, interactive, online education, learning,.*

Introduction

The academic year 2020/2021 was marked in Romania by a series of particular changes as a result of the pandemic context. The main feature of the teaching and learning activities in the university education was the one regarding the environment in which these took place, namely the exclusive online context. If in the pre-university educational system the pupils and teachers returned to school for a short period at the end of the 2020/2021 school-year, in the university, the face-to-face meeting of students and academic staff did not take place yet. The pandemic period was challenging both for students and teachers, since exclusive e-learning determined the need to adjust rapid and unpredicted to a new educational reality. Although organizations like UNESCO[1] or UNICEF[2] mitigate for a safe return to school for all students, we have to take into consideration the fact that due to the contagion of the Covid-19 infection this situation may be indefinitely prolonged, especially for the university educational

[1] https://en.unesco.org/safe-return-to-school-in-the-caribbean , accessed 20.07.2021

[2] https://www.unicef.org/eca/stories/use-summer-prepare-safe-return-school, accessed 15. 07. 2021. Cf. Flavius-Cristian Mărcău, „Analysis of Democratic States on the Reduction of Human Rights During the Sars-Cov-2 Pandemics," *Astra Salvensis,* VIII (2020), no. 15, p. 87.

system, and may lead to main changes in the subsequent conduct of educational activities at all levels. Given this situation, it is necessary to reconsider the efficacy of different teaching and learning strategies within the context of online learning situations.

Theoretical foundation

Project-based learning represents a student-centred approach that has systematically proven its efficacy over time. This form of instruction enables the active involvement of students in the learning process and promotes collaborative learning by sharing knowledge and insights. The specific character of the project-based learning is represented by the "construction of an end product, which represents students' new understandings, knowledge and attitudes regarding the issue under investigation often presented using videos, photographs, sketches, reports, models and other collected artefacts"[3]. Using the project-based learning within online seminars in higher education enables students to search information and to create their end product in digital format. Alongside adequate guidance offered by the teacher, the use of technology in the project-based learning can help in gaining knowledge and skills, both for weakly and strongly performing students[4].

It has been proofed that the achievement of educational objectives is enabled by the interactive character of the teaching and learning activities and thus it is recommended to organize courses and seminars within the online context without to much use of expository teaching methods, which turned out to be less effective[5].

The seminar is a main, specific didactic activity in higher education, and its importance is related to the fact that it is being centered on the students' learning activity. The seminar helps students to in-depthly process the content which was taught at the same subject at the course, passing over the first, superficial stage of processing it, and allows

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[3] R. Holubova, "Effective teaching methods - project-based learning in physics", in *US-China Education Review*, 12(5), (2008), 27-35.

[4] O.Erstad, "Norwegian students using digital artifacts in project-based learning", in *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 18(4), (2002), p.427.

[5] D. C. Marin, M. Bocos, "Characteristics of Online Learning in Higher Education During the Covid-19 Pandemic", in *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, Psychologia-Paedagogia*, LXVI, no. 1, (2021), p. 135. Cf. Inocent-Maria Vladimir Szaniszlo, "How much justice are we able to do in our political society? Social ethical and theological reflections on the virtue of justice and its implementation for a development of our post-communist countries also in the period of COVID-19 pandemic ," in *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 17, p. 95.

them to develop learning skills, the communicative competence[6] as a result of the use of the techniques for stimulating their intellectual activity[7].

From the teachers' point of view, the seminar represents an opportunity to offer students significant feed-back and to stimulate them to develop own investigations and a positive attitude towards a specfic subject, since it is an activity based on dialogue and debate[8].

The structure of the seminar is usually determined by answering the traditional questions used for planning any didactic activity[9]:

- Which are our main goals/objectives?
- Through which content will we be able to achieve these goals?
- How will we proceed? (didactic strategy)
- How will we know that our goals were achieved? (assessment strategy).

In the field of educational sciences most of the seminars are theoretical, but this does not mean that during this activity students must only listen and memorize. The theoretical seminar can include practical activities, which involve problem solving, discussions, debates, expressing different insights regarding the approached themes. Also, not only verbal communication methods can be used within the seminar, but also modern, active ones, like group working, role play, case studies or project-based learning. By using these modern, action methods the seminars become interactive[10]. Ensuring the interactive character of the seminar in the virtual environment can be achieved by adjusting the way in which these methods are used.

Within the current study we aimed to investigate how project-based learning contributes to the active attendance of students within the context of online seminars. Previous studies[11] showed that conducting online group projects turned out to enhance student learning.

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[6] D. Muste, „The Role of Communication Skills in Teaching Process", in *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS*, XVIII (2016), p. 430.

[7] D Jucan, "Effective Strategies for Teaching and Learning in University Seminar", in *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, Psychologia-Paedagogia*, LIX (2014), no.1, p.75.

[8] C. Onu, *Elemente de pedagogie universitară (Elements of university pedagogy),* Iaşi, Editura Universităţii Al. I. Cuza, 2017

[9] M. Bocoş, D. Jucan, *Teoria şi metodologia instruirii. Teoria şi metodologia evaluării (Theory and methodology of instruction. Theory and methodology of assessment),* Ediţia a III-a, revizuita, Piteşti, Editura Paralela 45, 2017, p. 111

[10] http://calitateid.uab.ro/imagini/Modul2_Herman.pdf , accessed 10. 07. 2021.

[11] K. Williams, C. Bruce, K. Morgan, "Supporting online group projects", in *North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Journal*, 56 (2012), p. 15.

Methodology

Research question

The research aimed to found the answer to the following research question: Can the use of project-based learning within online seminars conducted in higher education determine the active attendance of students?

Research methods

In order to answer the above mentioned research question the following research methods were used:

- direct observation of the participation of students in seminars – students attendance and activity during online seminars in the subject entitled Fundamentals of Pedagogy was monitored weekly for 12 weeks using the following indicators: very active, active, rather passive, uninvolved;
- documents analysis – in order to give us the conceptual delimitation of project-based learning as a pedagogical approach within online seminars and the measures taken by European, national and local decision makers regarding online education in universities;
- product analysis – used for analysing students' projects according to the following indicators: project accomplishing, compatibility between the project theme and its content, presenting relevant points of view according to the approached subject, involving interactive methods during project presentation, demonstrating the acquisition of new knowledge, especially conceptual and procedural knowledge, by involving metacognitive mechanisms in learning.

Participants

Our research involved a group of 38 students from the Faculty of European Studies and the Faculty of Law, studying in their first year for obtaining their bachelor degree at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. These students find themselves in a special situation. They conducted the activities during this academic year exclusively online, so they didn't get to know their colleagues and teachers in person so far. So, they are only partially familiar to the specific of studying in the university. Also, these students chose to go through the courses of the pedagogical

module, which is optional, but gives students the opportunity of a teaching carreer in addition to their main specialization.

Procedure

The research was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021 (February 2021-June 2021). During the seminars included in the pedagogical training of the students, which took place online, via Microsoft Teams, for the subject entitled Fundamentals of Pedagogy, the students received the assignment to create and to present projects. The teacher proposed a series of themes, established according to the subject syllabus, from which the students had to chose one. Also, the teacher gave students some specific instructions regarding the realization and presentation of the project. The project could be realized individually or in teams of maximum 4 students and had to contain a personal presentation of the topic and some interactive exercises for the rest of the students. The interactive requirement of the presentation aimed to overtake the limits of the online seminars and the ones of the situation in which the participants haven't meet in person so far and the group cohesion is not enough realised as in the situation of face-to-face activities.

The subjects proposed by the seminar holder were general, in order to give students the freedoom to adjust their presentation according to their perspective of the approached topic. Also, the themes gave students the opportunity to deepen the information transmitted during the courses at this subject. The themes from which the students could choose are presented in the table below (Table 1).

No.	Subjects of seminar projects
1.	Education in the contemporary society
2.	Lifelong learning
3.	Self-education
4.	Family as educational factor
5.	School as educational factor
6.	Media and its educational role
7.	Evolution of educational ideals
8.	Types of educational goals
9.	General structures of educational systems
10.	New perspectives in the conception and realization of education
11.	Analysis of main curricular products for the specialty subject
12.	Analysis of different curricula for optional subjects

Table 1. Subject proposed for seminar projects

After choosing one of this themes, the students received specific guidance from the seminar holder in order to find valid information sources and to present valuable findings in the seminar.

Results

After the first seminar in which students received their assignment and the aspects regarding the presentation of the projects were clarified together with them, we were glad to observe that all subjects proposed by the teacher were selected by students to be studied. Each subject was approached in one meeting, so that students had enough time to share their projects and to discuss different points of view according to the approached subject.

From the total of 38 students, a number of 26 students chose to make their projects in groups of 3 or 4 students, and the rest of 12 students chose to prepare their projects individually. The students who chose subjects approached in multiple presentations had to communicate with each other, so that each presentation reveals different aspects of the same topic (Table 2). Only the presentation of the projects took place during the online seminars, the preparation for it was conducted asynchronously.

Subject	**Number of presented projects**
Education in the contemporary society	1 individual project
Lifelong learning	1 individual project and 1 team project
Self-education	1 individual project
Family as educational factor	1 individual project and 1 team project
School as educational factor	1 individual project and 2 team projects
Media and its educational role	1 individual project and 1 team project
Evolution of educational ideals	1 individual project
Types of educational goals	1 individual project
General structures of educational systems	1 individual project and 1 team project
New perspectives in the conception and realization of education	1 individual project and 1 team project
Analysis of main curricular products for the specialty subject	1 individual project
Analysis of different curricula for optional subjects	1 individual project

Table 2. Number of presented projects for each subject

Regarding the indicators taken into consideration for analysing students' projects the results are the following:

- Project accomplishing was completed 100%. All students participating at the seminar presented a project.
- Compatibility between the project theme and its content – from the total of 19 projects, a number of 16 projects accomplished this criterion. The rest of 3 projects accomplished only partially this indicator. In these 3 projects, we could find information regarding the chosen topic, but the students couldn't prove that they acquired conceptual and procedural knowledge, not being able to answer different questions regarding their project, demonstrating a superficial processing of the studied contents and not being able to demonstrate the use of reflection strategies. Thus they presented only general information regarding their topic and their projects didn't contain critical analysis or in-depth aspects of the approached subjects.
- Interactive character of the project presentation. Each project had to contain tasks, questions or exercises for the auditory, composed for the other students, so that the presentations were not monotonous and all students were challenged to become active listeners and participants to the presentations. These tasks for the auditory could be conducted orally, directly during the presentation or by using different online applications or programs to which students have free access. We took into consideration the proper use of technology for each project, the efficient use of the internet and the identification of relevant web sites. From the total of 19 project presentations a number of 17 projects completed this criterion. The rest of 2 projects didn't contain these tasks and the teacher came with certain questions for the auditory in order to cover this limit. During each seminar, for each presentation, the teacher monitored the activity of students using the following indicators: very active, active, rather passive, uninvolved. We observed that during the first 3 seminars, the number of active and very active students registered a lower score, compared to the one in the next seminar sessions (Figure 1). The students got used to the way the presentations were structured and within the next sessions, the number of active students increased, while the number of rather passive or uninvolved students

decreased. We considered that the students were active during the seminar when they expressed their point of view regarding the topics discussed during the meeting, when they were able to give valid arguments for their answers and when they offered correct answers to the exercises and questions proposed by the students who presented their projects.

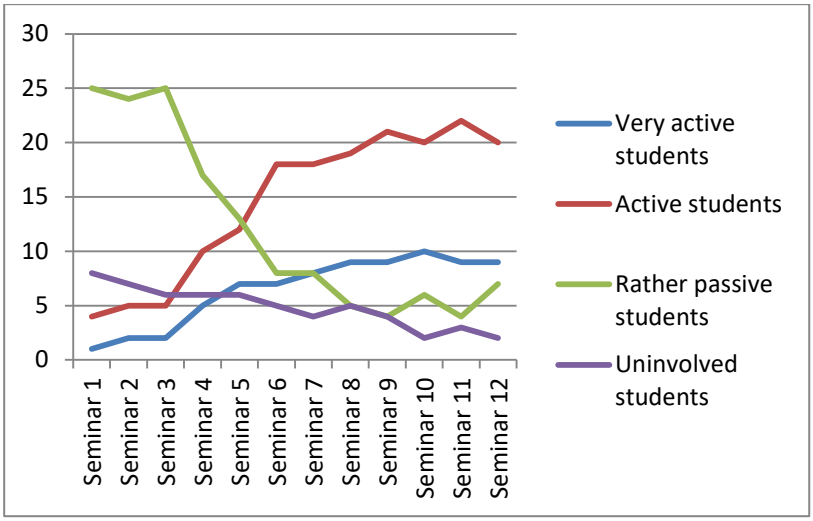

Figure 1. Student activity during seminar

Discussions

The online seminars mentioned above included activities regarding project planning and implementation in order to support students to complete and deepen the knowledge gained during the courses at the subject Fundamentals of Pedagogy. Given the fact that during the whole semester the activities took place online, we tried to get the most out of the technological resources in order to develop students' critical and communication skills. We benefited from the fact that during the pandemic times many companies such as Microsoft, Google, or Zoom have expanded their services and enabled free access for conducting online educational activities or for using different functions of some applications[12]. Another advantage was represented by the fact that

[12]https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340560537_Transition_to_Online_Education_in_Schools_during_a_SARS-CoV-2_Coronavirus_COVID-19_Pandemic_in_Georgia , accessed 19. 07. 2021.

students gained and developed their digital skills, so this was not a problem in accomplishing their assignment.

At the beginning of the semester, the teacher took care to offer students clear explanations, relevant for being able to carry out the project. After that, the teacher maintained constant contact with students monitoring their activity and giving them specific advice when they requested it. But the use of the project method was intended also to shift the responsibility from the teacher to students so that they became able to make decisions regarding their project design. Supporting students' independence and autonomy during the project-based learning within online seminars contributed to the development of a sense of control of their own learning process[13]. Thus we took into consideration the limitation regarding the teacher's low control over students' activity in online activities.

Conclusions

Taking into consideration the results presented above, we can conclude that project-based as a teaching and learning strategy can be used in online educational activities in order to enhance students learning.

Within the current study, we observed that students became able to express their point of view according to the chosen subject using valid arguments and previous knowledge gained during the courses. Another benefit of this approach was that it stimulated the communication between students so that they got to know their colleagues better during the discussions held during the seminars based on their projects. So, they acquired knowledge in an online environment, through their own effort, individual study, but also through interaction with their colleagues.

Further studies that approach students' opinions regarding the use of project-based learning within online seminars are necessary in order to obtain an overview of this topic. Also, the use of this method in online seminars at different subjects studied at the level of higher education can be explored.

[13] D. Kokotsaki, V. Menzies, A. Wiggins, "Project-based learning: a review of the literature.", in *Improving schools*, 19 (2016), no. 3, p. 267.

„Using Project-Based Learning in Online University Seminars," *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 18, p. 69-77.

Enhancing Autonomous Language Learning in Digital Environments-Paving the Way for Self-Learning via Escape Rooms and Communities of Practice

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Abstract. *The potential offered by digital tools and apps in the ESP teaching/learning process encouraged both teachers and learners to explore the affordances of such learning instruments in synchronous and asynchronous contexts. However, faced with the new scenario of shifting instruction entirely in a digital format, the conventional use of pedagogical and didactic methods and approaches was put under scrutiny. New learning needs and more customised employability skills are deemed necessary for learners, digital natives who prove availability and high interest in exploring and playing with the wide array of digital tools. The manner in which ESP teachers can exploit such readiness and, at the same time, use the resourceful digital apps is by building on learner autonomy, so as to expand language learning beyond the virtual walls of class instruction. To do so, there is a stringent need to boost learner motivation through gamified learning experiences, to facilitate resourceful digital interactions in micro-communities of practice and to allow learners to use peer assessment as a self-improvement mechanism. Teacher assistance along the process, regarding choice of digital tasks, collaboration within communities of practice and reciprocal multimodal training will this way redesign the digital ESP class and provide it a more practical pedagogical foundation.*

Keywords: *autonomous learning, gamified learning, communities of practice, employability skill needs, digital escape rooms.*

Introduction

Language learning and teaching, as a dynamic and ongoing mechanism of acquiring skills, bears the tremendous advantage of allowing both learners and educators to use creativity with regards to the manner in which didactic planning, design of contents and delivery methods should be blended. There are hardly any rigid learning/teaching patterns or constraints regarding the learning resources and environments, which enables learners to achieve a high level of autonomy. Paired with the recent shift of learning languages in an entirely digital format, students and teachers alike found the affordances granted by this educational domain to be virtually unlimited. However, learner autonomy as the ability to take charge of one's own learning[1] has become a need rather than an additional approach to learning, paving the way for new conundrums.

Referring to educational values, one may observe that the current initiatives to improve the educational system take into consideration not only the increase in school performance but also the students' education by means

[1] H. Holec, *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning*, Oxford, Pergamon, 1981, p. 3.

of establishing collaboration relations, raising self-esteem, and practicing common sense.[2]

Having been exposed to the synchronous and asynchronous facets of instruction, learners were granted significantly more authority in projecting and designing individual study and autonomous practice. Moreover, in the context of learning ESP (English for Specific Purposes) in a digital format, there is also the challenge of having to adapt and customise language teaching/learning so as to cater for contemporary employability needs. Particularly, for such online learners, who are digital natives, tailoring language learning demands a complex process of creating interactive educational content, enabling autonomy in the learning process and designing assessment that validates the destination point of their learning trajectory, that is, to use language in specific working contexts.

Digital natives' readiness to explore the knowledge input that instructors provide during synchronous ESP classes is a vast opportunity to consider in the didactic planning stage, but it can also be challenging given the variety of tools and methods necessary to design proper learning sequences. "The tech revolution has launched the challenge of online learning, where learning office methods make the students more responsible, being liable for choosing a study domain at the beginning of the day. In such a learning environment, one has the right to choose the means of improving learning, to set personal learning objectives, to select the materials prepared in this area."[3]

It is thus the purpose of this study to explore and investigate how digital learner autonomy can be supported throughout the acquisition and practice of communicative skills, by blending particular online tools, didactic scenarios and interactive sequences in the virtual learning environment. Some of the exemplified autonomous learning modules and sequences have been successfully implemented throughout the academic year 2020/2021, with undergraduate students enrolled in ESP classes at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca and can serve as good practice scenarios for further blended learning sequences.

Building learner autonomy in ESP learning

In order to motivate ESP learners to pursue an independent learning path in parallel to class instruction (on site or online) teachers must design various alternative communication contexts in which autonomy is the key element. Being a skill that is easily transferable to the employability set of skills, autonomy in learning grants students the motivation to use and test their

[2] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Educational Values within the Scope of the Technological Revolution," in *Astra Salvensis*, VII (2019), no. 14, p. 31-37.

[3] Adriana Denisa Manea, Ion Albulescu, Cristian Stan, "Student Learning", in *Education, Reflection, Development (8th edition). The European proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences,* 2020, p. 2.

acquired language skills in contexts that are unfamiliar to them and which require creativity and spontaneous reactions in non-instructional communication scenarios. Given that the process of becoming an autonomous language user means being recurrently exposed to learning contexts outside the traditional onsite or digital classroom, drilling, recycling of vocabulary and grammar structures along with a constant use of speaking skills become prerequisite instruments.

Referring to Littlewood's definition of autonomy, as "learners' ability and willingness to make choices independently about their study"[4] there are some factors that need to be considered when planning ESP lesson sequences and even a syllabus in which learner autonomy plays a significant part. Firstly, ***teacher assistance*** must be properly managed and not weakened, since learners are likely to lose motivation when being empowered to take control of their own learning. Closely related to motivation, autonomy is the product of empowerment, which implies at least two entities enabling the transfer of power and roles: the instructor, on one hand, whose roles modify progressively, and the learner, on the other hand, who takes control, to a certain extent, of their own learning objectives and targets. Voller[5] exemplifies three steps that are meant to lead to autonomy: teacher's transfer of control to the learner, negotiation with learners as a feature that is defining for teaching, and respectively self-monitoring of the teaching act in order to identify the types and specific character of interactions occurring in class.

Such a progressive transfer of roles and power is a necessary step in building autonomous learners, as, when learners are given complete empowerment over the how, what and when to study, there is quite often the risk of motivation decreasing. Therefore, some of the most relevant roles that teachers use in the primary stages of empowering autonomous learners refer to: *organiser/ coordinator* (for categories of tasks and types of interactions to follow, for providing clear and relevant instructions), *assessor* (to provide accurate feedback, to indicate learning opportunities for improvement) and *motivator* (to facilitate understanding regarding the particular benefits that learners gain from autonomous learning interactions). Moreover, having a strong exploratory function, autonomous learning grants learners the freedom to better identify their learning styles and participate in interactions that are not limited by the instructor's teaching style or by time constraints.

Even more so, the online classroom, with its generous toolkit of learning apps and platforms, poses new challenges to how teachers can assist in the autonomy building transfer. Asking for directions/ support in virtual spaces is different from the onsite alternative, as there can be delayed responses or, on the contrary, teachers might find it more difficult to adapt their assistance roles,

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[4] W. Littlewood, „Autonomy: An anatomy and a framework," in *System* 24 (1996), no. 4, p. 429.
[5] P. Voller, "Does the Teacher Have a Role in Autonomous Learning?" in P. Benson and P. Voller (eds.) *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*, London, Longman, 1997, p.102.

often feeling the urge to provide instructions that are too long and detailed, leaving little room for learners to actually complete the tasks on their own.

Secondly, the ***choice of tasks and activities*** in autonomous learning, initially under a teacher- guided framework and progressively handed over to the learner's own willingness and needs, indicates that autonomy in learning fulfills multiple functions. From the educational role of using language in non-instructional contexts, to the psychological function of boosting motivation after completing self-study sequences, autonomy has the benefit of allowing language learners to customise their learning according to their particular needs. This way, autonomy in learning projects a pedagogical dimension, as learners gradually manage to diagnose their particular learning needs and thus reshape the learning objectives. Equally important, the sociological dimension will enable learners to use language through natural and spontaneous interactions, and to communicate with peers of different language level, requiring negotiation skills along with language skills.

If in onsite classes these dimensions are often scaffolded, the teacher designing each dimension with the clear function it fulfills (e.g., teacher identifies learner needs and organizes content so as to suit the majority, teacher may tend to use the educational and pedagogical dimension more than the sociological one), virtual learning spaces will rather blend in the educational and sociological features. Likewise, motivation plays a more stringent role in online autonomous learning, as each completed task or interaction will leave the learner with a sense of accomplishment or instantly generated feedback, which can be difficult to provide by a teacher for each student in onsite classes.

Thirdly, to make learner autonomy a genuine tool for improving learners' language level online, the aspect of how ***language learning pedagogy*** is present ***in virtual spaces*** is essential. Teaching and learning online cannot be envisaged as a mere transfer of the materials and resources from onsite class into the virtual world, nor can the teacher assume the same traditional roles. Multimodal communication has a transformative function and embeds valuable affordances -a term coined by Gibson[6] - which pave a smoother way for language learning. Referring to the affordances for language learning, Moeller[7] mentions "opportunities for enhancing students' access to up-to-date and even up-to-the-minute cultural materials and realia. The use of these on-line authentic materials can help provide students with a level of cultural awareness that is most often acquired by means of experience abroad." (p. 8). Such affordances have the advantage of facilitating learning interactions online around topics and events (e.g., live exhibitions, live debates, workshops,

[6] J. Gibson, *The ecological approach to visual perception*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1979, p. 39.

[7] A. Moeller, "Moving from instruction to learning with technology: Where's the content?", in *CALICO Journal*, 14 (1997), no. 2-4, p. 5-13. Available at http://calico.org/journalarticles.html, accessed 12. 07. 2021.

conferences, webinars) that would otherwise be little accessible to onsite learners on a regular basis.

With the wide array of available learning apps to use throughout the language learning process, be it during online classes or organised as assessment sequences, there are also some challenges worth mentioning in the context of applying the pedagogical framework to online autonomous learning. On one hand, since teaching and learning shifted to exclusive digital formats in a very short period of time (with the measures imposed by the pandemic), most educators chose to explore the affordances of these apps without there being any documented pedagogical and didactic support for the respective apps. In a manner of saying, several of the game-based learning apps and popular gamified platforms (Kahoot! Quizlet, Quizizz) have gained more and more popularity, but there is a stringent need to use them with some pedagogical background and not predominantly for entertaining and assessment purposes.

On the other hand, there is the aspect of frequent distractors and interruptions in the online space, which might decrease productivity with autonomous learners. It takes motivation and discipline to focus on the tasks and interactions, ingredients that can unfortunately be easily forgotten while engaging in the online realm.

ESP autonomous learning between gamified learning experiences, digital interactions and communities of practice

Gaining autonomy as a digital ESP learner is a validation of having succeeded in acquiring proper language structure, in defining one's own learning needs for the field of study and in finding motivation to engage on a regular basis in digital interactions. Such interactions, which are at first teacher guided and gradually handed over to the autonomous learner to manage, can span from gamified learning experiences to communication with peers/teachers/ native speakers on social media or learning platforms, and to joining language communities of practice. All these digital interactions provide resourceful learning experiences, generating contexts for language practice and learning and rewarding the autonomous learner with sufficient motivation to continue this endeavour.

Gamified learning experiences, i.e., synchronous/ asynchronous digital escape rooms or platform designed games, provide both the functionality of self-assessment and individual practice and boost learning motivation. Digital escape rooms (designed on platforms such as Microsoft OneNote, Google Slides, Deck Toys, Microsoft Sway) have the advantage of allowing interactions with peers, while at the same time creating a game experience that enables players to use language in customised learning scenarios. "Designed as online controlled environments for learning, educational breakout rooms can provide resourceful contexts for assessing language skills and for uncovering learner understanding. Whether the advantages of using them throughout the process of evaluation refer to granting more learner autonomy, to allowing for a

complex form of assessment of language skills or to diversity in teaching methods, students are highly stimulated by such gamified alternatives."[8]

For autonomous learning, digital escape rooms can be designed by teachers so as to include various language skills- communicative skills, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, idioms etc. Learners will have to escape each digital sequence by working with their peers- thus practicing their speaking skills, and by decoding various challenges which are structured as language tasks. Learning autonomy is thus a key instrument along the gamified experience, as learners perform in a rather informal environment, they must negotiate and explain their choices along the game and, upon completing the challenge, their motivation level is highly increased.

Such digital escape rooms can embed various tasks that enable players to use learning apps in order to escape the digital rooms. Some particular good practice examples are: using an embedded Padlet to trigger written responses from players (such a task could require participants to write topic-based paragraphs that respond to what the other participants had written before i.e. argumentative essay on niche tourism, article promoting a popular destination to exemplify English for Tourism Digital Escape Room scenarios), allowing learners to interact and respond using voice only or audio-video apps (Vicario and Flipgrid are suitable resources that allow for qualitative and creative peer-interaction), creating self-assessment learning worksheets (interactive worksheets, Wordwall, EdPuzzle, Quizziz, Kahoot!). The result of learning via digital escape rooms is that learners gain autonomy in using language for particular purposes, they interact verbally or in written form and they gain "emotional ownership of their language learning."[9]

The most relevant benefit of joining communities of practice to enhance autonomous language learning is that communities of practice facilitate communication among various learners and specialists in a specific field of practice, thus customizing ESP language learning in the digital framework. "Communities of practice are voluntary groups of people who, sharing a common concern or a passion, come together to explore these concerns and ideas and share and grow their practice." [10] The exchange of information and learning practices that occur within communities of practice stimulate learner

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[8] Ioana Mudure-Iacob, "Hide and Seek in Gamified Learning: Formative Assessment of ESP in Digital Escape Rooms," in *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 17, p. 217.

[9] V. Kohonen, "Autonomy, authenticity and agency in language education: the European Language Portfolio as a Pedagogical Resource". in R. Kantelinen & P. Polari (eds.) *Language Education and Lifelong Learning* Helskinki, University of Eastern Finland. Philosophical Faculty, 2009, p. 27.

[10] B. Mercieca, "What is a community of practice?", in J. McDonald and A. Cater -Steel (eds.), *Communities of Practice. Facilitating Social Learning in Higher Education*, Singapore, Springer Nature, 2017, p 7.

autonomy particularly due to the fact that participants will engage in conversations revolving around the field of interest/study, thus being required to use specific purpose language.

Moreover, in virtual communities of practice or even in language cafes, which are becoming popular among universities, participants share their intercultural perspectives, emphasizing the sociological dimension of autonomous learning. Interactions in virtual communities of practice occur either on social media, on discussion boards, using email or other educational platforms and LMS. Autonomy in learning is supported in this context not only by the cross-cultural interactions among peers, but also by making learners pay more attention to netiquette, user-friendly language and politeness toolkits in the virtual learning rooms. Another benefit refers to the opportunity of interacting with academic staff, professionals in the field of study or native speakers, making language learning more authentic and generating multiple and resourceful learning experiences.

Conclusion

Facilitating language learners to become autonomous is tantamount to validating their progress with vocabulary and receptive and productive skills acquisition. An ideal balancing of guided ESP instruction, with structured content, customised methods and approaches, on one hand, and learners' readiness to expand knowledge input by autonomous practice, on the other hand, would make ESP teaching/learning a flawless endeavour. Unfortunately, such balances are seldom made possible, either because of lack of interest/time/ resources, or because teachers fail to recognise the importance that autonomy plays in learning.

As promising and entertaining as the plethora of digital tools, apps and platforms might seem for the ESP teacher, there are also limitations to keep in mind when designing and delivering online ESP classes. Namely, the fact that the pedagogical usefulness of highly used apps is not yet fully tested, nor can the impact it has had on digital native learners be properly quantified indicates that the infusion of ESP classes with apps without accurate correlation with the specific content might be questionable. In exchange, the online framework of teaching/ learning ESP does allow for exploratory scenarios, whose validation is seen in the motivation and engagement levels of students with autonomous learning.

Having experienced a year and a half of exclusively online ESP instruction, the good practice examples, with remarkable feedback from learners, were the use of activities and learning scenarios that allowed participants to be more autonomous. Among these, gamified learning tasks such as digital escape room challenges, gamified lesson sequences, virtual interactions organised in the form of peer assessment using audio-video digital tools and respectively communication in micro-communities of practice proved to be the most effective. Not only did they generate enthusiasm in learning, but

they also allowed for genuine know-how exchanges, collaboration and competitiveness in language use, and respectively creating learning contexts that enabled students to use a variety of other skills (technological, visual, language skills). The greatest challenge remains whether these learners are willing to pursue further language learning beyond the horizon of the syllabus-allocated framework. However, there are strong indicators that after getting a sense of the affordances that ESP provides in the contexts of employability skills, learners will improve autonomous learning and turn it into lifelong language learning.

Interpersonal Communication - Determinant Factor in Offline and Online Teaching Activity

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Abstract. *The shifting between offline and online communication can contribute to miscommunication between individual from the same institution. Especially in the school setting communication between teachers or teachers and other members of the board can create difficulties. Miscommunication has its roots in people not being able to find the right messages and the right context for delivering their thoughts. Today's educational setting requires teachers with communication skills that will deliver their messages to their students and colleagues in such a manner that interpretations are avoided. In order to do a proper job teachers must find ways to continually improve communication skills, know what communication barriers are, how to use online communication and online etiquette. This article tries to present the above mentioned elements of proper communication in showing how communication and verbal tools can be used in the correct way.*

Keywords: *type of communications, messages, interference, communication barriers, feedback, assertiveness.*

Introduction

Effective communication is the basis of the knowledge, skills and dispositions that teachers need to have a direct and indirect influence on student outcomes. Effective communication is defined as the ability to convey information to others effectively and efficiently. Teachers with good verbal, nonverbal and written communication skills facilitate the exchange of information between people in the school for the benefit of all.

The opportunity to improve and refine the communication strategy must be used at every opportunity. Many issues, in and out of school, can be directly related to the effectiveness of communications within the school - whether or not the information was communicated, what was communicated, how it was communicated, and who communicated it. Allocating time on the content of the message and the manner of transmission will also ensure the maintenance of integrity and professionalism, that of the school, but also of the educational community.

Forms of communication include verbal (oral), written and nonverbal. Verbal communications have the advantage of immediate feedback, are most useful for conveying emotions, and can involve important stories and conversations. Written communications have the advantage of asynchrony, reaching many readers and are best for transmitting information. Both verbal and written communications convey nonverbal messages through tone; verbal communications are also colored by body language, eye contact, facial expression, posture, touch, and space.

Classroom communication is important for students to learn effectively and should be implemented from an early stage of learning. Classroom communication exists in three categories: verbal, nonverbal, and written.

Verbal communication is the most recognized type of communication. In the case of this type of communication, what you express comes directly from what

you speak. Again, this can be formal or informal: with friends and family, in a formal meeting or seminar, at work with colleagues, in the community, during professional presentations, courses, lectures, colloquia, etc.

Non-verbal communication is more subtle but much stronger and includes the full range of physical postures and gestures, the tone and rhythm of voice, and the attitude used in communication.

Nonverbal communication can have five roles[1]:

- Repeat: often repeats and reinforces the message you make verbally.

- Contradiction: may contradict the message you are trying to convey, indicating to the listener that you may not be telling the truth.

- Replacement: can replace a verbal message. For example, the expression on your face often conveys a much more vivid message than words can ever.

- Complementary: can add or complete your verbal message.

Written communication, unlike verbal communication, is represented by printed messages. Examples of written communications include notes, proposals, e-mails, letters, instruction manuals, and operating policies. They can be printed on paper, handwritten, or displayed on the screen. Written communication can be developed using various tools over a longer period of time. Written communication is often asynchronous (occurs at different times). That is, the sender can write a message that the receiver can read at any time, as opposed to a real-time conversation. A written communication can also be read by many people (such as all employees in a department).

The communication skills of the communicators are necessary in order to have an effective communication and with an impact on the interlocutor. The communicator must know where to pause, where to repeat the sentences, how to say a certain sentence, how to pronounce a word and other important elements in an oral communication. In academia, communication skills are vital for success and performance. At all levels of education, pupils and students must be able to communicate effectively.

The attitude of those involved in the communication process must be appropriate and directed in support of maintaining open and free communication. Although most attitudes are determined by affect, behavior and knowledge, there is still variability in this regard between people and between attitudes. Some attitudes are based more on feelings, others are based more on behaviors, and still others are based more on beliefs. Other attitudes may be based more on behavior.

Knowledge of the communication process is not related to the educational qualification of the speaker or the number of diplomas he has in his portfolio. Knowledge is actually the clarity of the information that the speaker wants to convey to the receivers. The speech must be well documented, with a complete and in-depth knowledge of the subject in order to be able to find the answers to questions that can arise at any time.

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[1] Edward G. Wertheim, *The Importance of Effective Communication*, London, Northeastern University, College of Business Administration, 2008.

The message - the transformation of thoughts into words

The message appears when thoughts are transformed into words through the process of coding[2]. The encoder (sender / communicator) uses an "environment" to send the message - a phone call, e-mail, text message, face-to-face meeting or other communication tool. The encoder should also consider any "noise" that may interfere with their message, such as other messages, distractions, or external influences.

Transmitting the message in the classroom is important for students to learn effectively and should be implemented from an early stage of learning. The teacher can address a student or the whole class through verbal communication. For example, a teacher may ask a student to stand up to present the prepared project, a process that will be accomplished through verbal communication.

The message means not only the speech used or the information transmitted, but also the changed non-verbal messages, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures and body language. Non-verbal behavior can convey additional information about the spoken message. In particular, it can reveal more about the emotional attitudes that may underlie the content of speech.

In order to deliver messages in an effective communication process, some characteristics of efficient messages must be taken into account.

The effective key message has certain attributes[3], as follows:

- ✓ Concise - each idea expressed will contain a limited number of sentences;
- ✓ Strategic: defining, differentiating and addressing the benefits;
- ✓ Relevant: finding a balance between the need to communicate with what the public needs to know.
- ✓ Convincing: designing meaningful information to stimulate action.
- ✓ Simple: use an easy to understand language; avoiding jargon and acronyms.
- ✓ Memorable: ensuring the structure of the messages so that they are easy to remember and repeat; avoiding sentences that are too long;
- ✓ Real: use active voice, not passive;
- ✓ Adapted: effective communication in various contexts, depending on the target audience, adapting the language and depth of information.

In the educational environment, the message has two relevant and at the same time useful effects in guiding teachers to structure the message. The two identified effects would be the primacy effect and the recency effect[4].

The primacy effect refers to the fact that the messages that are communicated at the beginning are better retained and have a greater influence on the receivers.

The effect of recency is somewhat at odds with the effect mentioned above, emphasizing the message conveyed at the beginning or end. The way the teacher will dose the information in his lectures will have an influence on the received message.

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[2] Debbie Wetherhead, *Key message development: Building a foundation for effective communications*, New York, Public Relations Society of America, 2011.

[3] *Ibidem.*

[4] Ovidiu Pânişoară, *Comunicarea eficientă*, Iaşi, Editura Polirom, 2008, p. 49; Adriana Denisa Manea, „Features of educational activities in the contemporary society," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 12, p. 255-260.

John Hasling[5] shows us that there are three types of messages that we send and we must keep in mind when communicating.

Primary messages refer to the intended content, both verbally and nonverbally.[6] These are the words or ways you choose to express and communicate your message. For example, in the classroom we invite a student to come in and take a seat.

Even such a short, seemingly simple and direct message could be misunderstood. „Take a seat" can be much more difficult to understand than „please sit down."

Secondary messages refer to unintentional content, both verbal and nonverbal. The public forms impressions about the intended messages, whether negative or positive, over which there is no control. Perceptions of age, gender or ethnicity or even simple mannerisms and patterns of speech can unintentionally influence the message. Any clue or object that the sender can present to his / her interlocutor / audience provides clues about the person, even if these gestures are made unintentionally.

Auxiliary messages refer to intentional and unintentional ways of communicating a primary message. This may include vocal flexion, gestures, and posture or speech rate that influence the interpretation or perception of your message. The way we choose to convey the message is very important and should be built considering the person / audience. For this, the manner of expression, the chosen tone of voice, the gestures used must be very well known. In a formal context, the ways of expression are very different from an informal context.

Feedback - or how we clarify what we want

The moment of feedback is a necessary part in the communication process, through which the sender is interested to know the recipient's reaction and is willing to know if the recipient understood the message in the same way as desired, and if there is any deficiency, further negotiation or communication is necessary. At the same time, the recipient could have understood the meaning and intent of the message, but, due to a barrier of some kind, such as a language barrier, he could not convey his reactions properly. In this case, the intent of the message / feedback must be brought to the surface by removing the barriers. An effective feedback process includes the following steps:

a. Listening to and understanding the message correctly.
b. Asking questions if the message is not understood correctly and clarifying it.
c. Understanding the message in the original intended sense.
d. Sending the reaction to the sender of the message.

Clarifying the message is important when providing correct and relevant feedback. Thus, following a plan for understanding the message would be useful:

- ✓ acknowledging the misunderstanding of the meaning of the message sent.

[5] John Hasling, *The audience, the message, the speaker*, Boston, McGraw-Hill, 2006.

[6] Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Aspects of political theology in the spiritual autobiographies of the Orthodox space? New potential keys of lecture," in *Astra Salvensis,* V (2017), no. 10, p. 231.

- ✓ request to repeat the message.
- ✓ repetition of the message in your own words.
- ✓ request for specific examples.
- ✓ using open-ended questions where appropriate.
- ✓ questions regarding the correct understanding of the message and acceptance of the correction message.

Teachers often forget to mention when a student has behaved well and instead focus on negative aspects, such as undesirable behavior. This can have significant effects and can demoralize students. Although negative feedback can create positive results by helping students improve, providing positive feedback is a necessary part of promoting effective classroom communication. Students who receive praise are more likely to believe that they can accomplish tasks and be successful in the future and can help build a student's trust, create a good relationship and a safe environment in the classroom. It is also beneficial to encourage students to provide feedback to the teacher, even to colleagues. Allowing them to share feedback on lessons or teaching styles shows they are appreciated for their opinion, and are thus helped to improve learning.

Achieving communication

The communication process is influenced by the context in which it takes place, and an analysis of the situational context in which the interaction takes place, for example in a room, office or perhaps outdoors, must also take into account the social context, e.g. roles, responsibilities and relative status of participants. The emotional climate and expectations of the participants in the interaction will also affect the communication. Communication contexts include intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public and mass communication. Each context has its advantages and disadvantages and its uses have an impact on the communication process.

The channel refers to the physical means by which the message is transferred from one person to another. In a face-to-face context, the channels used are speech and sight, during a telephone conversation, the channel is limited only to speech, in the type of online communication the channel is the written form.

With the transformation of common verbal language, the emphasis of communication has been placed mainly on gathering information from a single channel - words, while a message in its most complete form is often generated by the five channels; face, body, voice, verbal content and verbal style. Fixing to only one channel can endanger the receiver from receiving only part of the message, further increasing the risk of misunderstanding the other person or even being deceived.

There are different types of communication channels, below are some representative examples:

- Face-to-face conversations,
- Video conferencing,
- Audio conferences,
- E-mails,
- Written letters and notes,

• Chats and messaging,
• Blogs,
• Formal written documents.

Barriers in communication

The communication process has multiple barriers. Intentional communication will often be disturbed and distorted, leading to a condition of misunderstanding and failure of communication. Barriers to effective communication could be of many types, such as linguistic, psychological, emotional, physical and cultural, etc. Some of these would be:

- Emotional barriers and taboos.
- Lack of attention, interest, distractions or irrelevance to the receiver.
- Differences in perception and point of view.
- Physical disabilities, such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.
- Physical barriers to non-verbal communication.
- Failure to follow non-verbal cues, gestures, posture and general body language may make communication less effective.
- Phone calls, text messages and other technology-based communication methods are often less effective than face-to-face communication.
- Cultural differences.

Most of the barriers mentioned above can be overcome by a qualified transmitter. Several tools can be used that can be useful to remove barriers in the usual communication process.

Barriers to communication in the classroom make it difficult for students to make the most of their education. Some teachers fail to create engaging lessons and struggle to connect with their students individually. Students with unaddressed language or speech difficulties often have communication problems with their teachers and colleagues. Personality differences and peer pressure add to disruptive factors in classroom communication, making some classroom interactions uncomfortable or forced.

Routine tasks and too much homework create barriers to communication - students do not want to interact with their teachers and will wait for classes to close as soon as possible. Teachers who put energy, enthusiasm and creativity into their lesson plans usually overcome this communication barrier.

Personality differences lead to frustration, unhappiness and a lack of communication between students and teachers. Teachers need to recognize and understand these personality differences and strive to find a healthy balance without showing partiality or favoritism. Peer pressure creates communication problems in the classroom when students respond to teachers by acting funny, cold, or disengaged. Students may refuse to build relationships with their teachers in order to maintain a reputation among their peers.

Assertive communication

Assertive communication involves the proactive response in difficult situations, rather than the passive or aggressive reaction[7]. Assertiveness means expressing one's point of view in a clear and direct way, showing respect for others. Assertive communication helps to:

• minimize conflict;

• anger control;

• maintaining positive relationships with friends, family and others.

Assertiveness is a style of communication that many people strive to put into practice, often due to confusion about exactly what it means.

Being assertive involves taking into account the rights, desires, needs of oneself and others. Assertiveness means encouraging others to be open and honest about their opinions, desires, and feelings so that both parties can act appropriately. Assertive people care about the feelings of others and therefore formulate their demands or respect them in a polite but firm way (Galata, 2019).

Some behaviors that include assertiveness:

• Openness in expressing desires, thoughts and feelings and encouraging others to do the same.

• Listening to the views of others and responding appropriately, whether or not they agree with these views.

• Acceptance of responsibilities and ability to delegate to others.

• Regular expression of appreciation of others for what they have done or are doing.

• Be able to admit mistakes and apologize.

• Maintaining self-control.

• Equal behavior with others.

There are many reasons why people can act and respond in a non-assertive way. When people are not assertive, they may suffer a loss of confidence and self-esteem, which is more likely to make them less assertive in the future. Therefore, it is important to break the cycle and learn to be more assertive, while respecting the opinions and desires of others. The right to free expression of feelings, values and opinions must be accessible to all.

Assertive teachers believe that a classroom in which the teacher is in control is in the students' interest. They believe that students want to have the personal and psychological security they experience when their teacher is extremely competent in directing behavior. Society requires appropriate behavior to be accepted and successful. Therefore, no one benefits when a student is allowed to behave undesirably. Assertive teachers listen carefully to what their students have to say, speak politely to them, and treat them all fairly (not necessarily equally).

Offline and online communication

Communication has changed fundamentally over the years to include not only face-to-face interaction, but also phone calls, email, instant messaging and video conferencing. Age also plays a favorite role, with each generation having its own

[7] Rakos Richard, *Assertive behavior: Theory, research, and training,* London, Routledge, 1991.

preferences and it is essential to use the right channels for a proper connection with the right groups - the wrong ones can be ignored, disapproved or even considered rude.

In the online environment, digital communication has no barriers of time and space and is permanently available. Any information can be transmitted online at any time, and the interlocutor will answer when he wants or when he has access to the online connection. The most popular way to communicate online is to use email. Some of the benefits of using email would be:

• Accessibility - e-mail is free for most users. Adopting a paid plan can be a handy solution for most personal users or companies / institutions.

• Responsibility - the record of conversations is at hand permanently, as long as the database allows, in the case of free accounts

• Unlimited expression - character limit is not imposed so the email can include any description, text or image you want

• Speed - email delivery is almost instantaneous

• Personalization - any email can be personalized with a template implemented by the email service provider

• Mobility - e-mail can be sent from any electronic device that allows the installation of an e-mail agent

• Ease of use - most e-mail services have an accessible and intuitive interface, so regardless of age it does not take long to compose and send an e-mail.

E-mail also has some vulnerabilities and disadvantages: the existence of filters makes some e-mails do not reach the recipients, vulnerable - the information sent by e-mail can be discovered and stolen; being a type of written communication it does not have the important elements of speech and may suffer misinterpretations, delayed response.[8]

In order to be effective, e-mails must be constructed in a certain way appropriate to the communication situation. Thus the existence of an online label in e-mails is necessary:

1. Every email has a classy and concise subject

Examples of topics include „Dated meeting", „Quick question about your presentation" or „Suggestions for proposal".

2. Use a professional email address

It is necessary to use the e-mail provided by the institution. If you use a personal email account, the address should be well chosen. The email address will send the name, first name, so that the recipient knows exactly who is sending the email.

3. Think twice before pressing „Reply to all".

Refrain from clicking „Reply to all" unless you think everyone on the list should receive the email.

4. Include a signature at the end.

[8] Adriana Denisa Manea, Cristian Stan, „Online communication," in *European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences.Conference 2016 - Education, Reflection, Development*, 8 (2016), no. 40, p. 317-323.

Provides the reader with some information about the sender, uses the same font, size and color as the rest of the email.

5. Using professional greetings.

Avoid using relaxed, colloquial expressions such as „Greeting", „Hello" or „Hello, folks". At the same time, avoid shortening anyone's name. Say „Hello Mihaela", if you're not sure she prefers to be called „Miha".

6. Using exclamation marks

It is enough to use a single exclamation mark to express enthusiasm, if necessary.

7. Pay attention to humor

Humor can easily be lost in translation without the right facial tone or expressions. In a professional exchange, it is better to avoid humor in emails, unless you know the recipient well.

8. People from different cultures speak and write differently

Improper communication can easily occur due to cultural differences, especially in written form when we cannot see each other's body language.

9. Reply to emails - even if the email was not intended for you

Situations would be when the email was sent to you accidentally, especially if the sender is waiting for a response. An answer is not necessary, but it serves as a good email tag, especially if that person works in the same institution as you.

10. Correction of each message

Typing errors will always be noticed by the recipient. A correction of the message before sending is a good practice.

11. Add the recipient's address after writing the message

To avoid sending the message incorrectly or without correction.

12. Double check of the correct recipient

Pay attention to the selected email address for the recipient.

13. Keep the classic fonts.

For official correspondence keeping fonts, colors and class sizes

The purpose of online communication is the same as that of face-to-face communication: building connections; information sharing; the student / teacher to be heard and understood. When and how the teacher communicates in the virtual classroom can promote a sense of community in the classroom which helps students feel connected, both with the teacher and with other colleagues.

„Interpersonal Communication - Determinant Factor in Offline and Online Teaching Activity," *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 18, p. 87-95.

Educaţia religioasă în lumina relaţiilor bisericeşti ortodoxe interstatale

The Religious Education in the light of interstatal Orthodox Churches Relations

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Abstract: *Religious education becomes important in the field of education by virtue, the one of ethical rules and values and by the transcendence that promotes, stating that religion towards the moral proposes a set of normative prescriptions that originate in the plane of transcendence, of divinity. Thus, the origin of the religious phenomenon is no longer the man in his capacity as the initiator of the rules, but the divinity which, through revelation, gives certain initiates the general data and frameworks for human existence. Interstate relations, just like those inter-human, are based on mutual trust and respect. As the state institution, the Church has over time a balance and binder shale at the same time between states and their fellow citizens. Through its representatives, the Orthodox Church is noted as a promoter of ethical and moral values.*

Keywords: *religion, morals, Orthodox Church, education, transcendence.*

Introducere

Idealul educaţiei religioase, la fel ca şi idealurile celorlalte dimensiuni ale educaţiei, reprezintă o construcţie abstractă cu un nivel maxim de generalitate, spre a cărui atingere omul tinde pe parcursul întregii sale existenţe. Idealul educaţiei religioase exprimă astfel necesitatea descoperirii graduale de către subiectul uman a esenţei sale divine şi apropierii progresive pe această cale de divinitate. În acest context, educaţia religioasă, în calitatea sa de dimensiune a fenomenului educaţional, devine în mare măsură echivalentă cu recuperarea din om a esenţei sale divine. Înţeleasă ca salvare spirituală a fiinţei umane, educaţia în general şi educaţia religioasă în special, se plasează astfel sub imperiul unor necesităţi cu valoare atemporală şi absolută. Dinstincţia majoră majoră între morală şi religie este reprezentată de faptul că dacă valorile şi principiile morale sunt variabile, contextuale, relativ flexibile şi recunoscute ca fiind dependente de cultura şi condiţiile social-istorice în care acestea au luat naştere, valorile şi prescripţiile religioase sunt absolute, atemporale, imuabile şi presupuse a fi perene şi în acelaşi timp universal valabile.[1] Educaţia morală are loc după un proces de interiorizare a principiilor, normelor şi valorilor morale, conştiinţa morală fiind declanşatorul comportamentelor dezirabile. În consecinţă, modelarea morală a personalităţii umană este rezultatul intercondiţionărilor procesale dintre

[1] Cristian Stan, *Teoria educaţiei. Actualitate şi perspective*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2021.

determinarea socială, reprezentată de social, cerinţele morale şi autodeterminarea personală, reprezentată de factori interni, subiectivi.[2]

Relaţiile existente între valorile promovate de educaţia morală şi valorile educaţiei religioase nu se suprapun, ci sunt mai degrabă complementare. Eficienţa valorificării educaţiei religioase pentru a consolida morala şi moralitatea tinerelor generaţii depinde în mare măsură de capacitatea cadrelor didactice de a concepe activităţi educaţionale care să combine valorile şi principiile etice cu cele de natură religioasă.[3]

Pentru a aborda diferitele provocări ale societăţii din zilele noastre, este necesar ca educaţia să fie orientată nu către eliminarea nediscriminatorie şi abuzivă a ideilor pedagogice ale modernităţii, ci spre transformarea şi adaptarea lor la particularităţile şi caracteristicile pe care societatea postmodernă le cere. Situată în sfera schimbărilor tehnologice, societatea şi sistemul educaţional încearcă să facă faţă presiunilor din interiorul şi din afara sistemului şi să facă faţă nevoii de schimbare. Societăţile democratice, bazate pe respect şi sprijin reciproc, umanism şi justiţie socială, necesită dezvoltarea unor politici educaţionale care ar putea duce la construirea unei culturi de valori universale, inclusiv: adevărul, dreptatea, iubirea.[4]

Formarea conştiinţei şi comportamentului religios necesită din partea educaţiei religioase întreprinderea unor eforturi instructiv-formative specifice de durată, atent articulate din punct de vedere logic şi psihopedagogic.

Axa valorii intelectuale, culturale, morale şi civice a fiecărui individ educabil este o construcţie dezirabilă care se conturează, de-a lungul dezvoltării ontogenetice, începând cu primul mediu educaţional reprezentat de familie şi continuând prin formele/instituţiile specifice (şcoală, biserică). Tendinţele umaniste-democratice subliniază nevoia de modele şi practici educaţionale care promovează valori etice şi morale (adevăr, justiţie, altruism) împreună cu atitudini şi comportamente socio-emoţionale (empatie, asertivitate şi consens).[5]

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[2] Ion Albulescu, *Moral and education*, Cluj-Napoca, Eikon Publishing House, 2008. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu"Eastern Orthodox Churches and Ecumenism according to the Holy Pan-Orthodox Council of Crete (2016)", in: *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 74:4, (2018), p. 3.

[3] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Influences of religious education on the formation moral consciousness of students," in *Jurnal Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 149 (2014), p. 518-523; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, 'The new Ukrainian Autocephalous Church and its image in the ecumenical space', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies,* 76 (3), a6012, 2020, p. 2.

[4] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Educational values within the scope of the technological revolution," in *Astra Salvensis*, 7 (2019), no. 14, p. 31-37.

[5] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Features of educational activities in the contemporary society," in *Astra Salvensis,* 6 (2018), no. 12, p. 255-260. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "The social thought of the

Educaţia religioasă din zilele noastre, deşi păstrează în continuare ca finalitate ultimă mântuirea în calitatea sa de act eliberator, contribuie prin conţinutul său nu doar la apropierea omului de religie şi credinţă ci şi a bisericii de existenţa şi problemele cotidiene ale omului şi societăţii. Avem în vedere în acest context faptul că educaţia religioasă vizează unificarea sub larga cupolă a credinţei şi transcedentalului a valorilor şi principiilor morale, estetice, religioase, sociale şi culturale, urmărind astfel armonizarea globală a existenţei umane şi implicit o mai bună integrare a individului în viaţa comunităţii din care acesta face parte.

1. Premisele legăturilor mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev şi Rusia

Pentru reliefarea legăturilor Mitropolitului Moldovei, Varlaam Moţoc, cu bisericile ortodoxe din Kiev şi Moscova este absolut necesar să fie conturat profilul cultural al situaţiei religioase contemporane. Implicaţiile luptelor interconfesionale, între ortodocşi pe de o parte şi romano-catolici şi protestanţi pe de altă parte, l-au impus pe arena de luptă ca pe cel mai mare doctrinar şi apologet, în domeniul Teologiei încât pe drept a fost supranumit de către Macarie, Mitropolitul Moscovei, istoricul bisericii ruse, „Părintele Teologiei ortodoxe moderne".

Relaţiile lui Petru Movilă, de adâncă prietenie cu Patriarhul Constantinopolului, Chiril Lucaris, a căruia memorie a căutat s-o apere împotriva celor ce-l acuzau de criptocalvinism[6], dragostea lui pentru biserica părinţilor, fraţilor şi unchilor lui care au domnit peste Moldova şi Ţara Românească, strânsa afecţiune pentru Mitropoliţii Varlaam şi Teofil, toate acestea au făcut ca lumina cărţii să se răspândească prin tiparniţele de la Câmpulung, Govora şi Iaşi, tiparniţe date prin grija lui Petru Movilă. „Varlaam Motoc, Mitropolitul Moldovei, n-a fost din os domnesc, ci a plecat la călugărie dintr-o familie de ţărani din ţinutul Vrancei. Călăuzit de porunca evanghelică care spune: De voieşti să fii desăvârşit, mergi, vinde-ţi averile tale şi le dă săracilor şi vei avea comoară în cer şi, vino, de-mi urmează mie (Matei XIX, 21), el a luat calea monahismului, după ce şi-a împărţit moştenirea de la părinţi nepoţilor de la cei doi fraţi ai săi "care nu se ridicară nici odată la mărire». Dacă Varlaam n-ar fi fost înzestrat cu alese însuşiri sufleteşti, el ar fi rămas în anonimatul în care s-au pierdut şi numele fraţilor săi. înclinaţia lui spre studiu l-a îndreptat spre mănăstire, unde, pe vremea lui, putea să-şi realizeze această dorinţă arzătoare. Secu era o ctitorie nouă, a lui

Orthodox Church reflected in the documents of the Holy Pan-Orthodox Council of Crete (2016)," in HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies, LXXV (2019), no. 4, p. 4.

[6] Pr. Scarlat Porcescu, „Locul Mitropolitului Varlaam în Biserica Ortodoxa şi în viaţă culturala a poporului român", în *Mitropolia Moldovei şi Sucevei*, 10-12 (1957), p. 843.

Nistor Ureche, preţuită de Mitropolitul Anastasie Crimca, neîntrecutul miniaturist şi caligraf de pergamente"[7]. În anul 1610, Varlaam ajunge egumen al Secului, deci în conducerea administrativă, luând parte ca delegat al soborului să stingă unele neînţelegeri de hotărnicie între mănăstirea Secu şi cea a Neamţului[3]. Factura lui sufletească însă îl atrăgea către alte probleme duhovniceşti, şi de aceea el poposeşte, cu răgaz, pe lucrarea ascetică Leastviţa lui Ion Scărarul pe care o traduce[4]. Treptele ascetice recomandate în această carte, şi poate şi recomandarea Mitropolitului Crimca, l-au făcut cunoscut voievodului Miron Barnovschi, domnitorul Moldovei, care şi 1-a ales de duhovnic.

Cunoscător al limbii greceşti şi al celei slavone, lui Varlaam i-a fost uşor să se afirme ca un cărturar al vremii, încât i s-au putut încredinţa misiuni cu caracter diplomatic şi cultural. Domnitorul Miron Barnovschi (Bârnoveanu) făcea parte din familia Movileştilor şi acest fapt îi ţinea mintea trează, că are un neam apropiat exilat în Polonia care acum, la urcarea lui pe tron, 1627, se afla peregrin la Lavra Pecerska din Kiev. Acest bărbat era Petru Movilă, care în acelaşi an (1627) se făcuse călugăr, renunţând definitiv la tronul Moldovei. „Interesul lui Miron Barnovschi pentru treburile bisericeşti pleca din firea lui cucernică. El ridicase din temelie o serie de biserici iar pe altele le renovase. S-a îngrijit ca starea morală a cinului monahal să-şi recapete curăţia ca pe vremea Sfântului Vasile cel Mare, stabilind prin reforma sa înlăturarea abuzurilor şi dezmăţului. Denaturarea vieţii monahale o aduce, în primul rând, belşugul şi îmbuibarea. De aceea Miron Barnovschi, cu episcopii săi, hotărăşte, în anii 1626 şi l627, printre altele, ca monahul să nu aibă nici un soi de avere "nici cal, nice stup, nice altu dobitoc, nimica, nice arături, nice din afară, nice din lontru în mănăstire»"[8].

Prin aceste măsuri se încerca restaurarea vieţii de obşte şi înlăturarea vieţii de sine. Varlaam, ca cel ce avea însărcinări administrative la Secu, trebuie să fi avut părtaşie, măcar lăturalnică, la această reformă, ţinându-se seamă că el era duhovnicul domnitorului. N. Iorga[9] susţine că legăturile dintre Miron Barnovschi şi Petru Movilă ar fi fost strânse din anul 1621 prin intermediul lui Varlaam, arhimandritul. În acel an, Varlaam s-ar fi dus la Kiev să-i comunice lui Petru Movilă despre o minune întâmplată la Suceviţa,

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[7] Z. M. Augustin Pop, „Viaţă Mitropolitului Varlaam al Moldovei", în *Mitropolia Moldovei şi Sucevei*, nr. 10-12, (1957), p. 743-744.

[8] Scarlat Porcescu, Locul mitropolitului Varlaam în Biserica Ortodoxă şi în viaţa culturală a poporului român," în *Mitropolia Moldovei şi Sucevei*, XXXIII (1957), nr. 10-12, p. 841-861; Oreste Trafali, „Chiesa Ortodoxa e riforma nei secoli XVI e XVII," estrato da *Religio*, XI (1935), pp. 1-38.

[9] Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Bisericii Româneşti şi a vieţii religioase a românilor*, Bucureşti , 1929, p. 306; Ion Dianu, „Mitropolitul Varlaam ctitor de scriere şi de carte românească," în *Glasul Bisericii*, XL (1981), nr. 1-2, p. 90

cu moaştele Sfântului Ioan cel Nou, când racla s-ar fi îngreuiat şi nu s-a lăsat mutată de teama cazacilor care ameninţau cetatea. E greu de primit o astfel de opinie, deoarece Petru nu era la Kiev, ci făcea parte din oştirea hatmanului Hotkievici. După lupta de la Hotin (1621) Petru Movilă ştia, din constatările proprii, că armatele căzăceşti nu putuseră să treacă râul Suceava din pricina puhoaielor. Acest fapt Petru îl apreciase ca o minune dumnezeiască. De ce minunea se întâmplase la Suceviţa şi nu la Suceava, unde se aflau moaştele, marele istoric N. Iorga nu ne spune. Se pare că este la mijloc o confuzie după cum se va vedea din misiunea pe care Varlaam o îndeplineşte la Kiev în 1629, când Petru era arhimandrit şi conducătorul Lavrei Pecerska.

Misiunile cu caracter diplomatic şi cultural întreprinse de Varlaam în spaţiul kievean

Prima misiune la Kiev din 1628

Prima misiune a lui Varlaam, ca împuternicit al lui Miron Barnovschi pe lângă Petru Movilă, la Kiev, şi la Ţarul Mihail Feodorovici, la Moscova a avut loc în anul 1628.

Această misiune urmărea două obiective. Varlaam ducea lui Petru Movilă un Octoih, în manuscris, de la mănăstirea Neamţ, pe care Petru probabil că îl ceruse, şi care avea să apară în tiparniţa de la Kiev în 1630. Cu acest prilej Arhimandritul Varlaam ducea lui Petru veste despre Miron Barnovschi, ruda sa, şi avea să se întoarcă cu alte veşti ce interesau pe voievod, în convorbirile particulare Varlaam va fi luai vorba şi despre minunea întâmplată la Suceava, în 1621, cu moaştele Sfântului Ioan cel Nou. În acelaşi timp avea să primească scrisori de recomandare de la Petru Movilă către Ţarul Mihail şi către Patriarhul Moscovei, ca astfel să i se poată uşura misiunea ce o avea de îndeplinit la Moscova.

Al doilea obiectiv urmărit de misiunea moldoveană era ca "să vadă ochii» ţarului, să-i capete bunăvoinţa ca să poată comanda la pictorii moscoviţi, vestiţi în arta iconografiei, câteva icoane pentru bisericile ridicate de Miron Barnovschi: Dragomirna, cu hramul Sfintei Treimi, Bârnova pe moşia lui Barnovschi lângă Iaşi, cu hramul Sfântul Gheorghe şi Sfântul Ioan cel Nou şi din Iaşi cu hramul Adormirea Maicii Domnului". Pentru a căpăta bunăvoinţa ţarului şi a-i arata preţuirea deosebită, Miron Barnovschi îi trimite în dar, moaştele Sfântului Iacov din Persia şi alte obiecte de preţ "ce s-au aflat în palatul nostru».

"Că noi, spune Miron Barnovschi în scrisoarea către Ţarul Mihail Feodorovici fiind în Hristos Dumnezeu, ţinând credinţa noastră ortodoxă şi aceasta păstrând-o întreagă şi ne..., urmând părinţilor noştri de demult şi străbunilor şi celor drept credincioşi, care au fost în ţara noastră a Moldovei,

luptători ai adevăratei ortodoxii, prea luminații Domni, care în semnul dreptei lor credințe în Hristos Dumnezeu au umplut toată țara Moldovei cu prea frumoase mănăstiri și cu cinstite hramuri măritoare de Dumnezeu, de la, care prin nespusele sorți ale lui Dumnezeu a venit și la noi în țara Moldovei, unde am primit tronul patriei mele spre a fi țiitorul sceptrului domnesc și oblăduitor. În acestea urmând și noi Domnilor de demult care au fost înaintea noastră, vieții lor binecredincioase în Dumnezeu, cu binecuvântarea și ajutorul lui Dumnezeu am zidit cinstita mănăstire numită Dragomirna și în ea am clădit biserică de piatră în numele sfintei și de viață făcătoarei Treimi. Pe urmă încă alte două mănăstiri de piatră, le-am zidit din temelie, una în numele Adormirii prea Sfintei, cinstitei și prea binecuvântatei fecioare Măria, iar cealaltă în numele sfântului marelui mucenic Gheorghie și al lui Ioan cel Nou, care zace în țara noastră a Moldovei.

Văzând noi credința ortodoxă împodobită pretutindeni cu prea frumoase icoane din împărăția ta, și apărarea tuturor bisericilor lui Dumnezeu am îndrăznit și am trimis la bineiubitoarea ta împărăție pentru cinstitele și prea frumoasele icoane, ca să împlinești osârdia și dorința noastră și să fie și numele împărăției voastre ortodoxe înscris în pomelnicul acestor sfinte biserici ale noastre, în sfântul jertfelnic spre a se aminti binefacerea împărăției voastre; și cu bună voirea Tatălui și cu lucrarea Fiului și cu săvârșirea Sfântului Duh, a Treimii mai înainte fiind și neîmpărțită luminând și strălucind, trimitem împărăției tale aceste cinstite și sfinte moaște ale sfântului mucenic Iacov din Persia, care le trimit împărăteștii tale bine iubiri spre apărare și biruință asupra dușmanilor și altele ce s-au aflat în palatul nostru, prin Arhimandritul nostru Varlaam, 67 și prin sluga noastră credincioasă Pavel Medelniceru cu oamenii săi. Pe ei i-am trimis cu această solie și rugare a noastră la împărăția ta cea mare"[10].

Delegația moldovenească condusă de Arhimandritul Varlaam se compunea din trei monahi: chelarul Teodosie, călugărul Teofan, ierodiaconul Pavel; din cinci mireni, din care doi dregători: medelnicerul Petru a lui Ștefan Ureche și cămărașul Hristofor Larionov; din trei boieri: Teodor Ignatiev, Niculae Eustratiev și Paladie Ponovitoi. Această solie avea ceata de servitori necesară îngrijirii cailor și vehiculelor. Din Kiev, Petru Movilă le dăduse și un tălmaci[11].

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[10] Textul Scrisorii lui Miron Barnovschi către Țarul Mihail Feodorovici este preluat din Pr. Constantin Nonea, „Legăturile Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev și Moscova," în *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, 10-12 (1957), p. 810.

[11] Dragomir, Silviu. „Contribuții la relațiile Bisericii Române cu Rusia în veacul al XVII-lea," în *Analele Academiei Romane*, *secția istorica* II (1912), p. 123.

Ca scrisori de recomandare către Ţarul Mihail şi către Patriarhul Filaret, solia avea cu sine: o scrisoare către ţar de la Miron Barnovschi, o scrisoare către patriarh tot de la Miron Barnovschi, o scrisoare de la Mitropolitul Iov Boreţchi către ţar (care desigur o căpătase prin intervenţia lui Petru Movilă), o scrisoare către Patriarh de la Mitropolitul Moldovei Anastasie Crimca, o scrisoare către Ţar şi Patriarh, de la Petru Movilă, conducătorul Lavrei Pecersca; o scrisoare către logofătul Efrim Telepnev din partea lui Miron Barnovschi. Din mulţimea scrisorilor de recomandare, cum şi din greutatea persoanelor ce le semnau, se vede ce importanţă mare se dădea soliei ca ea să-şi ajungă scopul[12].

Delegaţia a plecat de la Suceava în ziua de 13 decembrie 1628, şi după ce a trecut prin Kiev de unde s-a înarmat cu scrisori şi tălmaci a ajuns la Putivlia, locul unde a trebuit să-şi spună scopul vizitei, la Moscova. Cneazul de la Putivlia a înştiinţat pe ţar, prin biroul ambasadorilor din Moscova, despre solia din Moldova şi despre însărcinarea ce o avea, propunând să fie primită. Procedeul acesta se aplica tuturor misiunilor străine, urmărindu-se de a opri posibilitatea de spionaj[13]. Ţarul a acceptat să primească solia, care a ajuns la Moscova în februarie 1629. Aici a fost supusă unui nou interogator la biroul ambasadorilor, după care i s-a fixat primirea la ţar în ziua de 4 martie[14].

Varlaam a prezentat ţarului scrisorile de recomandare şi darurile din partea lui Miron Barnovschi. La rândul său, ţarul a miluit cu daruri pe membrii delegaţiei cu obiecte, după rangul fiecăruia. I s-a permis lui Varlaam să trateze cu pictorii moscoviţi angajarea icoanelor. Cum Varlaam dorea să se întoarcă în ţara cu icoanele comandate, iar lucrul acestora cerea mai mult timp, el a trebuit să elibereze pe ceilalţi tovarăşi spre casă, în ziua de 21 aprilie, el rămânând cu ierodiaconul Petru şi cu doi servitori să aştepte în Moscova până ce pictorii îi vor fi executat comanda. De oarece Varlaam nuşi luase bani suficienţi, el intervenise la cneazul de la Putivlia să permită venirea la Moscova a unor împuterniciţi moldoveni, care îi aduceau bani pentru trebuinţele ce le avea de îndeplinit: cumpărarea de icoane şi alte obiecte[15].

Pictorii moscoviţi care au angajat lucrarea icoanelor erau Isidor Pospeev şi Bojen Naprudnăi[16]. Indicaţiile asupra compoziţiei iconografice au fost date de Varlaam, după un model văzut şi indicat de dânsul. Pictorii au executat modelul întocmai, dar când să predea lucrarea lui Varlaam,

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[12] Pr. Constantin Nonea , *Legăturile Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev şi Moscova*, p. 810.
[13] *Ibidem,* p. 811.
[14] *Ibidem,* p. 812.
[15] Z. M. Augustin Pop, „Viaţă Mitropolitului Varlaam al Moldovei, p. 756-757.
[16] Z. M. Augustin Pop, „Viaţă Mitropolitului Varlaam al Moldovei", p. 756-757.

Patriarhul Filaret, care avea altă părere despre iconografie, s-a opus. El a găsit că ţinuta era necuviincioasă. Varlaam, deşi a plătit costul comenzii, a lăsat icoanele la Moscova şi a plecat spre casă la 29 decembrie 1629, după un an de la plecarea lui de la Suceava. Deocamdată misiunea lui nu-şi ajungea scopul. Se întorsese acasă cu mâinile goale, cu bani cheltuiţi şi cu atâta timp pierdut în zadar. Singura lui consolare era că văzuse lucruri interesante la Moscova"[17].

În ţară, în lipsa lui, se schimbaseră multe lucruri. Miron Barnovschi nu mai era pe tronul Moldovei şi nici Anastasie Crimca pe scaunul mitropolitan. Arhimandritul Varlaam nu mai avea cui să dea socoteală de nereuşita misiunii lui. Cei care îi încredinţaseră scrisori de recomandare nu mai aveau nici o putere la cârmuirea ţării. Icoanele totuşi aveau să fie reclamate de la Moscova, mai târziu, tot de Varlaam, dar cu mijlocirea Domnitorului Vasile Lupu.

La 23 septembrie 1632, Varlaam este hirotonit arhiereu, şi ridicat pe scaunul mitropolitan al Moldovei, rupând tradiţia succesiunii ce se practicase până atunci. „Valoarea lui personală depăşea cu mult pe ierarhii aflaţi în scaune la Rădăuţi, Huşi şi Roman. Cuvântul de salutare i-a fost ţinut de vestitul teolog grec Meletie Sirigul, marele dascăl al patriarhiei de Constantinopol,, duşman al calvinismului şi al lui Chiril Lucaris. De la păşirea pe treptele scaunului mitropolitan, Varlaam era înconjurat şi preţuit de bărbaţi cu renume în întreaga ortodoxie".[18]

Urcându-se pe tronul Moldovei Vasile Lupu, „domnitor cu pretenţii de basileu bizantin"[19], problema relaţiilor cu Kievul şi Moscova căpăta o perspectivă mai largă. Varlaam aminteşte lui Vasile Lupu de icoanele comandate şi plătite dar rămase la Moscova, de pe vremea lui Miron Barnovschi. Cum Vasile Lupu avea nevoie de meşter în arta iconografică pentru bisericile ridicate de el, reluă problema icoanelor, reclamându-le de la ţar.

A doua misiune la Moscova din 1636

În anul 1636, el trimite o delegaţie la Moscova, în frunte cu Paladie Ponovitoi, care fusese şi în prima delegaţie condusă de Varlaam. În

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[17] Pr. Constantin Nonea, *Legăturile Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev şi Moscova*, p. 811.

[18] Pr. Nicolae Şerbănescu, „La trei sute de ani de la moartea Mitropolitului Varlaam al Moldovei", în *Biserica Ortodoxa Română*, 1957 (10), p. 1020.

[19] Nicolae Iorga, „Vasile Lupu, ca urmator al imparatilor de Rasarit in tutelarea Patriarhiei de Constantinopol si a Bisericii Ortodoxe", în *Analele Academiei Române*", XXXVI (1913-1914) p. 217. Pr. Constantin Nonea, *Legăturile Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev şi Moscova*, p. 221.

scrisoarea de recomandare dată de Vasile Lupu către ţar, domnitorul Moldovei spune printre altele: "Noi care suntem în Hristos Dumnezeu binecredincioşi Vasile Vodă, cu mila lui Dumnezeu Domnul ţării moldoveneşti, ne închinăm prea marei Voastre împărăţii şi facem totodată cunoscut Majestăţii Voastre, căci suntem siliţi de Dumnezeu a trimite pe boierii noştri la Majestatea Voastră... Căci au rămas acolo în Moscova, în împărăţia Voastră, două icoane de la arhimandritul lui Vodă Bârnovschi, ce a fost mai înainte de noi Domnul acestei ţări, una a sfinţilor mucenici Gheorghe şi Ioan cel Nou jur împrejur cu martiriul lor, cealaltă a sfinţilor mucenici Procopie şi Mercur, asemenea "jitiile» lor împrejur, care au fost făcute şi pictate la demîndul împărăţiei Voastre de zugravul Nazarie şi plata i s-a dat toată în mână şi fiindcă nu le-am putut aduce, au rămas acolo în mâinile lui Nazarie; porunceşte, Ţarule, a se da acele icoane boierilor noştri, să le aducă la noi»"[20].

Pe lângă cei doi zugravi amintiţi în misiunea lui Varlaam apare un al treilea, Nazarie, la care rămăsese icoanele. Delegaţia, după ce îndeplineşte tot protocolul la Putivlia şi Moscova, este primită de ţar, care dă dispoziţie să se cerceteze afacerea în litigiu, cu icoanele. Zugravii sunt chemaţi la biroul ambasadorilor, recunoscând că au icoanele în posesia lor. Patriarhul Filaret chemă şi el pe pictorul Nazarie, căruia îi ceru socoteală, de felul nepotrivit în care executase lucrarea, deoarece pictase pe sfinţi şezând pe scaune. Pictorul i-a explicat că aşa i-a pretins Varlaam, care a văzut o icoană a Sfântul Dumitru din Tesalonic, în catedrala Maicii Domnului, impunându-o ca model. Vina nu o purta pictorul, ci gustul artistic al lui Varlaam. Atunci Patriarhul Filaret s-a învoit să dea icoanele, aşa cum erau ele pictate. Au intervenit însă alte persoane influente, care l-au determinat pe ţar să nu permită ca aceste icoane să fie trimise în Moldova. Motivul era hotărâtor. Deşi indicaţiile compoziţiei au fost date de Varlaam, deci îl priveau pe el, totuşi "acum la porunca noastră, spune ţarul, li s-a spus solilor tăi, că icoanele nu se pot trimite cu ei, fiind pictate necviincios», Solia întorcându-se şi de data asta fără icoane[21]. Ar fi fost interesant, dacă se permitea aducerea lor în ţară, să se fi putut constata ce gust artistic a avut Varlaam în materie de artă iconografică.

Moscova era prea atrăgătoare din punct de vedere al maeştrilor în arta plastică, ca să nu fie din nou solicitată pentru satisfacerea simţului artistic de astă dată al lui Vasile Lupu. O nouă solie condusă tot de Paladie Ponovitoi, în 1637, duce ţarului o scrisoare din partea Mitropolitului Varlaam, în care el nu mai aminteşte de icoanele în litigiu, ci roagă pe ţar să-l

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[20] Pr. Constantin Nonea, *Legăturile Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev şi Moscova*, p. 812. 70

[21] *Ibidem,* p. 813.

ajute cu bani, să poată tipări, pe limba românească, cartea Sfântului Calist "Cuvântările la sfânta Evanghelie, ca s-o citească preoţii în biserică spre învăţătură românilor credincioşi»[22].

Textul îl avea gata tradus, îi lipseau banii deoarece de haraciul datorat turcilor nu erau scutiţi "nici preoţii nici vlădicii». De data asta Varlaam nu se mai interesa de icoane, ci de tipărituri ba încă să le scoată în limba română, plan gândit pentru viitoarele opere „Carte românească de învăţătură" şi „Răspuns la Catehismul calvinesc"[23]. De acum înainte cu problemele de iconografie se va interesa însuşi Domnitorul Vasile Lupu, care va apela la ţarul Moscovei să-i trimită meşteri buni pentru pictarea - bisericii Trei Ierarhi, cum şi pentru primirea de meşteri moldoveni, la Moscova, unde aceştia aveau să picteze catapeteasma bisericii şi icoana răstignirii „după obiceiul nostru bisericesc"[24].

Misiunile trimise de Vasile Lupu reuşesc să capete bunăvoinţa ţarului, care trimite pe cei mai renumiţi pictori moscoviţi să execute pictura murală de la Trei Ierarhi. Cei dintâi pictori au fost Sidor Pospeev şi Iacob Gavrilov, la care s-au adăugat, mai târziu, Deico Iacovlev şi Proka Nichitin. Aşa de frumos au fost executate picturile la Trei Ierarhi, de către aceşti pictori, încât Paul de Alep, cronicarul Patriarhului Macarie putea să afirme "că nici în Moldova, nici în Ţara Românească, nici în ţara Cazacilor nu mai exista o biserică ce i s-ar putea asemăna, atât în ce priveşte picturile, cât şi în ce priveşte frumuseţea arhitectonică, încât uimeşte mintea de mirare"[25].

Legăturile personale ale Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Ţarul Mihail Feodorovici nu au fost întrerupte. Litigiul cu icoanele se stinsese de la sine, mai ales că vina o purta însuşi Mitropolitul. Ţarul îl răsplătise cu daruri, care poate întrecuseră, în valoare, costul icoanelor. Moscova fiind un mare oraş, bogat în mărfuri de tot felul, era natural să fie căutat de cei ce-l vizitaseră altădată.

Ţarul Mihail se arată ca un mare protector tuturor acelor ce-i cereau sprijinul. Dărnicia lui era copleşitoare. Varlaam cunoştea firea ţarului. De aceea el apelează la sprijinul ţarului, odată pentru un nepot al său Lupu Grigorie şi a doua oară pentru nefericitul Iorest, Mitropolitul Ardealului, alungat din scaun din pricina opunerii lui la calvinizarea preoţilor ortodocşi[26]. „Intervenţia pentru Lupul Grigorie era de fapt o intervenţie pentru interesele

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[22] *Ibidem.*

[23] Pr. Paul Mihail, „Circulaţia Cazaniei Mitropolitului Varlaam în Biserica Românească", în *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, 1957 (10-12), p. 822.

[24] Pr. Constantin Nonea, *Legăturile Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev şi Moscova*, p. 817. 71

[25] Pr. Scarlat Porcescu, „Locul Mitropolitului Varlaam în Biserica Ortodoxă şi în viaţă culturală a poporului român", p. 860.

[26] Z. M. Augustin Pop, „Viaţă Mitropolitului Varlaam al Moldovei", p. 743.

personale ale Mitropolitului. Dânsul avea trebuinţă de unele lucruri ce nu se găseau în ţară, dar la Moscova el le văzuse. Nepotul său era însărcinat să meargă să le cumpere. De aceea el cerea autorizaţia ţarului Mihail la 24 octombrie 1644, în felul următor: "Între cei mulţi şi nenumăraţi, care se refugiază cu o astfel de bunătate la prealuminata stăpânire a împărăţiei Voastre este (unul) şi acest nepot al nostru cu numele Lupu Grigorie, trimis de smerenia noastră pentru lucrurile noastre de lipsă în singur stăpânea împărăţiei Voastre mari să cumpere acelea pe care noi nu le găsim. De aceia mă închin cu această rugare şi aduc mulţumită împărăţiei Voastre mari şi pentru această aştern rugare, să aibă voie susnumitul nostru nepot Lupu al lui Grigorie a ne cumpăra lucrurile de lipsă din ţara ta mare împărătească, şi a se întoarce fără de întârziere"[27].

Cu urcarea pe tronul Moldovei a lui Vasile Lupu, „fire mândră, ambiţioasă şi cu o sensibilitate artistică rar întâlnită"[28], personalitatea lui Varlaam trece pe planul al doilea, punându-se în slujba domnitorului. Varlaam fusese preţuit şi promovat de Movileşti şi prin ei el îşi făcuse legăturile cu Kievul şi Moscova. Vasile Lupu, ca om realist, nu se poate dispensa de el în realizarea planurilor lui culturale măreţe. Vasile Lupu apare ca iniţiator şi realizator, dar sub aureola voievodală lucra mâna înţeleaptă a Mitropolitului Varlaam. De altfel Varlaam înţelegea să aibă acest rol de consilier în materie de cultură bisericească, dat fiind că Vasile Lupul era voliţional, încât "nul încăpea Moldova ca pre un om cu hirea înaltă şi împărătească mai mult decât domnească», după cum spune cronicarul Miron Costin[29]. Varlaam îl îndeamnă să cumpere tiparniţa, prin intermediul Mitropolitului Petru Movilă, căci el cunoştea câtă putere are cartea în apărarea curăţiei credinţii ortodoxe[30].

La intervenţia lui Vasile Lupu, Petru Movilă îi trimite material tipografic şi o misiune de patru profesori, în frunte cu Sofronie Pociaski rectorul colegiului din Kiev. Tipografia, cu caractere cirilice, era trimisă din Liov, unde Petru îşi avea un centru puternic de propagandă ortodoxă.

De altfel, prima carte tipărită în noua tiparniţă de la Trei Ierarhi era Cazania: „Carte românească de învăţătură Duminicele preste an şi la praznice împărăteşti". Această carte, ce se adresa preoţilor, apăru în 1643. A doua carte românească este „Cele Şapte Taine". Ea apăru în 1645, după o tălmăcire a lui Eustratie Logogofătul. A treia carte, tot cu caracter religios

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[27] Pr. Constantin Nonea, *Legăturile Mitropolitului Varlaam cu Bisericile Ortodoxe din Kiev şi Moscova*, p. 818

[28] Ioan I. Irimia, „Personalitatea religioasa a domnitorului Vasile Lupu", p. 580.

[29] Miron Costin, *Letopisetul Moldovei,* p. 124, apud D. Russo, „Varlaam al Moldovei, candidat la scaunul Patriarhiei ecumenice", în *Studii istorice greco-române*, I (1939) p. 231.

[30] G. Ştrempel, *Relaţii româno-ruse în lumina tiparului,* Bucureşti, 1956, p. 35.

este: „Cartea care se chiamă Răspunsul împotriva catehismului calvinesc, făcută de părintele Varlaam, Mitropolitul Sucevei şi Arhiereul ţării Moldovei" (Iaşi, 1645)[31].

Geneza acestui Răspuns este extrem de preţioasă.[32] Propaganda calvină, în Ardeal, se făcea cu tipărituri în limba română. Când Varlaam este trimis să negocieze pacea între Matei Basarab şi Vasile Lupu, dânsul găseşte la Udrişte Năsturel, cumnatul lui Matei Basarab, "o cărţulie mică, în limba noastră tipărită... care o am aflat plină de otravă de moarte sufletească». Varlaam şi Udrişte Năsturel, ca doi cărturari de seamă, vor fi analizat Catehismul calvinesc şi mijlocind adunarea, în sobor, a episcopilor din cele două ţări, aceştia condamnă conţinutul cărţii încriminate. Mitropolitul Varlaam îşi ia sarcina de a răsturna ereziile calvine, cu toată armătura scripturistică cuvenită, alcătuind „Răspunsul împotriva catehismului calvinesc". Opera aceasta este originală şi aparţine lui Varlaam. Ea prezintă importanţă nu mai din punct de vedere apologetic, dar şi al formei literare şi lexicului, deoarece autorul caută ca această carte să fie înţeleasă de toată românimea"[33].

Solia şi-a împlinit-o Varlaam, împăcând pe cei doi domnitori, care, ca preţ al păcii, au ridicat câte o biserică, Vasile Lupu restaurând din temelie biserica Stelea din Târgovişte iar Matei Basarab ridicând biserica din Soveja. Tot din timpul cât va fi tratat pacea, Varlaam a cunoscut efectul tipăriturilor lui Matei Basarab, în ce priveşte dreptul civil şi penal, după izvoarele bizantine. "Obiceiul pământului», nu mai putea satisface cerinţele unor state în plină dezvoltare. Vasile Lupu, poate la îndemnul lui Varlaam, tipări şi el o „Pravilă", cu titlul: „Carte românească de, învăţătură de la pravilele împărteşti şi de la alte giudeţe cu dizisa şi cu cheltuiala lui Vasile Voevodul şi Domnul Tării Moldovei den multe scripturi tălmăcită den limba ilenească pre limba românească"[34] (1646). Pravila lui Vodă Lupu avea ca izvoare, o colecţie de legiuiri bizantine dar şi o parte din opera lui Prosper Farinaccius, mare jurist italian, intitulată „Praxis et Theorice criminalis", tipărită la Lion în 1616 şi retipărită la Anvers în 1620. Nomocanoanele bizantine erau depăşite acum prin introducerea, măcar în parte, a jurisprudenţei apusene, ceea ce constituia un vădit progres[33].

Contribuţia Mitropolitului Varlaam la lucrările sinodului din Iaşi, din 1642, nu pot fi stabilite, deoarece ştiinţa teologică a lui Meletie Sirigul, ca şi a

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[31] Scarlat Porcescu, *Locul mitropolitului Varlaam în Biserica Ortodoxă şi în viaţa culturală a poporului român,* p. 852.

[32] Nicolae Iorga,*Vasile Lupu, ca urmator al împăraţilor de Răsărit în tutelarea Patriarhiei de Constantinopol şi a Bisericii Ortodoxe,* p. 226.

[33] *Ibidem,* p. 227.

[34] *Ibidem,* p. 856.

delegaţiei trimisă de Petru Movilă îl depăşeau. Cum era şi firesc el a stat alături de opiniile exprimate în scris de marele său protector Petru Movilă.

Concluzii

Biserica Creştin Ortodoxă a reuşit să se impună ca un liant între state, acțiunile ei subsumându-se principiului autonomiei şi respectării libertății individuale care concentrează însăşi esenţa religiei creştine, care lasă credinţa şi fiinţarea în spiritul creştinismului la latitudinea fiecăruia dintre oameni. Asumarea autentică a valorilor şi principiilor creştinismului nu se poate realiza decât din interior, ca urmare a unei adeziuni personale voluntare. Realizarea educaţiei religioase de tip creştin se va subordona astfel acestui principiu, urmărind nu să impună prin constrângere o anumită atitudine în raport cu divinitatea, ci să ajute elevul în realizarea unor clarificări interioare şi în opțiunea liberă pentru credința în tezele, valorile şi principiile pe care creştinismul le propune.

Decalogul creştin a reprezentat un cod etic şi moral care a fost folosit atât pentru a menţine dominaţia asupra anumitor categorii sociale, cât şi pentru fenomenul emancipării, consolidării structurilor democratice.[35]

[35] Adriana-Denisa Manea, „Patterns and moral values promoted through religious education," in *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences,* 58 (2019), p. 7-12.

„The Religious Education in the light of interstatal Orthodox Churches Relations,"
Astra Salvensis, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 97-109.

Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority

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Abstract. *According to data obtained from Romania census we can observe a tendency of a continuous increase in the evolution of the ethnic structure of Roma ethnic population, but a comparison with the results of complementary studies raises question signs regarding a change of an identity nature. For this reason, the paper analyses identity elements specific to Roma communities in Romania, presented in specialty litterature (linguistic, social, economic, educational and judicial elements) and resulted from an investigation based on questionnaired and on an interview focused on groups. The results show the fact that the belonging to a tribe is a main characteristic of Roma population. The ability to speak Romani is low; in Romania there are cases of entire communities of a Roma people which lost their language. Nowadays we can observe a trial to revive the Romani language through inter-cultural programs and the promotion of books and dictionaries. The economic profile of persons of a Roma ethnicity is discouraging, characterized by small incomes, of social assistance or by the performance of poorly paid activities which cannot guarantee a secure income. In the affirmation of a Roma ethnic identity cultural traditions are the ones that come first. The construction process of an identity is now centered on a cultural affirmation, on the mobilization of resources from the community, by encouraging and forming intellectual and political elite. A reconsideration of the Roma ethnics in the structure of the contemporary Romanian society must necessarily begin as a redefining of an identity realized by these ethnics.*

Keywords: *Roma minority, ethnicity, identity changes, Romania, 21st century.*

Introduction

One of the most recent aspects brought to the Romanian public attention is connected to the fact that during the last decades the Roma mirority has registered a fluctuant increase, fact which caused a difficulty of an exact establishment of its number and thus a difficulty in a national public politics prognosis for this ethnicity. According to the results of the 2011 census, the number of Roma ethnics from Romania is of 619.000persons, representing 3,2% of the total of the stable population[1]. According to the data published by NIS, in 2002 the number of Roma ethnics from Romania was of 535.000 persons - 2,5% of the total of the stable population[2]. According to 1992 census, there were 409.723 Roma ethnics in Romania, representing 1,8% of the total of the stable population[3]. Still, according to other statistics, the number of Roma ethnics from Romania would be a lot greater: the Institute of Research of Life

[1] National Institute of Statistics, *Romania in numbers*, Bucharest, Breviar Statistic, 2011.
[2] National Institute of Statistics, *Population and housing census,* vol. IV, „Ethical and confessional structure. Population according to ethnicity for the census of 1930-2002, on counties, 2002", www.insse.ro, accessed on 25.12.2020.
[3] http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate, accessed on 25.12.2020.

Quality estimated their number in 1998, between 1.452.700 and 1.588.552 (hetero-identified), from which from 922.465 to 1.002.381 (self-identified)[4]. The statistics of the World Bank estimate around 3 million, Amnesty International 2,2 million[5], and the European Commission between 1,8-2,5 million – fact which can show a massive ethnic solidarity and a conversion to a majority culture[6].

Problem Statement - Identity changes among romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority

In Romania, in most situations, the analyses approach regarding the Roma community has been and still is realized from an ethic perspective. Instruments of identity changes and measurement are mainly censing, for which affidavits are free. Still, official censes are not able to offer a real figure on the basis of an ethnic auto-identification. According to censes realized in Romania we can observe a tendency of continuous development in the evolution of an ethnical structure of the Roma population ethnicity, but a comparison with the results of complementary studies rises question marks regarding an ethnic identity change.

Purpose of the Study. Research Methods

The purpose of this study is the identification of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations that stand at the basis of person auto-identification of a Roma ethnicity. For this reason, we have proposed to analyze identity elements specific to the Roma community in Romania, elements which represent landmarks of an identity nature.

The research design contains methods of information collection: qualitative (study of texts and interviews) and quantitative (investigation based on questionnaires), methods of information processing: texts analyses (selection, synthesis and comparison) and the SPSS software, methods of research data interpretation: content qualitative analysis and outputs of the SPSS software, by using tables with frequencies and percentages, cross tables, charts and Pearson correlations. The study of texts and official documents facilitates the underlining in a general frame of the evolution of identity changes of Roma ethnics information regarding the history, the specific and the presents of romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority. An investigation based on a questionnaire brings a plus of objectivity, in the case of an identification of the present characteristic of the Roma community in Romania.

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[4] http://www.edrc.ro/resurse/rapoarte/Roma_of_Romania.pdf, accessed on 20.12.2012.

[5] I. Gavril, *What problems does the non-declaration of the Roma ethnicity raise in the census*, http://spunesitu.adevarul.ro, accessed on 23.11.2020.

[6] D. Sandu, *Roma Communities of Romania. A Map of Poverty Based on the PROROMI Survey*, Bucharest, World Bank, 2005, http://www.anr.gov.ro, accessed on 23.11.2020.

The analysis of the sample obtained on a field study contains the following indicators: the county, in which the instruments were applied, the type of locality in which the subject lives, the gender and the age category in which the subject is framed. The sample of this research is composed of a number of 669 persons of a Roma ethnicity from 5 counties, in a proportion that is approximately equal to the urban environment 51,3 % and from the rural environment 47,7 %.

The analysis of the sample from the age category perspective, the subject of the study is a part of, allows us to observe a relatively balanced distribution, with an anticipated plus for the first age category. Thus, we have 42,9% persons of a Roma ethnicity in the 1st category, 16 – 25 years; 29,4% in the 2nd category, 26 – 35 years and 27,7% in the 3rd category, 36 – 46 years.

Findings. Identity elements specific to Roma minority

Landmarks and linguistic characteristics of Roma minority

A great scholar said that the true history of the gypsy race is found in the study of their languages. Thus we present a few documentary aspects of the gypsy language[7]:

- The first samples of gypsy language were published in England in the year 1547, but these were identified as samples of Egyptian language.

- Three studies that research the gypsy language dialects are very important in the demarche of establishing its origin: Alexandre Paspati (1870), „Études sur les Tchinghianés ou Bohémiens de l'Empire Ottoman", published in Constantinople; John Sampson (1926) „The Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales" and O Gjerdman and E. Ljunberg (1963), „The Language of the Swedish Coppersmith Gypsy". The authors identify in the gypsy language dialects specific to the geographic area from which they origin.

- 200 years ago it has been mentioned for the first time that the Romani language has an Indian origin, due to its resemblance to certain Indian speeches, and the trend lead by Sir Ralph Turner (in his paper „The position of Romani in Indo-Aryan", 1927) confirms through research this affirmation. Of course, the opponents of this trend, led by John Sampson, sustain that the Romani language has its origin in the North-West provinces, lands left in the 9th century by the nomad gypsies.

Over time, the writing standards for the Romani language were totally lacking. Nowadays we can observe a trial to revive the Romani language through inter-cultural programs and the promotion of books and dictionaries.

Starting from the premises that the language represents an essential identity element we have questioned the ability and the frequency of Roma ethnics to speak Romani in comparison, for example, to Romanian.

Table 1. The ability to communicate in Romanian

[7] F. Angus, *Gypsies*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2008, p. 17-29.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	Good	552	82.5	82.5
	medium	74	11.1	11.1
	low	25	3.7	3.7
	I don't have	18	2.7	2.7
Total		669	100.0	100.0

Table 2. The ability to speak Romani

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	good	177	26.5	26.5
	medium	90	13.5	13.5
	low	115	17.2	17.2
	I don't have	287	42.9	42.9
Total		669	669	100.0

Table 3. The ability to speak Romani in communities where Roma people represent the majority

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	another	87	36.9	36.9
	Romanian	33	14.0	14.0
	Romani	48	20.4	20.4
	another	68	28.8	28.8
Total		236	100.0	100.0

We can observe the fact that at the level of the sample questioned, the ability to speak Romani is low. The loss of the Romani language is not specific to some individual cases in which gypsies left their origin groups and were assimilated by neighboring communities, fact which can be observed in the answers of people leaning in communities where Roma people represent the majority. In Romania there are cases of entire communities of a Roma people which lost their language, but it is possible they kept their group awareness and life style.

Landmarks and social characteristics of Roma minority

The landmarks of the Roma population migrations are especially important and numerous in the establishing of the identity of this ethnicity. Most studies confirm the Asian origin of gypsies, the origin country being North India. Donald Kenrick considers that the gypsies departure from India was produced in the 3rd century A.C., when the shah Ardashir (224-241 A.C. conquered and transformed the North of India into a colony belonging to Persia (today's Iron)[8]. Relating from a chronicle written by the Arab Al Utbi

[8] D. Kenrick, *Rromii: from India to Mediterana. Rroma migration,* Bucharest, Alternative, 1998, p. 18-19.

during the 11th century A.C. – Marcel Courthiade considered that the departure of the old gypsies towards Europe, towards the West, had place at the beginning of the 11th century, on the 21th December, 1018.[9]

The gypsies' migration towards Europe was realized gradually during more centuries. Different documents confirm the presence of gypsies in different European regions[10]: the letter of the Constantinople patriarch, Gregorios II Kyprios, from the year 1283 speaks about taxes that should be taken from the so-called *gypsies*; during the year 1322 a Franciscan monk, Simon Simeonis from Crete described a group of gypsies that have had lodged in caves and Arabian long tents, near Candia (Iraklio); In Moldavia during the year 1385 we could find texts that confirmed the *gypsies slavery*; a document signed by the Venetian governor of Naupliei during the year 1397 speaks about privileges for *acingans*; between 1407-1416 we could find chronicles confirming the presence of gypsies in Germany; in 1521 The Swedish chronicle of Olai Petr relates about the ones that travel from one country to another and which are called *tater*; during the year 1526 D. Jao III from Portugal edicts the expulsion of *Ciganos* etc.

As we have already mentioned, the first documentary confirmation of gypsies on today's Romanian territory dates from the year 1385. At that moment the ruler for the Romanian Country, Dan the 1st, offered to the Tismana Monastery the possessions which first belonged to the Vodita Monastery. Among these goods, movable and immovable, we could find 40 dwellings belonging to *atigans*[11]. The establishment of gypsies in this geographical area was due to „the discovery of favorable economic niches brought from India or which were learnt in the Byzantine Empire: the processing of metals and wood and entertainment"[12].

The conclusion of these two studies represents essential characteristics of persons of a Roma ethnicity: the fact that they organized in groups when they travelled with the purpose of finding favorable economic in order to value their abilities. Always found at the border between art and the need for money, the gypsies' crafting and customs are the ones that offered a name to *gypsy tribes*. I. Chelcea recognized the following gypsy tribes[13]: *smiths, fiddlers, day laborers, flower sellers, boots cleaners, tinsmiths* (the crafting abilities of settled gypsies - fireplace builder), *wood crafters - shovelers, pot crafters*, smiths, duffers, gurbets, sieve makers, cauldron makers, bells makers, bear leaders (the occupations of nomad

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[9] M. Itu, J. Moleanu, *Indian culture and civilization,* Bucharest, Credis, 2001.

[10] J. P. Liegeois, *The Roma in Europe,* Bucharest, Bureau of the Europe Council, 2008, p.15-18.

[11] http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rromii_din_Rom%C3%A2nia#Istoric, accessed on 20.12.2020.

[12] Centre of Documenting and Information regarding Minorities from the South-East Europe (CEDIMR-SE), *Roma from România,* http://www.ardor.org.ro, accessed on 01.11.2020.

[13] I. Chelcea, *Roma from România (ethnographic monography)*, Bucharest, Central Institute of statistics, 1944, p. 37.

gypsies). To these we can add[14]: *Gabor* (Hungarian gypsies, which in the past dealt with tinsmithing, but nowadays also deal with ambulatory commerce with carpets, blankets and home objects), *cauldron makers* (their traditional crafting refers to the processing of tin, from which they make cauldrons, treys and kettles), *Lovars* (Hungarian gypsies which dealt in the past with horses trade).

The results showed by data from the realized investigation, show the fact that the belonging to a tribe is a main characteristic of Roma population. For the option another tribe we can mention the tribes specific to regions where the questionnaire was applied: miners, blacksmiths, horse dealers, fiddlers, builders and tismanar.

Table 4. The tribe Roma ethnics belong to

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Home builder	133	19,9	20,2	20,2
	Cauldron makers	104	15,5	15,8	35,9
	Miners	20	3,0	3,0	38,9
	Tinsmith	2	,3	,3	39,2
	Silk craftsmen	10	1,5	1,5	40,8
	Bear leaders	18	2,7	2,7	43,5
	Brick builders	95	14,2	14,4	57,9
	Gabor	6	,9	,9	58,8
	Another	136	20,3	20,6	79,4
	None	136	20,3	20,6	100,0
	Total	660	98,7	100,0	
Missing	System	9	1,3		
Total		669	100,0		

We have already stated that it is possible for Roma ethnics, even if they don't know or speak the Romani language, to have kept their group awareness and their life style. The belonging to a tribe is not a characteristic only of the newly formed communities of Roma ethnics. An ethnic affiliation is thus understood through its specificity - an affiliation to subgroups (tribes) - the pride of belonging to an ethnic subgroup, measured directly through a favorable attitude towards the Roma history and specific.

[14] D. Grigore, *Rrromanipen. Fundamentals of Roma identity*, course support, Timisoara, Parudimos Association, 2010.

Economic landmarks and characteristics of Roma minority

The type of community in which Roma people live has deep implications in their qualification. Thus for Roma people coming from compact and isolated communities we can find characteristics as the lack of a qualification or the presence of competencies in traditional crafting. As they move away from these communities, get qualifications, usually in modern crafting. In the study realized: 8,8% of Roma people questioned live in Roma communities, 26,5% live in communities where the Roma population represents the majority and 64,7 % of the persons interviewed live in communities where the Roma population represents the minority.

Table 5. The presence of Roma citizens at the community level

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	Roma community	59	8,8	8,8
	Community in which Roma citizens represent the majority	177	26,5	26,5
	Community in which Roma citizens represent the minority	433	64,7	64,7
Total		669	100,0	100,0

Socio-economic statistic data are rare, mainly as a result of the fact that many citizens of a Roma ethnicity are not registered as members of a specific group. The lack of these data is at the same time the result of a limited integration of gypsies into an official economy[15]. The political Romanian climate found in full changing lead to an evolution of traditional Roma occupations: 3,9% in 1992 and 10,3% in 1998. Researchers explain this reviving on the basis of the Romanian economic evolution 1992 until 1998. During this period many gypsies lost their jobs, being forced to return to their traditional occupations. Another explanation, offered by the same researcher, would be the accent that many organizations put on the reviving of traditional occupations.

The analysis of income sources of the persons interviewed underlines the fact that the state is the one that sustains this category of citizens. 34,8% of the income sources mentioned at the first choice and even 54,2% of the income sources specified for the second choice in the questionnaire can be framed in the social help category. Independent activities cannot be neglected as income sources, being mentioned in the first choice with a percentage of 6,1%. In this category chimney sweeping, iron collection and/or nonferrous materials collection and day laborers are the most important. I among these activities considered to be secondary we can mentions: small business, music, and house-keeping or construction labor. In the lack of other sources, the child support is

[15] E. Bakker, "The economic situation of Slovakia's minorities" in S. Trifunovska (ed.), *Minorities in Europe*. Croatia, Estonia and Slovakia, T.M.C. Asser Press, The Hague, 1999, p. 189-207.

followed by ambulatory clothing commerce, day labor and help received from parents in percentages that are in relatively close percentages, but also a series of less meaningful sources, as music.

Table 6. Categories of income sources

No.	Income sources	Number of choice 1st	2nd	3rd
1.	Salaries incomes	26,1	6,5	0
2.	Social help	34,8	54,2	0
3.	Agriculture	,8	2,8	42,9
4.	From abroad relatives	8,2	13,1	14,3
5.	From independent activities	6,1	3,7	0
6.	Other sources	21,9	19,6	42,9

Thus the economic profile of persons of a Roma ethnicity is discouraging, characterized by small incomes, of social assistance or by the performance of poorly paid activities which cannot guarantee a secure income.

Educational landmarks and characteristics of Roma minority

The education of ethnic minorities in Romania is defined in two general frameworks: policies for minorities and polices regarding access to education for disadvantaged groups.The main emphases of educational policies for Roma minority have resulted since 1990. The emphasis has shifted from Roma school mediators, Roma school inspectors, through positive discrimination measures aimed at ensuring special places for Roma students in the education system, or through the Second chance Program, to emphasize the importance of access to pre-school education. During the process of accession of Romania to the European Union, various European and international institutions have played a major role in defining the policies for Roma people. Multiannual Phare Programs had a special impact, mainly through the allocation of financial resources by the European Commission for social inclusion. Strictly monitored during the accession process, the Romanian Government has worked out a number of general policies for Roma people, which had important reference on education[16.]

National statistics shows that of those persons aged 91360 over 6 years following an educational level, 42148 (46,1%) were in the primary level, 43346 (46,1%) were in a secondary level, 2552 (2,8%) were in a vocational school and 2747 (3%) were in a high school. 0,6% are found in the higher education institutions of short or long duration[17].

Despite progress made in the last 10 years following affirmative action and otherinitiatives implemented in Romania, there remains a constant gap between the Roma and non-Roma in terms of achieved educational

[16] J.P. Liegeois, *Rroma in Europa*, Bucharest, Council of Europe Information Office, 2008.
[17] National Agency for Roma, http://www.anr.gov.ro/html/Statistici.html, accessed on 01.02.2021.

background. Therefore, from the people who declared themselves as Romanians, 14.8 % graduated higher education, and from those who declared themselves as Hungarians, 10.2 % graduated higher educat on, while within the group declaring themselves as Roma, the proportion is of just 0.7 % (3,397 Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority having higher education were identified in the census).[18] This situation is found also in our sample in terms of the level of education:

Table 7. Level of education

Level of education	Primary school	Secondary school	Compulsory education (10 classes)	High school)	Vocational school	Higher education
Procent	50,9%	36,1%	9,6%	2,1%	0,7%	0,4%

Education is the strongest tool in the hands of adults and children from marginalised groups which can raise them out of poverty, both socially and economically. In Romania, kindergarten enrolment rate for Roma children aged 3-6 years is way below that of the majority population, 37 % of Roma children vs. 77 % of non-Roma children[19]. Two out of ten Roma children do not attend school, and the most cited reason is the lack of financial resources[20]. One out of six Roma parents invokes ethnic discrimination as the reason for their children's weak school attendance[21].

Judicial landmarks and characteristics of of Roma minority

On Romanian territory gypsies were enslaved for 600 years, overpassing the number of slaves of another ethnicity (Tatar and even Romanians), so that in their usual language and even in the administrative one the word *slave* became synonym to *gypsy*. The idea that gypsies came from the South of the Danube as free people and slavery was a specially created institution for this population, during the Middle Ages - idea circulated by some gypsy militants - has no support, because the phenomenon of medieval slavery didn't characterize only the Romanian Countries, but is was present in all neighboring countries (the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Slave countries from the South of the Danube): „the slave represents a movable, it lacks judicial personality, it doesn't count in front of the law, he cannot confess, the slave's family could be

[18] Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian*, Citizens belonging to Roma Minority for 2015-2020*, p.7, https://ec.europa.eu, accessed on 01.02.2021.

[19] The World Bank, *Toward an equal start: closing the early learning gap for Roma children in Eastern Europe*, 2012, p. 12.

[20] A. M. Preoteasa, M. Şerban, D.Tarnovschi, *The Condition of Roma in Romania. Between Social Inclusion and Migration,* Bucharest, Soros Foundation România, 2011.

[21] L. Surdu, *Roma school participation, non-attendance and discrimination in Romania*, Bucharest, Vanemonde, 2011; cited in United Nations Economic and Social Council, Draft country programme document Romania, 2012, p. 3-4.

spread between more owners, the owner could sell the husband or the child to another owner. The Administration controlled this population".[22]

During the second half of the 18th century a change of authorities' politics concerning gypsies took place, due to new Enlightenment and uniformist vision from Vienna. We have to underline the fact the gypsies' abolition of slavery act, emitted by the emperor Josef the 2nd . Especially during this period, but also during the following century imperial authorities lead a politics of ethnic assimilation of gypsies. These were forbidden from living in temporary establishments, from speaking their language and from using their traditional clothing, to circulate freely from one shire to another (thus introducing for this purpose the use of passports), to own horses and wagons, for men (over the age of 16) the obligation to follow a military stage is introduced, and for children the obligation to follow school laic and religious courses; land owner have the obligation to offer them to gypsies lads for them to cultivate, most of them practicing agriculture.

Enslavement was followed by a project of settlement, by offering judicial and social conditions and even occupational similar to peasants that represented the majority of the country citizens. But this project had been compromised by the Rural law of the ruler Al. I. Cuza from 1864: the landlords tried to drive gypsies away from their lands, where authorities tried until 1850, to settle them.

The effects of state politics with a racist character during the Second World War and the episode of Transnistria deportations, contributed to the consolidation of mistrust and violence of gypsies towards authorities. The use of statistic and evidence bureaucratic resources of the population in the context of this collective trauma, is a cause that needs to be mentioned for the gypsies' reticence towards the official assuming of the gypsy ethnicity.

The minority assimilation politics, of socio-cultural and economic uniformity and of literation of literacy assumed by the communist regime, the cultural and economic effects of globalization and of politics of adhesion and European integration associated with the re-instauration of democracy, the economic difficulties and the difficult access to quality education and to social services for the poor population, the persistence of racism towards gypsies brought their contribution to the dissolution of the Romanian gypsy community identity.

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[22] http://www.adevarul.ro/interviurile_2_plus_1/Viorel_Achim-_Marea_migratie_a_tiganilor_abia_incepe_0_334166865.html, accessed în 2.12.2020.

The word *gypsy* is still keeping, in the Romanian collective thinking and in the Romanian language, the profound pejorative sense, determining and being determined by the negative social representation of gypsies. The following sayings are used even nowadays: *The gypsy will remain gypsy until the Easter day*, *When the gypsy become emperor he hanged his father*, *The wicker is not a tree as the gypsy is not human*, *The wicker is a barrel wood, not the gypsy a leading man*, *The gypsy is not human until he steels*, *When the gypsy reached the shore, he drowned' and many others*. Besides the says mentioned expressions from the current vocabulary are also used, as for example: *Begging like a gypsy*, *Fighting at the opening of the tent*, *Fighting like gypsies*, *Fighting as being in front of the tent opening*.

In this context, an interesting aspect for the study of the Roma community is the relation of its members to the community; the trust degree and the relating with other persons from the same town or with the institutions of the state. According to correlations, the level of education cannot be connected to the manner in which this appreciates the relation with the family members, with neighbors, with the people from the community and the representatives of the state institutions.

Table 8. Correlation education level – relating level

		The education level graduated	How do they appreciate relations with the family members	How do they appreciate relations with neighbors	How do they appreciate relations with the inhabitants of the same town	How do they appreciate relations with the personnel of the state institutions
How do they appreciate relations with the family members	Pearson correlation	1	,013	-,025	-,015	-,073
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,808	,635	,771	,167
	N	368	367	367	366	362

We can observe on the basis of the correlative study that persons with the ability to relate transfer these abilities in the interaction with the family, with the neighbors and with other people from the community and with the representatives of the state institutions. Roma ethnics found in relations with the people from their community are also found in good relations with their neighbors (a significant strong correlation of 0,615) and with the representatives of the state institutions (a significant strong correlation of 0, 696). On the other side Roma ethnics that don't relate very well with other

people from their community have problems with their neighbors and with the representatives of the state institutions.

Conclusions

The history of Roma ethnics from Romania, especially after the Second World War, during the communist period and even in the context of its disappearance and the liberalization of people circulation towards the Occident bring its contribution in the establishing of the present distribution. The reticence towards the assuming of an ethnic identity in the case of partially assimilated gypsies, the spirit of independence of small Roma communities, where these still survive, of segregation towards other communities, derives from the historical circumstances presented. The economic difficulties and the difficult access to quality education and to social services for the poor population, the persistence of racism, characteristics presented in todays' Romanian society bring their contribution to the dissolution of the ethnic identity of the Roma community in Romania.

All the characteristics presented in this paper are mainly the consequence of extrinsic demarches provoked by history, by the social, the economic, politics and the judicial, which had as purposes the expulsion of Roma ethnics or their ignoring or their assimilation. The particular characteristics are the situations in which we can speak about real actions of empowerment of Roma ethnics for a socio-economic affirmation and adaptions, with attention and respect for the ethnic unity and integrity

We may state that the Roma community was formed due to cultural traditions but also due to external factors as discrimination and marginalization which confirm the fact that the identity is a game of auto-identifications and hetero-identifications. The extrinsic and intrinsic resorts that stand at the basis of the auto-identification of persons of a Roma ethnicity intertwined. Today it seems that in the case of Roma ethnics identity doesn't represent a declarative action, as the frequent use of the Romani language, but more a group awareness and a life style. An ethnic affiliation is more understood through specificity - the affiliation to subgroups (tribes) - the pride of belonging to an ethnic subgroup with traditions and customs. The construction of an identity is centered today on a cultural affirmation, through the mobilization of resources from the community, through the encouragement and the construction of intellectual and political elite.

The purpose presented of an identity construction of a Roma ethnicity (with a noble purpose) is to raise the statue of a community member from the *Roma* one (a term with pejorative connotations) to the *Romani*, symbolical speaking from *slave* to an equal status with any citizen of a country, by keeping the right to auto-identify as a member of the gypsy community. We also have to remember in this context the word *Romani* as a common name given to all

gypsies in the world[23]. *Romani* is an old word of the Romani language, used for the belonging to a Roma ethnic community: „Romani had a great emperor, a Romani. He was our prince. He was our pad shah. The Romani people lived then all in one country in a good vilayet. The name of this vilayet was Sindh… this was a clean country (beautiful). You could find there a lot of happiness and joy. Everyone lived ok there."[24]- a fragment of the Roma history in the vision of a chimney sweeper from Bulgaria, Ali Ceauşev, a reflection of his wish to identify with a people, with a strong ruler.

[23] M. Block, *Moeurs et coutumes des Tziganes*, Paris, Payot, 1936, p. 43.
[24] G. Sarău, *Rromii, India şi limba rromani,* Bucharest, Kriterion, 1998, p. 14 .

„Identity Changes of Roma Ethnic Population. The Case of Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority", *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 18, p. 111-123.

Biserică şi Naţiune la Românii Ardeleni în a Doua Jumătate a Sec. XIX şi la Începutul Secolului XX

Church and Nation in the Transylvanian Romanians in the Second Half of the 18th and Early 20th Centuries

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Abstract. *The issue of national identity in Transylvania is commonly overwhelmed irrespective of the historical period traversed in treating different historical, religious, political documents or artistic-literary works. The political life in the 19th century in Transylvania was often intersected by the church's vision, all the more so since the church was a cohesion factor, as well as the affirmation of the Romanian nation, as Romanians did not have other institutions around to which the ethnic group is solidarity. Therefore, the establishment of the Romanian autonomous metropolitans in Transylvania marked the victory in expressing the identity of the nation and country of the Romanians of the lives of this historical region. The movement of emancipation of Transylvanian Romanians, the development of national consciousness will materialize in the events that marked the large union in 1918.*

Keywords: *Church, nation, patriotical feeling, political life, Romanians.*

Biserica românească din Transilvania sfârşitului de secol XIX-scop şi modalităţi de exprimare

Apariţia unor biserici naţionale autonome în Transilvania, ca de altfel în întreg spaţiul din componenţa Imperiului habsburgic, a fost posibilă datorită unui curent favorabil dezvoltat încă din secolul al XVIII-lea. Biserica a devenit factorul de coeziune, dar şi de afirmare a naţiunii române în condiţiile în care românii nu aveau alte instituţii în jurul cărora să-şi realizeze solidaritatea grupului etnic. Ca urmare elita ecleziastică şi cea laică şi-au unit forţele în vederea restaurării sau creării unei mitropolii autonome care să unească toate eparhiile româneşti aflate sub jurisdicţie străină.[1] În scopul realizării acestui obiectiv a fost lansată ideea unificării celor două biserici româneşti, proiect care la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea a căzut treptat în desuetitudine, în special odată cu ascensiunea episcopului ortodox al Transilvaniei, Andrei Şaguna, dar şi ca urmare a suspendării episcopului Ioan Lemeni[2].

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[1] Nicolae Bocşan, *„Naţiune şi confesiune în Transilvania în secolul al XIX-lea: cazul mitropoliei române,"* în Nicolae Bocşan, Ioan Lumperdean, Ion Aurel Pop, coord., *Etnie şi confesiune în Transilvania în secolele XIII-XIX*, Oradea, Editura Universităţii din Oradea, Oradea, 1994, p. 110-112.

[2] I*bidem,* p.149.

În condiţiile în care celelalte postulate ale naţiunii române nu s-au putut concretiza după revoluţia de la 1848, toate eforturile fruntaşilor mişcării naţionale s-au concentrat spre obţinerea statutului mitropolitan pentru Biserica românească din Transilvania. Dezideratul lor era crearea unei singure mitropolii pentru toţi românii din Principat, potrivit dorinţei înscrise de altfel în actul programatic al revoluţiei paşoptiste, în chiar punctul doi. Crearea unei provincii mitropolitane autonome era cu atât mai importantă cu cât în Imperiul habsburgic bisericile şi instituţiile religioase se puneau în slujba bisericilor naţionale.[3] Cu revoluţia a fost inaugurată totodată şi ultima etapă pe calea restaurării mitropoliei naţionale.[4]

La începutul anului 1850 schimbul epistolar între Oradea, Strigoniu şi Viena avea să fie decisiv în procesul de formare a provinciei mitropolitane româneşti şi s-a finalizat cu obţinerea unei soluţii favorabile pentru cauza Bisericii Române Unite din Transilvania.[5] Astfel, după consultarea factorului politic şi a celui ecleziastic, s-a dispus crearea unei comisii care să discute formarea unor noi dieceze. Episcopul de Oradea Vasile Erdely a fost însărcinat în 11 martie 1850 cu conducerea comisiei ai cărei participanţi proveneau din toate eparhiile din care se preconiza a se desprinde parohii pentru formarea noilor dieceze.[6]

Comisia validată de Strigoniu şi Viena şi-a început dezbaterile în 10 iunie 1850 la Oradea, în palatul episcopal.[7] Discuţiile din cadrul comisiei au scos în evidenţă importanţa Unirii înfăptuite în 1699 pentru naţiunea română şi s-a proclamat încă o dată loialitatea faţă de monarhia austriacă. Au fost discutate situaţiile diecezelor de Făgăraş şi Muncaci, posibilitatea desprinderii unor parohii, analizându-se dimensiunile acestora prin numărul de credincioşi greco-catolici.

Rezultatul a trei zile de discuţii a fost schiţarea unui plan a noii provincii mitropolitane, formată din 4 episcopii. Ca întindere prima episcopie era cea de Făgăraş, alcătuită din 1035 de parohii şi 476.539 de suflete, după care urma dieceza de Baia Mare cu 302 paroii şi 277.357 de suflete, apoi dieceza de Oradea cu 227 parohii şi 142.092 de suflete şi dieceza de Lugoj cu 90 de parohii şi 42.977 de suflete.[8]

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[3] *Ibidem,* p.110.

[4] *Ibidem,* p.143.

[5] Ioana Mihaela Bonda, *Mitropolia Română Unită în timpul păstoririi lui Alexandru Şterca Şuluţiu (1853-1867),* Cluj-Napoca, Presa universitară clujeană, 2008, p. 55.

[6] *Ibidem.*

[7] *Ibidem.*

[8] Ioana Mihaela Bonda, *Mitropolia Română Unită în timpul păstoririi lui Alexandru Şterca Şuluţiu (1853-1867),* p. 58.

Discuţiile din cadrul comisiei au fost legate şi de educaţia şi instituţiile prin care aceasta se propaga, stipendiile oficialilor diecezani, dotarea bisericilor catedrale, întreţinerea reşedinţelor episcopale, situaţia fondurilor şi a fundaţiilor. Propunerea, lansată în 1848 în programul revoluţionar, ca românii să aibă o singură mitropolie la Alba Iulia condusă de un episcop ne-unit în persoana lui Andrei Şaguna, ar fi creat, în opinia episcopului Erdely, grave prejudicii cauzei Sfintei Uniri. În concluzie, episcopul de Oradea a susţinut importanţa coagulării tuturor forţelor în jurul planului de refacere a mitropoliei române unite de Alba Iulia, şi pentru obţinerea recunoaşterii acesteia de către Sfântul Scaun, prin canonizare solemnă.[9]

Odată cu trimiterea actelor conferinţei primatelui Scitowski, la 16 iunie 1850, Vasile Erdely a ataşat şi o documentaţie despre istoria religioasă a românilor, un scurt istoric al evoluţiei confesionale a tuturor românilor, pe care le-a realizat cu câteva zile înaintea desfăşurării întâlnirii dintre ierarhii români. Potrivit spuselor lui Erdely, organizarea Bisericii Române Unite era necesară în contextul în care ortodocşii din Bucovina, Transilvania şi Arad, lansau atacuri împotriva ei. Ofensiva ortodocşilor se folosea de mantia naţionalităţilor pentru a stârni agitaţii, subminând astfel Sfânta Unire. În asemenea condiţii, episcopul de Oradea solicita sprijinul Sfântului Scaun şi al împăratului pentru a restaura mitropolia de Alba Iulia, ce fusese creată prin acceptarea unirii.[10]

Susţinerea demersurilor episcopului de Oradea de către primatele maghiar Scitowski este reprezentată de o circulară adresată clerului român, prin care primatele şi-a exprimat sprijinul în faţa pericolului reprezentat de ortodocşi. Prin numirea românilor *romano-catolici*, circulara a stârnit proteste şi va duce la înaintarea unui memoriu Curţii de la Viena prin care acuzau ierarhul maghiar de uzurpare a drepturilor Bisericii Române Unite.[11]

Despre situaţia Bisericii Române Unite s-a discutat în cadrul Conferinţei de la Strigoniu desfăşurate între 25-31 august 1850 cu scopul de a evalua concret situaţia Bisericii Catolice din provinciile imperiului. A fost scos în evidenţă rolul malefic al episcopului ortodox Andrei Şaguna pentru a determina o grăbire a procedurilor pentru formarea noii provincii mitropolitane româneşti. Cu ocazia sinodului convocat în vederea alegerii episcopului de Făgăraş, întrunit la 18/30 septembrie 1850, reprezentanţii

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[9] *Ibidem,* p. 59.

[10] *Ibidem,* p. 60-61

[11] Octavian Bârlea, „Mitropolia Bisericii Române Unite proclamată la 1855 la Blaj," in Perspective, X (1987), no. 37-38, p. 228.

clerului au trimis o adresă împăratului prin care au fost reluate ideile comisiei de la Oradea din iunie 1850: restabilirea mitropoliei şi ierarhiei,supunerea acesteia direct Scaunului de la Roma, organizarea sinodului în fiecare an cu participarea atât a clericilor, cât şi a laicilor, în conformitate cu canoanele Bisericii Răsăritului, numirea cât mai grabnică a ierarhului şi cu ocazia jurământului acestuia, să-l împuternicească cu organizarea sinodului mixt, sprijin materia pentru ridicarea de şcoli, dar şi pentru îmbunătăţirea vieţii clerului.[12]

O nouă întâlnire pe tema mitropolie române unite a avut loc la Viena în 18 noiembrie 1850 cu participarea arhiepiscopului de Stigoniu, Ioan Scitowski, episcopului de Oradea , Vasile Erdely, a ministrului de interne, Alexander Bach, ministrului cultelor şi instrucţiunii, Leo Thun. Discuţiile au adus în prim-plan stabilirea reşedinţei mitropoliei, Erdely susţinând reactivarea vechii mitropolii cu titlul de Alba Iulia. După părerea sa un răspuns pozitiv la solicitarea românilor uniţi reprezenta o recunoaştere a loialităţii şi fidelităţii lor faţă de Casa de Austria. Primatele Ungariei a dat asigurări celor prezenţi că a trimis documentaţia ierarhilor români către Sfântul Scaun, precum şi propriile opinii referitoare la oportunitatea creării provinciei române unite cu condiţia menţinerii jurisdicţiei arhiepiscopului de Srigoniu asupra întregii provincii ecleziastice româneşti. Concluzia finală a fost necesitatea înfiinţării a două noi episcopii cu sediile la Gherla şi Lugoj şi, evident, reactivarea mitropoliei greco-catolice din Transilvania.

La 12 decembrie 1850 împăratul a decis ca mitropolia unită de Alba Iulia să fie „reactivată" şi să fie create două episcopii noi la Gherla şi Lugoj. Deoarece primatele Ungariei, Johannes Scitowski, a cerut papei să menţină autoritatea scaunului primaţial de la Strigoniu asupra diecezelor greco-catolice româneşti şi dreptul de a primi apelări de la scaunul mitropolitan român, Congregaţia de Propaganda Fide a cerut documentaţie suplimentară despre disciplina bisericii unite româneşti. Documentaţia a fost realizată e Congregaţia Afacerilor Ecleziastice Extraordinare, care a respins orice dependenţă a mitropoliei române de scaunul primaţial din Ungaria. Congregaţia a acordat primatului Ungariei titlul de delegat apostolic pentru credincioşii din provincia românească. Sfântul Scaun a hotărât înfiinţarea mitropoliei de Alba Iulia şi a lăsat pe seama viitoarei conferinţe episcopale româneşti să elaboreze proiectul de organizare a acesteia.[13]

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[12] Ioana Mihaela Bonda, *Mitropolia Română Unită în timpul păstoririi lui Alexandru Şterca Şuluţiu (1853-1867),* p. 62.

[13] Nicolae Bocşan, „Biserică şi stat la români," in *Istoria Transilvaniei, vol. III,* Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008, p. 533.

Tergiversarea adoptării hotărârii de canonizare a noii unităţi ecleziastice de către Sfântul Scaun este urmarea unei lipse acute de informaţii despre episcopatele greco-catolice româneşti, iar o altă cauză o reprezintă solicitarea primatelui Ungariei de a-şi menţine jurisdicţia asupra Bisericii Greco-Catolice din Transilvania. De asemenea, în timpul întocmirii documentaţiei s-a observat că lipseau din arhivele Romei chiar şi actele unirii Bisericii româneşti, acestea considerându-se că au rămas la Viena. Pentru elucidarea aspectelor mai puţin cunoscute, Sfântul Scaun s-a adresat Vienei care, prin ministrul cultelor, Leo Thun şi arhiepiscopul de Strigoniu, Scitowski, a creat o comisie încredinţată spre organizare episcopului de Oradea Vasile Erdely. Comisia era formată, la fel ca cea din vara anului 1850, din reprezentanţii tuturor diecezelor implicate. Din partea Făgăraşului a participat Alexandru Şterca Şuluţiu care, înainte de a porni spre Oradea a cerut informaţii despre Alba Iulia, oraşul propus a deveni centrul noii episcopii, ceea ce dovedeşte că Şuluţiu spera în reactivarea vechii mitropolii, cu sediul la Alba Iulia. Documentaţia rezultată în urma discuţiilor demarate cu întârziere la 20 octombrie 1851, a fost transmisă Romei respectându-se toată ierarhia, Strigoniu-Viena-Sfântul Scaun. Nunţiul vienez Michele Viale Prela şi-a exprimat convingerea potrivit căreia crearea arhiepiscopiei ar da o mai mare autoritate şi strălucire episcopului de Făgăraş. [14]

La sfârşitul anului 1852, secretarul de stat i-a solicitat secretarului Congregaţiei de Propaganda Fide să trimită cât mai urgent documentele deţinute Congregaţiei Afacerilor Ecleziastice Extraordinare pentru soluţionarea dosarului mitropoliei române unite, astfel încât acesta să poată fi canonizată. O nouă intervenţie pentru accelerarea soluţionării dosarului mitropoliei a venit şi la 30 noiembrie 1853 dinspre episcopul de Oradea, care a trimis o nouă scrisoare nunţiului, rugându-l să susţină cauza Bisericii Române Unite în faţa Sfântului Scaun.

Pontiful Pius al IX-lea a însărcinat Congregaţiei de Propaganda Fide întocmirea documentaţiei în vederea pregătirii decretului de înfiinţare a mitropoliei greco-catolice româneşti care, după centralizarea referinţelor, notelor, relatărilor provenite de la Viena, Strigoniu, Oradea, Blaj, precum şi cele existente în arhivele romane, au fost înaintate Congregaţiei Afacerilor Ecleziastice Extraordinare pentru realizarea unui raport.

Cea mai importantă parte a raportului a constituit-o imaginea Bisericii Române Unite desprinsă din notele date de arhiepiscopia

[14] Ioana Mihaela Bonda, *Mitropolia Română Unită în timpul păstoririi lui Alexandru Şterca Şuluţiu (1853-1867),* p. 72.

Strigoniului. Aici se opina de către Scitowki că românii incitaţi de Andrei Şaguna ar fi ucis sute de preoţi uniţi şi au distrus sute de biserici greco-catolice în timpul revoluţiei de la 1848, împăratul fiind îndreptăţit să ceară, prin reprezentantul său la Roma, crearea unei noi provincii ecleziastice de rit grec, prin restaurarea arhiepiscopatului de Alba Iulia şi crearea a două noi episcopii la Gherla şi la Lugoj, obligându-se să la doteze corespunzător. În raport era de asemenea subliniat punctul de vedere al primatului Ungariei, care sprijinea crearea provinciei româneşti cu menţinerea influenţei sale asupra acesteia.[15]

Raportul se încheia cu reluarea sub forma unor întrebări a aspectelor dezbătute, problemele semnalate de către membrii Congregaţiei de Propaganda Fide fiind în număr de 14. Ultima chestiune propusă spre dezbatere viza posibilele prevederi ce puteau fi adoptate pentru toate Bisericile Unite din Imperiul austriac în vederea conservării Sfintei Uniri.

O comisie specială formată din 5 cardinali şi doi monseniori, întrunită la 15 martie 1853, a fost chemată să se pronunţe asupra dubiilor formulate în raportul Congregaţiei Afacerilor Extraordinare. Dacă pe diverse probleme ale bisericilor greco-catolice din imperiu voturile au fost diferite, pentru înfiinţarea mitropoliei de Alba Iulia toţi participanţii au subscris, propunându-se sprijinirea românilor de către guvern. Modul de alegere al mitropolitului şi episcopilor din provincia mitropolitană din Transilvania era cea veche, adică prezentarea a trei candidaţi împăratului. Între altele, cardinalii au decis ca pentru întărirea şi conservarea Sfintei Uniri, să se impună măsuri valabile pentru toţi uniţii din imperiu, precum trimiterea la fiecare 4 ani a unor relatări din fiecare dieceză Congregaţiei de Propaganda Fide.[16] Rezultatul întrunirii comisiei nesoluţionând problemele legate de crearea provinciei mitropolitane româneşti, secretarul de stat Antonelli a trimis dosarul mitropoliei nunţiului Michele Viali Prela. Prela a întreprins noi cercetări şi a trimis o nouă relatare la 25 septembrie 1853 pronunţându-se pentru înfiinţarea mitropoliei, iar organizarea ei să fie dezbătută într-un sinod de către ierarhii noii provincii.

O ultimă solicitare de informaţii referitoare la disciplina orientală şi la modul de organizare a unei provincii mitropolitane catolice de rit bizantin, a fost făcută de către prelaţii romani profesorului slav Matthaeus Topalovic.[17] Profesorul a subliniat importanţa menţinerii ritului şi disciplinei

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[15] *Ibidem,* p. 75.

[16] *Ibidem,* p. 82.

[17] Matthaeus Topolocic era profesor de drept canonic la seminarul episcopal al diecezei Bosnensis et Syrmiensis, ASV, AA:EE:SS:, *Carte d'^Austria, vol. 6, pos.1,*disp.20, ff.1.

bizantine în noua provincie, a căror formă de manifestare era şi modul de alegere al mitropolitului şi a episcopilor sufragani.

Având în vedere informaţiile primite şi considerându-le suficiente, papa Pius al IX-lea, prin bula *Ecclesiam Christi ex omni lingua*, din 26 noiembrie 1853, a înfiinţat arhiepiscopia şi mitropolia de Alba Iulia şi Făgăraş cu trei episcopii sufragane, la Oradea, Lugoj. În consistoriul din 16 noiembrie 1854 papa a anunţat numele lui Alexandru Şterca Şuluţiu ca arhiepiscop şi mitropolit. Înfiinţarea noii provincii greco-catolice române s-a datorat conjuncturii politice create prin izbucnirea crizei orientale din 1853, urmată de ocupaţia principatelor române de armatele ruseşti şi de propaganda ortodoxă ce s-a făcut cu această ocazie, ceea ce a crescut valoarea şi importanţa mitropoliei greco-catolice în zona de întâlnire a catolicismului cu ortodoxia răsăriteană.[18]

Îndelungatele demersuri ale prelaţilor români uniţi au avut succes şi reprezintă o realizare importantă pentru întreaga naţiune, concretizându-se în obţinerea statutului de mitropolie, dar şi în obţinerea independenţei faţă de arhiepiscopia maghiară.

Dacă demersurile făcute pentru înfiinţarea mitropoliei greco-catolice au fost reprezentate de numeroase acţiuni şi activităţi diplomatice, politice sau administrative, în cazul bisericii ortodoxe, care îşi dorea la fel de mult înfiinţarea unei mitropolii, lucrurile au evoluat puţin diferit, dar în aceeaşi manieră a întrunirilor înalţilor prelaţi şi a nenumăratelor apeluri către forurile decizionale ale imperiului.

Mitropolia ortodoxă a înregistrat un parcurs strâns legat de biserica sârbească care prin opoziţia patriarhului a întârziat să apară ca instituţie autonomă românească. Dorinţa de subordonare a viitoarei mitropolii ortodoxe transilvănene faţă de patriarhia sârbă şi dorinţa acesteia de a înfiinţa o mitropolie pentru Bucovina, cu sinod la Viena, s-au transformat într-un eşec al episcopului Şaguna în realizarea unei mitropolii ortodoxe autonome. La acestea se adaugă şi obstacolele ridicate de ministrul cultelor Leo Thun şi de cercurile politice din Transilvania.

Liberalizarea regimului politic din Imperiul Austriac a favorizat înfiinţarea mitropoliei ortodoxe din Transilvania cercurile aulice reconsiderându-şi atitudinea faţă de români. Şi cercurile politice maghiare au susţinut înfiinţarea mitropoliei ortodoxe după încorporarea Voivodinei

[18] Nicolae Bocşan, *Biserică şi stat la români*, p.533-534.

Sârbeşti şi a Banatului Timişan în Regatul Ungariei, în 1860, cu scopul de a contracara opoziţia sârbilor din Ungaria.[19]

La conferinţa româno-sârbească de la Viena, din 1860, patriarhul Josif Rajacic a propus consolidarea ortodoxiei din Austria printr-o mai puternică centralizare a biserici sub autoritatea sa. În replică la această poziţie, la 21 august 1860, deputaţii români din Senatul imperial - Şaguna, Andrei Mocioni şi baronul bucovinean – au cerut împăratului să aprobe înfiinţarea unei mitropolii ortodoxe româneşti. De asemenea, sinodul episcopiei ortodoxe din Sibiu a cerut , în 26 octombrie 1860, înfiinţarea mitropoliei române printr-un decret imperial.[20] La solicitările menţionate împăratul a cerut ca interesele românilor ortodocşi să fie respectate, făcând posibilă înfiinţarea mitropoliei ortodoxe. Ministrul cultelor Leo Thun a cerut episcopului Andrei Şaguna să înceapă demersurile pentru înfiinţarea mitropoliei.

Prima reacţie a ierarhilor ortodocşi a fost refuzul de a participa la congresul bisericesc din 1862, convocat pentru ocuparea scaunului patriarhal, vacant în urma morţii lui Josif Rajacic. Astfel românii din diecezele Arad, Timişoara şi Vârşeţ au refuzat să trimită deputaţi. După această primă reacţie urmează, în 15martie 1862, cererea către împărat, din partea unei delegaţii reprezentative pentru toţi românii ortodocşi, de convocare a unui congres bisericesc, înfiinţarea mitropoliei româneşti şi separaţia de biserica sârbească. Răspunsul s-a lăsat aşteptat până în 1863, când Viena s-a hotărât să-i sprijine pe români în detrimentul sârbilor, ungurilor şi slovacilor. Rescriptul imperial din 25 iunie 1863 a deschis drumul înfiinţării mitropoliei ortodoxe româneşti, împăratul solicitând autorităţilor să facă propuneri în acest sens. Episcopul Andrei Şaguna a propus şi susţinut crearea unei singure mitropolii pentru toţi românii din imperiu cu cinci episcopii sufragane la Sibiu, Arad, Caransebeş, Timişoara şi Cluj.

Un alt pas spre înfiinţarea mitropoliei îl reprezintă legislaţia Dietei transilvane din 1863-1864 în care se recunosc bisericile româneşti ca recepte şi autonome şi egale cu celelalte religii recepte din Transilvania, fără diferenţe de naţionalitate.

Sinodul episcopal din Sibiu, întrunit în 22 marte 1864, a înaintat împăratului un memoriu în care a susţinut proiectul episcopului Şaguna de organizare a noii provincii ortodoxe. La congresul bisericesc de la

[19] *Ibidem.*
[20] *Ibidem.*

Karlowitz, aprobat de împărat pentru alegerea patriarhului sârb, delegaţii români au făcut o declaraţie de abţinere de la alegeri şi au proclamat separaţia bisericii româneşti de cea sârbească. Prin scrisoarea din 13 august 1864, adresată noului patriarh Samuil Masirevic, împăratul a recomandat sinodului episcopal să decidă în chestiunea separaţiei celor două biserici şi a înfiinţării mitropoliei româneşti.[21]

Sinodul din 26 august 1864 a aprobat înfiinţarea unei mitropolii pentru românii ortodocşi din Austria, separaţia lor de biserica sârbească, păstrându-se o legătură de coordonare printr-un sinod general româno-sârbesc. Patriarhul a dispensat episcopia Aradului de legătura ierarhică cu biserica sârbească şi i-a acordat dreptul de a se subordona viitoarei mitropolii româneşti.

La 24 decembrie 1864, prin scrisoarea autografă, împăratul Francisc Iosif I a aprobat înfiinţarea „mitropoliei românilor greco-orientali din Transilvania şi Ungaria", scoasă de sub jurisdicţia de la Karlowitz, numirea lui Andrei Şaguna ca mitropolit şi crearea unei noi episcopii ortodoxe, la Caransebeş.[22]

Înfiinţarea mitropoliilor româneşti din Transilvania după principiul naţionalităţii a constituit un pas spre construirea identităţii naţionale, dar la momentul înfiinţării lor au creat probleme de natură practică în raport cu provinciile bisericeşti din care s-au desprins. Autonomia bisericilor româneşti din Transilvania reprezintă şi o recunoaştere a drepturilor şi libertăţilor românilor, consideraţi, în sfârşit, egali, cel puţin din punct de vedere religios, cu ceilalţi locuitori ai imperiului. În acelaşi timp, se poate vorbi de manifestarea unui sentiment patriotic puternic, real al românilor transilvăneni, sentiment ce a condus la formarea conştiinţei naţionale.

Viaţa politică a românilor din Transilvania la sfârşitul secolului XIX şi începutul secolului XX

Evoluţia vieţii relgioase în Imperiul austriac şi în Transilvania este dublată de o evoluţie a vieţii politice cu însemnate repercursiuni asupra societăţii româneşti, dar şi a celorlalte naţionalităţi din imperiu. Evenimentul politic şi administrativ din anul 1867, înfiinţarea Austro-Ungariei, prin încoronarea împăratului ca rege al Ungariei, în ziua de 8 iunie

[21] Nicolae Bocşan, Ion Lumperdean şi Ion Aurel Pop, *Etnie şi confesiune în Transilvania (secolele XIII-XIX),* Editura Universităţ ii din Oradea, Oradea, 1994, p. 172.
[22] Nicolae Bocşan, „Biserică şi stat la români," p. 536.

1867, a dus la restaurarea Ungariei Mari (cu peste 13 milioane de locuitori, dintre care aproape şapte milioane nemaghiari).[23]

Reacţia românilor faţă de dualism nu a întârziat să apară, să se materializeze în formula consacrată în timpul revoluţiei de la 1848-1849, cea a adunările naţionale reprezentative. La 3-15 mai 1868, mai multe mii de români au aniversat la Blaj 20 de ani de la Marea Adunare Naţională din 3/15-5/17 mai 1848. Cu acest prilej s-a adoptat şi un document politic intitulat Pronunciament, în care se solicita restaurarea autonomiei politice şi administrative a Transilvaniei, aplicarea legilor votate de Dieta de la Sibiu în 1863-1864 şi convocarea unui nou for legislative provincial,pe baze democratice.[24]

În contextul dualismului austro-ungar, Transilvania a avut parte de consecințe nefaste, cunoscând o intensă politică de maghiarizare, fundamentată pe noile legi privind naționalitățile, presa, învățământul, alegerile.

Pronunciamentul de la Blaj, aşa cum este cunoscut în istorie acest act de protest în masă, a fost publicat în ziarele româneşti din Transilvania: „Telegraful Român", „Gazeta Transilvaniei", „Federaţiunea", iar un exemplar a fost înaintat guvernului. Autorii protestului, Ioan Raţiu şi George Bariţ, arată că „inteligenţa română, adunată spre a serba aniversarea zilei de 3 mai" s-a adunat pentru a discuta asupra situaţiei politice prezente, în care a fost aruncată fără voia sa, şi împreună au alcătuit acest pronunciament. Documentul reafirmă că *românii reprezintă majoritatea locuitorilor Transilvaniei* şi că aceştia *rămân neclintiţi pe lângă principiile din 3/15 mai 1848*. Ei se pronunţă pentru autonomia Transilvaniei pe baza diplomei leopoldine, pentru repunerea în vigoare a legilor adoptate de Dieta de la Sibiu în 1863 (legea privind egalitatea politică şi confesională a naţiunii române şi legea prin care limba română devenea oficială în Transilvania, alături de limba maghiară şi germană), pentru redeschiderea Dietei transilvane pe baza unei adevărate reprezentări populare, căci Dieta de la Pesta nu poate fi îndreptăţită a face legi valide pentru Transilvania.

Pronunciamentul s-a pronunţat pentru autonomia Transilvaniei şi pentru repunerea în vigoare a legilor adoptate de Dieta de la Sibiu în 1863, anume legea privind egalitatea politică şi confesională a naţiunii române, precum şi legea prin care limba română a fost declarată limbă oficială în

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[23] Liviu Maior, „Dualismul austro-ungar," in *Istoria Transilvaniei, vol. III,* Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008, p.422

[24] Ioan Bolovan, „Naţionalităţile şi dualismul," in *Istoria Transilvaniei, vol. III*, Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008, p. 437.

Marele Principat al Transilvaniei, alături de limba maghiară şi germană. Pronunciamentul a solicitat redeschiderea Dietei Transilvaniei.

Autorii Pronunciamentului au arătat că nu recunosc unirea Transilvaniei cu Ungaria, iar în consecinţă nu recunosc nici dreptul Parlamentului de la Budapesta de a adopta legi pentru Transilvania. Documentul a reafirmat boicotul vieţii politice a ţării, precum şi refuzul recunoaşterii instituţiilor maghiare.

Pronunciamentul a fost publicat în ziarele de limba română din Transilvania, în România şi în ţările vestice. Drept răspuns, Ministrul Justiţiei din Ungaria a iniţiat proceduri publice împotriva semnatarilor (Basiliu Raţiu, preşedintele capitulului mitropolitan, profesorul Ioan Micu Moldovan etc.). În zilele ce au urmat, ziarele au publicat numeroase declaraţii de solidaritate cu poziţia exprimată în Pronunciamentul de la Blaj. Autorităţile maghiare au trecut la măsuri represive, declanşând o aprigă campanie de persecuţii. Iacob Mureşanu a fost destituit din funcţia de director şi profesor al gimnaziului din Braşov, sub motiv că a fost pus în urmărire penală pentru crimă de tulburare a ordinii publice, deoarece publicase Pronunciamentul în „Gazeta Transilvaniei". Acuzaţi de crimă contra liniştii publice, principalii autori ai documentului urmau să fie judecaţi de tribunalul din Târgu Mureş.

În Dieta de la Pesta, patru deputaţi români au interpelat guvernul, în legătură cu măsurile poliţieneşti şi judiciare ordonate împotriva intelectualilor consideraţi principalii semnatari ai Pronunciamentului. În România numeroase gazete, precum „Românul", „Trompeta Carpaţilor", au publicat articole de solidarizare cu românii din Transilvania. Numeroşi intelectuali, precum Carol Davila, B. P. Haşdeu, au mers în Transilvania în iunie 1867, cu ocazia încoronării lui Franz Josef ca rege al Ungariei, pentru a protesta împotriva dualismului. Ca urmare a frământărilor politice, o ordonanţă regală a suspendat procesul intentat semnatarilor Pronunciamentului de la Blaj.

Formarea partidelor politice a fost un fenomen general european în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea. La începutul anului 1869, în 26 ianuarie/ 7 februarie, s-a desfăşurat la Timişoara Conferinţa Naţională a românilor din Banat, unde Alexandru Mocioni a susţinut o organizare politică modernă de tip partidist, punându-se bazele Partidului Naţional al Românilor din Banat şi Ungaria.[25] În 7 martie 1869 , Conferinţa Naţională a românilor ardeleni, convocată la Miercurea, lângă Sibiu, de către Ioan Raţiu, Visarion Roman şi Ilie Măcelariu, a hotărât înfiinţându-se Partidul Naţional al Românilor din Transilavania.

[25] *Ibidem.*

Politica de maghiarizare intensificată după 1875, odată cu numirea lui Kalman Tisza ca prim-ministru al Ungariei, precum şi ecoul obţinerii independenţei de către românii de dincolo de Carpaţi, au condus la acţiuni de reorganizare a vieţii politice româneşti din Transilvania. Astfel, după consultări şi corespondenţe între lideri politici de peste munţi şi pregătiri prealabile, între 12 şi 14 mai 1881 s-a desfăşurat la Sibiu Conferinţa Naţională a cercurilor electorale ale românilor din Transilvania şi Banat, având loc cu această ocazie şi fuziunea cele două partide întemeiate în 1869, respectiv Partidul Naţional al Românilor din Banat şi Ungaria şi Partidul Naţional al Românilor din Transilvania. Prin programul său, PNR revendica în primul rând autonomia Transilvaniei, introducerea limbii române în administraţie şi justiţie, numirea de funcţionari români proporţional cu ponderea românilor în ansamblul populaţiei, respectarea autonomiei bisericilor româneşti, revizuirea Legii naţionalităţilor din 1868, pentru garantarea menţinerii individualităţii naţionale a etniilor din statul ungar multietnic.[26]

Petiţionarismul românesc a reprezentat, pentru multă vreme, calea folosită de către conducătorii români din Transilvania de a face cunoscute instituţiilor statului dezideratele lor politice, sociale şi culturale. Petiţionarismul a debutat simultan cu lupta naţională, exprimând cu fidelitate stadiul evoluţiei sale.[27] Memorandul românilor din Transilavnia şi Ungaria a fost semnat la Sibiu în 25 martie 1892, tipărit sub formă de broşură în mai multe limbi: română, franceză, italiană, germană şi maghiară. La finalizarea documentului a contribuit, într-o mare măsură, şi acţiunea studenţilor universitari români prin Memoriul elaborat în Bucureşti în 1891, urmat de răspunsul studenţilor unguri, căruia îi vor răspunde prin faimoasa „Replică" întocmită de Aurel C. Popovici, student la Gratz, în numele studenţilor români din universităţile din monarhie.[28]

Conferinţa naţională a Partidului Naţional Român desfăşurată la Sibiu în zilele de 20-22 ianuarie 1892, a dezbătut activitatea partidului şi poziţia pe care trebuie să o adopte partidul ca răspuns la măsurile luate de guvernul de la Budapesta în privinţa dreptului la manifestare naţională a

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[26] *Ibidem.*

[27] Liviu Maior, *Petiţionarismul românesc*, în Memorandumul 1892-1894. Ideologie şi acţiune politică românească, Editura „Progresul Românesc", Bucureşti, 1994

[28] Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Situaţia românilor din Transilvania în perioada 1894-1918,* Editura Semănătorul Online, Tismana, 2011, p. 10; Toader Nicoară, „Acţiunea şi procesul memorandului. Ecouri interne şi internaţionale," in *Memorandumul 1892-1894. Ideologie şi acţiune politică românească,* Bucreşti, Editura „Progresul Românesc", 1994, p. 59.

românilor, în domeniul învăţământului, bisericii şi, în general, a politicii de maghiarizare a instituţiilor menţionate. Ca urmare directă a hotărârii Conferinţei Naţionale, Comitetul Central al PNR s-a întrunit la Sibiu în 25-26 martie 1892 pentru a stabili textul final al Memorandului şi înaintarea acestuia de către membrii Comitatului şi o delegaţie impunătoare de 300 de români Curţii de la Viena. Delegaţi aromânilor a fost primită cu deosebit entuziasm de românii aflaţi la studiu în Viena şi de membrii societăţii studenţeşti „România Jună".

Cercurile politice maghiar, primul ministru ungar Iuliu Arpad, printr-un memoriu trimis împăratului la 23 mai 1892, cu cinci zile înainte de data propusă de români pentru a prezenta împăratului Memorandul, au contribuit substanţial la refuzul de a fi primită delegaţia românilor. În atare condiţii conducerea delegaţiei românilor, în special dr. Ion Raţiu, va trimite la 1 iunie 1892, baronului Adolf Braun, o petiţie împreună cu Memorandul, cu rugămintea să fie prezentat împăratului. După o perioadă de timp în care Memorandul trece prin birourile unor miniştri, a primului ministru ungar, a prefectului de Turda şi a celui de Sibiu, importantul document pentru români ajunge la 25 iulie 1892 la cel care a fost un membru marcant al delegaţiei românilor dr. Ion Raţiu.

Gestul românilor de a cere drepturi şi libertăţi cetăţeneşti, egalitate cu celelalte naţionalităţi din imperiu, nu va rămâne nepedepsit. Deputaţi maghiari vor cere în Parlament pedepsirea autorilor Memorandului. Schimbările politice la vârful guvernelor maghiar şi austriac au condus la primul act juridic materializat în denunţul penal al Parchetului General din Cluj, denunţ semnat de procurorul Iezenki Sandor, la data de 21 septembrie 1892. Procesul intentat iniţial lui Eugen Brote va fi extins prin denunţarea tuturor membrilor Comitetului Partidului Naţional Român. În contrapondere, în zilele de 23-24 iulie 1893, la Sibiu, este convocată Conferinţa Naţională Extraordinară a PNR pentru a hotărî conduita partidului faţă de procesul intentat fruntaşilor politice.[29]

Conferinţa de la Sibiu prin succesul de care s-a bucurat a neliniştit guvernul de la Budapesta, dr. Ion Raţiu fiind invitat pentru o discuţie cu înalţii demnitari. Primul ministru ungar Wekerle Sandor cere renunţarea la a pretinde autonomia Transilvaniei şi la mişcarea naţională în schimbul suspendării procesului şi adoptării unei legi electorale favorabile românilor. Răspunsul lui Ion Raţiu şi presiunea a numeroşi parlamentari unguri, a

[29] *Ibidem,* p. 67.

determinat guvernul de la Budapesta să înăsprească măsurile împotriva românilor.

Procesul memorandiştilor a început la Cluj în data de 7 mai 1894 pentru 20 de inculpaţi care au beneficiat de cei mai buni apărători din rândul avocaţilor, publiciştilor, oamenilor de cultură şi chiar din rândul altor naţionalităţi: sârbi şi slovaci. În ciuda apărării excelente şi a atmosferei de solidaritate internă şi internaţională, tribunalul a dat verdictul de condamnare. Recursul a pus în libertate condamnaţii până la pronunţarea Curţii Regale. Întemniţaţi la 27 iulie 1894, detenţia memorandiştilor se va încheia la 15 septembrie 1895, printr-o graţiere colectivă semnată de împărat.[30] Se pare că ul rol în acordarea graţierii l-a avut regele Carol I al României care în august 1895 s-a întâlnit cu împăratul Franz Iosif.

Se poate constata că impactul mişcării memorandiste şi al procesului va avea consecinţe deosebite pentru mişcarea naţională. Prin larga participare la acţiunile de propagandă a tinerilor, intelectualilor, a fost impulsionată şi pătura de jos a societăţii româneşti, ţăranii, care constituiau marea masă a populaţiei din Transilvania şi Ungaria. Se va înrădăcina sentimentul naţional şi se va crea o punte între popor şi reprezentanţii luptei pentru emancipare naţională. De asemenea, participarea în masă la evenimentele desfăşurate de la depunerea Memorandului până la finalizarea procesului, demonstrează autorităţilor maghiare, dar şi clasei politice din imperiu, că demersul românilor era o sinteză a programului naţional şi avea susţinerea naţiunii române.

Mişcarea memorandistă a contribuit la intensificarea colaborării dintre naţionalităţile oprimate din Ungaria, colaborare care s-a concretizat în organizarea Congresului Naţionalităţilor de la Budapesta, în 10 august 1895, cu participarea a 700 de delegaţi români, slovaci şi sârbi, care au adoptat un program în 22 de puncte, solicitând recunoaşterea autonomiilor naţionale, desfiinţarea sistemului dualist, democratizarea regimului politic, şi au ales un Comitet Executiv, din care făceau parte şi patru români: Ion Raţiu, Iuliu Coroianu, Vasile Lucaciu şi Vasile Mangra.[31]

La începutul secolului XX, urmare a mişcării memorandiste şi a apariţiei unei noi generaţii de oameni politici, se poate vorbi de o mişcare de emancipare naţională. Se remarcă faptul că orientarea spre România poate fi în beneficiul maselor şi în consecinţă a naţiunii române. Strategia Partidului

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[30] *Ibidem,* p. 73.

[31] Ioan Bolovan, *Naţionalităţile şi dualismul, în Istoria Transilvaniei, vol. III,* Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008, p.440.

Naţional Român se schimbă tocmai ca urmare a progreselor obţinute de românii din Transilvania la sfârşitul secolului XIX şi începutul secolului XX. Tactica activistă şi lupta parlamentară trebuiau relansate, ţărănimea înstărită şi clasa de mijloc fiind pregătite şi capabile să susţină un asemenea demers. Neoactivismul s-a manifestat la Arad unde un grup de politicieni s-au mobilizat în jurul ziarului *Tribuna poporului* care, după 1904 a preluat numele celei din Sibiu, *Tribuna*, iar din 1912 a fuzionat cu *Românul* al PNR. Un alt grup a apărut la Orăştie.

Trecerea la activism a mai multor naţionalităţi din Ungaria a determinat conducerea Partidului Naţional Român să organizeze la Sibiu, la 23 ianuarie 1905, Conferinţa partidului la care a fost ales un nou Comitet executiv şi a deci, printr-un nou program, trecerea la activism. Programul din 1905 avea ca obiective garantarea dezvoltării naţiunii române prin introducerea limbii române în administraţie, justiţie şi armată, vot universal, drepturi şi libertăţi cetăţeneşti, o nouă legislaţie socială şi economică, susţinerea ţărănimii, ceea ce a dus la o dinamizare a activităţii politice şi o relansare a celorlalte instituţii.

După 1905 au fost aleşi în Parlamentul de la Budapesta câţiva parlamentari români care, împreună cu parlamentari sârbi şi slovaci, au format un club al naţionalităţilor, luând poziţie împotriva legilor care limitau manifestările naţionalităţilor aflate sub dominaţia guvernului maghiar. Pe fondul deteriorării relaţiilor dintre Budapesta şi Viena, un grup de politicieni români în frunte cu Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, au lansat ideea unui stat federal constituit pe baze naţionale.[32] Ideea preluată de bănăţeanul Aurel C. Popovivi într-o lucrare, nu s-a materializat.

În 1910 şi apoi în 1913-1914 s-au purtat tratative între reprezentanţii PNR şi guvernul de la Budapesta fără a se ajunge la un acord. Guvernul maghiar a susţinut ideea statului naţional indivizibil, în timp ce Partidul Naţional Român a propus formula autodeterminării naţionale, în ideea desprinderii, în viitor, a Transilvaniei de Ungaria. Semnalele date de românii de dincolo de Carpaţi celor din Transilvania, sprijinul guvernului de la Bucureşti au întărit convingerea elitei româneşti din Transilvania că doar unirea cu România va putea salva individualitatea naţiunii române din Ungaria.[33]

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[32] *Ibidem,* p.443.

[33] *Ibidem.* Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Imaginea primului război mondial reflectată în paginile revistei „Cultura creştină", în Anamaria Macavei, Roxana Dorina Pop (coord.), *Imaginea în istorie. Tipologii în societatea de ieri şi de azi – lucrările Conferinţei naţionale, Cluj-Napoca, 19-20 aprilie 2013,* Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut, 2014, p. 445.

Ideea unei singure naţiuni române apare tot mai des în discuţiile dintre politicieni, intelectuali şi chiar marea masă a populaţiei, atât de dincoace cât şi de dincolo de Carpaţi. Dacă românii transilvăneni aveau conştiinţa apartenenţei la imperiul austriac (austro-ungar), datorat modului în care s-au impus autorităţile statului multinaţional, românii din regat aspirau la o unire firească cu fraţii lor de aceeaşi naţionalitate. Victoriile obţinute de fruntaşii mişcării de emancipare, la nivel de conştiinţă naţională, vor fi dublate de o schimbare profundă a manifestării loialismului faţă de împărat odată cu moartea lui Franz Iosif în 1916. Un nou împărat, întronat în condiţii de război, în timp ce România era angajată în luptă împotriva imperiului, nu reprezenta pentru românii din Transilvania împlinirea visului de autonomie, egalitate în drepturi cu naţiunea maghiară ş.a. Ca atare înlocuirea loialităţii dinastice cu cea naţională, dorinţa de unire cu patria mamă, idealul naţional şi conştiinţa apartenenţei la un singur popor vorbitor de aceeaşi limbă, va duce, într-un interval de timp relativ scurt, la unirea tuturor românilor într-un stat naţional unitar, independent, cu mari posibilităţi de afirmare în plan economic, politic, cultural. Marea Unire desăvârşită în 1918 a demonstrat eforturile românilor nu au fost zadarnice, că naţiunea română poate să-şi poarte de grijă şi este capabilă să-şi croiască propriul drum printre naţiunile Europei şi ale lumii.

Concluzii

Valorile naţionale se subsumă celor universale atunci când vorbim de dreptate, adevăr, umanism, iubire şi respect reciproc,[34]

A face vorbire despre actul istoric fără dublarea trăirilor afective în relaţie cu acesta pentru fiecare român transilvănean este aproape imposibil. Prin urmare, cunoaşterea şi înţelegerea istoriei este o condiţie necesară şi idinspensabilă menţinerii statului de drept în limitele unei vieţi democratice autentice, benefice şi prospere pentru fiecare cetăţean, căci parafrazând un dicton popular putem spune cum că *cine nu îşi cunoaşte istoria este sortit pieirii.* În actualul context social, istoric şi geografic se fac eforturi în identificarea de soluţii pentru o educaţie consonantă cu valorile universal valabile (adevăr, dragoste, libertate, fericire, democraţie, pace, dreptate, loialitate, responsabilitate) cu atât mai mult cu cât aceste valori umane, etico- morale,

[34] Adriana Denisa Manea, „Educational Values within the Scope of the Technological Revolution", in *Astra Salvensis,* VII (2019), no. 14, p. 31-37.

etice şi culturale susţin formarea de valori profesionale ale individului ce conduc la o instruire de calitate şi dezvoltarea ştiinţifică.[35]

[35] Adriana Denisa Manea, "Features of Educational Activities in the Contemporary Society", in *Astra Salvensis,* VI (2018), no. 12, p. 245-253.

„Church and Nation in the Transylvanian Romanians in the Second Half of the 18th and Early 20th Centuries," *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 18, p. 125-141.

Family, education and social life
Seven inputs regarding the contemporary paradigm

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Abstract. *In this article I will analyze the effects that the ideas propagated by the 'sexual revolution' of the 60s and 80s have on the family institution today. In my analysis I will consider two main effects: the first one deals with the vulnerability of axiology in the matter of philosophy of life and lifestyle. In this frame, the subjective takes the first place before the objective, experience before the essence, personal before the communitarian. The second element is a consequence of the first one and it refers to the crisis of authority and respect. By using excessive discourse regarding social equality, today's man seeks to get rid of everything that is considered an outdated lifestyle. From this perspective, I will analyze both the changes produced within the family (redefinitions, roles), as well as the behavioural changes and the way in which they could be improved. I will consider character education, emotional investment, forgiveness, and family life accompanied by prayer.*

Keywords: *family, axiology, character, lifestyle, authority, model.*

1. Context. One needs nowadays to identify the main features of the contemporary philosophy of life so that to interpret it and consequently to choose a lifestyle that interacts with this reality, but at the same time, that naturally pertains to human being in its permanent content – *ousia*. There is an ongoing change, in a rapid manner, and this occurs especially since the "sexual revolution" of the '60-the '80s in the USA and Western Europe, now reaching its maturity. I will not enter into details, but I will list two main effects in the matter of approaching and interpreting the contemporary reality in reference with the institution of family, that have their origin in this very period.

The first one, with a general character, points to the vulnerability of axiology, as a common Magna Charta in matter of philosophy of life and a concrete living style. There was a permanent reflection of an objective reality coming from up to down, from a perfect world or at least common accepted by many, if not by all, in a specific place and time, mirrored and respected by the people. This objective reality was considered to be the perfect reality to refer to in matter of living out human experience in a subjective way in the sense of personal – *experientia* (*energia*). Since this period one can observe a major shift corresponding to the change of the primate among these two – the subjective takes the first place before the objective, the experience before the *ousia* (the essence), and personal before what means communitarian. And from here, the so-called set of principles, a common axiology, undergoes difficult time, since there are no more

evident common criteria to describe a specific formulation or situation, good or bad, natural or un-natural, beautiful or un-beautiful and so on. "I" becomes almost the unique valid criteria to make assertions regarding the „correct" way of speaking or doing. Consequently, the voice of the minority becomes stronger and even gets the priority before that of the majority. The visible effects of this change are identifiable in different contexts and, in particular, regarding family and the specific education. So, one can easily speak nowadays of an axiological crisis.

The second element, as a consequence of the first one, points to what we might call the crisis of authority and respect[1]. As this order from up to down undergoes changes, one finds also difficult to apply the hierarchical model and the authority criteria that accompany it. By using an excessive discourse regarding social equality and freedom from the 'despotism' of institutions, 'the actual man'[2] strongly and insistently struggles to free himself from any element that possibly might be connected to what means 'old fashion' lifestyle, that used to offer to first place to institutions before an individual. This direction denounces the 'communitarian' communist political approach', but, almost invisibly, one can identify an 'individual communist approach' from another way around. In this sense, we bring into the core of discussion the 'political'[3] perspective of the Gospel, that makes the balance between the common and individual, between the reality of the Kingdom and the one here, down, between objective and subjective. The Orthodox Church itself offers a paradigm of hierarchy, authority, and a sense of respect, which develops independently with the changeable ideologies. We call this concept 'Tradition', as a permanent continuation of teaching and experience, having its source in what we know as 'Revelation'. It has to do with the institution, this is why one may have a defensive attitude, but also with 'event', revealing its contemporary character, as here and now.

2. New 'definitions' of family. In this general frame of rapid changes, the concept of family, first of all, and then the family itself has to do with changes. One may find this situation in the USA and Western Europe, but rapidly extending its effects also in our Eastern space. What commonly was recognized as the strongest structure of human social life – family: father,

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[1] For details see Adrian Opre, "Reconsiderarea reformelor educaţionale. Rolul familiei şi al Bisericii în educaţia socio-emoţională şi morală a copiilor", in *Familia contemporană. Provocări, principii, valori*, Cluj-Napoca, Renaşterea, 2021, p. 76-77.

[2] Cf. Horia Roman Patapievici, *Omul recent*, ediţia a VI-a, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2020.

[3] In the sense of common work, common purpose.

mother, and children[4] – is put nowadays into question. One observes the presence of a discourse promoting different 'types' of contemporary families. I will evoke the main forms, present in the contemporary debate: co-sanguine family, describing the family of origin; conjugal family, founded by marriage, which has its purpose of procreating, highlighting its demographic dimension; nuclear family, formed of typically father, mother and children; reconstituted family, made of those divorced or who lost their partner and forming together a new family; family with one, two or more children; family with no children; monoparental family, because of different reasons; and lastly, in some European countries, in the last years, the family formed of two parents of the same gender. In fact, belonging to a traditional orientation, I will argue that one may find here only one pattern, while the rest of them are either different developments of this unique form, or accidents, because of different contextual situations. So, it remains one unique form of construction and one definition with the necessary spiritual attention for those belonging to all these above-evoked situations.

3. ***The identification of the role in the family.*** I will dwell now on the specific roles to occupy within the family. In the middle of this lack of a set of common values or, at least, in a better situation, of its vulnerable presence, as mentioned above, the specific traditional roles in the family are also undergoing different evolutions and transformations. One may observe the existence of un-clear borders between the role of a father and that of a mother, as has been since in the recent past. In biblical terms, the father is the sign of authority, protection, and security. At the same time, the mother

[4] Kari Moxnes gives us a relational perspective on the family, seen as representing primarily the kinship relationships that are created between people, such as those between the two parents, between parents and children, between siblings, who live together in households and take as responsibility the extension of the family through reproduction, production, and consumption of goods (K. Moxnes, "Risk Factors in Divorce: Perceptions by the Children Involved", in *Childhood,* Volume 10 issue 2, 2003, p. 131-146); George Murdock considers the family to be essentially a (micro) social group, which may be characterized by common living space, reproduction, and economic cooperation, and implicitly includes two adults of both sexes and possibly one or more children, born of the relationship of the two or adopted (cf. A. Băran-Pescaru, *Familia azi. O perspectivă sociopedagogică*, Bucureşti, Editura Aramis, 2006, p. 77); Rose Laub Coser gives us a social perspective similar to the previous one, understanding the family as a social micro-structure that originates in marriage, includes two adults, husband and wife, may include children born from their marriage or adopted, may include other relatives, the group being united by legal, moral, religious, economic and social rights and obligations (R. Laub Coser, *The Family: Its Structure and Function*, State University of New York, 1965, p. 100-102). See at large Glava, "Familia – o perspectivă pedagogico-socială", in *Familia contemporană. Provocări, principii, valori*, Cluj-Napoca, Renaşterea, 2021, p. 117-119.

is the icon of sensibility, tenderness, and comfort. This description reflects the psychological area, but only as a natural development of its physiological structure. This paradigm in its relational manifestation is well expressed by Saint Paul in parallel with the mystical relationship between Christ and the Church. Christ is the type of man in the family: "*the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour*" (Ephesians 5:23), so the wife is asked to obey her husband similar with, as in the following verses affirmed, the Church who submits to Christ. But also, the husband is asked to love his wife as Christ did to the Church. The standards are very high, in fact, divine and pertaining to the Kingdom: "*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish*" (Ephesians 5:25-27). The roles are complementary, but not interchangeable. At the same time, they are structural, not only functional. In the following verses, the same author argues the connection between the family structure and the social structure and life, extending this paradigm to the social institutions and life, in general.

Regarding the modifications that may appear in the paradigmatic form of family, the roles might be, in a certain manner, adaptive, but not interchanged. In case of malfunction, other persons would normally assume in a partial manner those missing in the concrete contextual situations. The Church has a great role in this area, to accompany the persons experiencing different difficult family situations. It is about the necessity of a new family pastoral care, contextualized and using all the elements offered by the other socio-humanistic sciences regarding the complex transformations and experiences one may undergo nowadays. While asserting this idea, I refer mostly to the psychological resources in the matter of affective-emotional human evolution. It is quite generally accepted that despite technological progress, one may identify a visible emotional regress. So it is a necessity to take into consideration the emotional process of growing up of the parents, in the first place, and, secondly, of the children. But, most probably, these two processes develop together, in mutual interaction.

4. The education of character. The methodology of contemporary education goes along with the accumulation of knowledge in a time of a vast area of information, brought together in published works or digital libraries. There are mostly no barriers to getting information regarding one or another issue, because of the digital development which characterizes contemporary reality. But in the same time, at least in our Romanian

educational system, one may easily observe the scarce preoccupation for the formation of characters in the case of young people. And this situation should also be interpreted in the same paradigm of the equivoque atmosphere in a matter of objective criteria. There is no more visible acceptance of a set of common values, for there is no anymore present the concept of common values since this up-down movement of the *ousia*/ objective reality with the *energia*/ subjective experience, common and personal, tradition and circumstance. One may find it very difficult to reach a balanced relation between the two.

I will quote Professor Adrian Opre, the dean of the Faculty of Psychology in Cluj-Napoca while referring to the education of characters: "*Character refers to a series of psycho-moral characteristics of human being that remain relatively stable over time and manifest in the same way regardless of context. Once acquired, this personal trait helps children and adolescents to have confidence in the values they outline, to distinguish between what is good and what is bad, in order to make the most appropriate decisions. Thanks to this competence, adolescents are able to notice how their own behaviours have an impact on those around them. Children and adolescents with a well-developed ethical attitude manage to be more empathetic with their colleagues and loved ones, to respect them, and to offer them help. But beyond definitions and operationalizations, I consider that given the moral profile we want to develop in the case of our children, much more important is the way it is lived and expressed in behaviour by those who teach and then by those who are taught. Let us not forget that in the Book of Books, the Holy Scriptures, we find, first of all, living examples of moral conduct. In the Bible, we are simply presented with human models of morality, at the head of which is placed their prototype – Jesus Christ"* [5].The same author argues the necessity of making credible the moral formation of children, that if of characters. And in this sense, he indicates the importance of the good collaboration between family, school, and the Church. He, surprisingly for the pedagogical orientation in Cluj-Napoca, is a representative of the traditional vision on family and education.

The last three sections will be dedicated to behaviours in the family that need attention and, eventually, modifications and corrections.

5. Affective investment. Human beings need protection, security, and affection so that to reach happiness. For that one finds necessary the existence of coordination, stable structures so as to reach a place of refuge in the front of rapid, excessive, and unpredictable changes. Family properly may bring together all these needs into one reality. I will quote an Italian psychologist with his inputs on this issue: *"The contemporary researches show that*

[5] Adrian Opre, "Reconsiderarea reformelor educaţionale", p. 87-88.

family life helps a lot in maintaining mental health because love is a flame that emanates an inner good estate; it is an energy that generates peace, offering health, harmony and inner well-being. In addition, it adjusts the crystallization of one's identity, thanks to constant interaction with the other; and it is a continuous way of verifying one's personal 'seductive arsenal' which God has endowed us with. Thanks to the dialogue, we can negotiate and clarify the different points of view of the couple. In addition, if conflicts are confronted in a constructive way, they will be transformed into evolution in the couple, mutual growth, or mutual enrichment"[6].

In this line, I will argue that in the family one may find the basic way of affective investment, but, at the same time, the best school of learning how to do it. Husband and wife, on one side, struggle to practically manifest their mutual love; love is something to be learned and to be taught. And, on the other side, parents and children do the same thing but respecting the specificity of the correspondent relation. Love gives vital force, and to love means to fully live your life. It means participation: in two, or in three, so to speak about the triangle structure of the family, pain is half reduced, while love and happiness double themselves. And transform a person into a good colleague and a good friend in the social area. I will quote the same Italian psychologist to highlight this idea: *"The quarrelsome couple is a very fragile one, while the one united in love forms a real team, which, both professionally and socially, is a much stronger entity than would have been the two individuals combined, or taken separately. Having friends increases your self-esteem, but not as much as the awareness that you are loved by your life partner. A life partner with great emotional potential and great confidence invites you to pursue new goals at work and socially stimulates you"*[7].

An authentic emotional relationship reduces anxiety: *"Love is the best anxiolytic and antidepressant, because, often, there are moments in life that you can overcome only thanks to the acceptance and love received from the one next to you. In two it is much easier to fix mistakes and train children properly. Affective stability in the family is the most useful ingredient for success at work. The one who benefits from harmony in the family will also transfer it to the workplace, easily facing the difficulties there. The emotional state in the family also has a social impact"*[8].

The same observation may be prolonged in the area of public education. Next to its moral dimension, contemporary educators are asked to take care also of the emotional behaviour of children or younger in its educative dimension. I will quote again Professor Adrian Opre who clearly argues on this issue: *"Unfortunately, we find that, more and more often, school*

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[6] Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi*, San Paolo Edizioni, 2014, p. 58.

[7] Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore*, p. 58-59.

[8] Teofil Tia, "Familia, o universitate a dragostei", in *Familia contemporană. Provocări, principii, valori*, Cluj-Napoca, Renaşterea, 2021, p. 27-28.

programs leave at random or evade not only the moral development but also the socio-emotional development of children, unilaterally overbidding their academic training. Often, they are deprived of even the slightest emotional literacy, leaving the education system unarmed in the face of reality. That is why a new vision is needed regarding what kindergarten and then the school can do to ensure a complete education of children, both academic and socio-emotional, which will allow them to better adapt to the complexities of everyday life"[9].

In the last part of this section, I will make an observation regarding the necessity of pointing to the difference between healthy emotional investment and the dependency, very present in contemporary families. The origin of this behaviour is a negative way of emotional investment, in particular in a family where one finds a very demanding parent, constantly concerned with the child's performance, critical even when it is not the case, never satisfied with the child's achievement, rigid in decisions and in enforcing the rules. This parental model tries to create the ideal child, as he has always imagined, perfectly, impeccably. Sometimes as he sees himself, or as he would like to be, these parents turn the child into a 'puppet dependent on their decisions, without initiative, timid, discouraged'[10].Often these children, as adults, find various solutions to leave the family of origin, in an attempt to get rid of the trauma. In reality, the role of the parent is to reinforce his positive and desirable behaviour by inducing positive emotions. Exaggerated exigency entails insecurity, the fear of not meeting the requirements, the fear of failure and its consequences.

The same situation may occur in the case of a hipper-protective parent, always preoccupied to create a supportive climate for his child, protective, so that to offer to him protection and security. Thus, he/she consumes time, resources, and energy to meet all the needs and especially desires of his family members. Favourable resolutions to their children become priorities, very often exaggerating in this regard. His scope is to cope as much as possible with the child in a way falling into a trap to satisfy all his/her exaggerate desires. Behind this apparent positive intention, one finds the effect visible later, in suffocating a child's personality. In this situation, a parent needs to optimize his parenting style in time, stabilize rules, and be firm in respecting them. There is also disagreement and dissatisfaction. This would be the right way to establish a healthy climate in the family and, consequently, very important, not to isolate the child from the reality of daily life, with its positive or negative experiences, but both of them are necessary to understand and interpret the reality. Children need a favourable, positive and supportive educational environment, in which to

[9] Adrian Opre, "Reconsiderarea reformelor educaţionale", p. 99-100.
[10] Catalin Glava, "Familia – o perspectivă pedagogico-socială", p. 148-149.

develop and experience various behaviours in response to environmental challenges[11].

6. Attention to forgiveness. The biblical rule regarding forgiveness asks humans not to be angry more than one day: "*Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry*" (Ephesians 4:26)[12]. If the spouses do not engage in daily forgiveness, the mutual malice is sedimented in stages day after day, time after time. One may speak in this case of solid resentments, or, even more, of a specific general and permanent atmosphere, difficult either for the spouses, as well as for children. Unfortunately, very often, forgiveness is interpreted by many as a sign of vulnerability, but spiritually or even psychologically it frees of the negative burden of the other's action and visibly gives space to the correction of the other[13]. Forgiveness brings peace, inner good estate, and availability before the other. Thus, it is compulsory to solve family conflicts as soon as possible. The initiative must be assumed by one of the family members, despite all possible risks.

The positive effects of forgiveness are present both in the one who beneficiates of it, for it gets vital energy and enthusiasm, and in the same time, inner stability, dominated by harmony and peace, but also in the case of the one who offers forgiveness: it is about his psychological and spiritual health which is lifted to higher standards. Forgiveness is, finally, "*a liberating act, the smartest option to quickly reach inner peace, as it facilitates concentration on the future, on a deep and lasting psycho-physical well-being. It allows us to overcome the problem to move forward, to act beyond and above it, to love*"[14].

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[11] For the main types of parenting see Catalin Glava, "Familia – o perspectivă pedagogico-socială", p. 139-153.

[12] See the commentary made by Pope Francis on this rule: "One cannot live without seeking forgiveness, or at least, one cannot live at peace, especially in the family. We wrong one another every day. We must take into account these mistakes, due to our frailty and our selfishness. However, what we are asked to do is to promptly heal the wounds that we cause, to immediately reweave the bonds that break within the family. If we wait too long, everything becomes more difficult. There is a simple secret to healing wounds and to avoiding recriminations. It is this: do not let the day end without apologizing, without making peace between husband and wife, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters... between daughters- and mothers-in-law! If we learn to apologize promptly and to give each other mutual forgiveness, the wounds heal, the marriage grows stronger, and the family becomes an increasingly stronger home, which withstands the shocks of our smaller or greater misdeeds. This is why there is no need for a long speech, as a caress is enough: one caress and everything is over and one can start afresh. But do not end the day at war!"(*Catechesis on Family, Family - 31. Forgive us our debts*, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20151104_udienza-generale.html, 7 September 2021).

[13] Teofil Tia, "Familia, o universitate a dragostei", p. 60-61.

[14] *Ibidem,* p. 62-63.

7. Family life accompanied by prayer. The last point to deal with in this paper has a general and panoramic character and seems to be the most salient one. There is so present the lamentation that one does not have time enough for prayer. Or even worse, it is really difficult to observe and to have the impression that prayer is more than to spend time in vain. In fact, prayer has to do with relationships and, eventually, with love. And this special relationship may have visible effects, not only personally, but also in the family, and in the social area.

In fact, prayer offers the time to God so that to sanctify it and then He gives it back to us, but in an extensive way[15]. There are affairs to do and essential projects. Very often we accomplish the first category of things, while we avoid the second one. Secondly, in prayer, the family members, in their complicated moments and difficult passages, entrust to each other, so that each of them may be guarded by the perfect and permanent love of God. And finally, prayer is 'a methodology' of giving a specific architecture to the family itself, for it is not only a practice but a lifestyle. If so, it has also social effects summarized into three – the beauty of celebration, the serenity of work, the spirit of prayer (cf. Luke 10:38-42).

[15] See the commentary of Pope Francis on that: "The spirit of prayer gives time back to God, it steps away from the obsession of a life that is always lacking time, it rediscovers the peace of necessary things, and discovers the joy of unexpected gifts. Two good guides for this are the sisters Martha and Mary, spoken of in the Gospel we have just heard; they learned from God the harmony of family rhythms: the beauty of celebration, the serenity of work, the spirit of prayer (cf. Lk 10:38-42). The visit of Jesus, whom they loved, was their celebration. However, one day Martha learned that the work of hospitality, though important, is not everything, but that listening to the Lord, as Mary did, was the really essential thing, the "best kind" of time. Prayer flows from listening to Jesus, from reading the Gospel. Do not forget to read a passage of the Gospel every day. Prayer flows from closeness with the Word of God. Is there this closeness in our family? Do we have the Gospel at home? Do we open it sometimes to read it together?... In the morning and in the evening, and when we sit at the table, we learn to say together a prayer with great simplicity: it is Jesus who comes among us, as he was with the family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. There is something that is very close to my heart; because I have seen it in the city: there are children who have not learned to make the Sign of the Cross! But you, mother, father, teach your child to pray, to make the Sign of the Cross: this is a lovely task for mothers and fathers!" (*Catechesis on Family, The family - 24. Prayer*, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150826_udienza-generale.html, 3 September 2021).

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The family priority: oxygenating life with love (Traveling with Giacomo Dacquino through the society of the future)

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Abstract. *In this study we try to extract the most valuable warnings about the fading of love as a social reality in the future society, focusing on the couple relationship realities, in the research of the Italian psychoanalyst Giacomo Dacquino. He lists: the sprawling of vulgarocracy, the egalitarianism that demolishes the hierarchy, the hypertrophy of the biological factor (by medicine) in love; the paralysis of the power to love ("affective fragmentation" of subjects). As a comforting conclusion, he proposes the recognition of affectivity as a multifaceted and complex structure; cultivating it through a responsible pedagogy: the praise of good education expressed multifactorially, in different ways (through: courtesy, cordiality, inner nobility, kindness; immunization of young people in front of clichés circulated by the media).*

Keywords: *"Affectivity - multifaceted construct", "affective predictability"; "Devastating discomfort of life"; "Strangling loneliness" etc.*

1. Is matter or love the "agent" of happiness on earth?

The ultimate proof for the materialism of our civilization is the appetite for consumption, the consumerism. After the shortages from the communist era, we crave to consume and afford everything we couldn't in the past. And yet, according to Orthodoxy, the agent of happiness on earth is love, not the matter. How does matter see love? According to the materialist view, love is only a biochemical subject, a reality related „to" and caused „by" the neurotransmitters of the body such as dopamine, a hormone associated with states of joy, euphoria, exaltation.[1]

Confronted with this vision, we can ask ourselves: if in love everything could be reduced to the play of some chemicals, then why wouldn't we intervene from the outside, chemically, to guarantee long lasting relationships between people, trying to eliminate relationship crises chemically, through drug treatment? In addition, if the materialist vision was correct and exhaustive, irresponsibility would become the sovereign rule, because no one is guilty of the biochemical mutations occuring at the biological level, outside of his own will. Oxytocin promotes lasting

[1] The exponents of this purely materialistic theory and vision believe that love is generated by phenylethylamine, a natural amphetamine produced by the brain, which also makes instinctuality possible, causing physical attraction and falling in love. Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi,* Roma, San Paolo Edizioni, 2014, p. 38.

relationships; then why not recommend oxytocin "treatments" to couples who want longevity?[2]

The vision of the Church is much more nuanced, proclaiming that neither the body nor the brain secretes the state of consciousness and the whole range of emotional feelings that man experiences throughout life, but the soul; it, with all it's attachment to moral values, is the true author and it can cause fluctuations detectable at the organic level that are biologically quantifiable. Matter is secondary to spirit[3], and not the other way. Matter depends on the spirit, it is an interface of it, and the spiritual is the true consistency of reality, even if it is invisible and situated "beyond" and "above" it.[4]

Therefore, although we find that there is a programming towards love of our being, because at a certain age during youth love occurs even for the atheists (who have nothing to do with the Church), no biochemical science can explain in detail why a man falls in love with a certain woman (and cannot predict how long their love will last). Biological factors are important, but not decisive, having to do more with instinctuality than love. Biology and chemistry are a bit intimidated in the face of the multifaceted and complex reality of affectivity.[5]

Passion[6] is an "driver" that stimulates in the direction of formulating objectives, drawing up future plans, life projects, which urges towards

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[2] Wouldn't it be tragic if we loved only if stimulated by neurochemicals produced by different areas of the brain? The one who loves wouldn't have the right to be loved? Don't our minds feel this reciprocity legitimate? The Holy Fathers teach us that love is contaminating, having the power to be transmitted from one person to another. *Ibidem.*

[3] It will not be able to offer, as done in the Middle Ages, potions for increasing or diminishing love; there were antidotes and boosters to love, all made in the realm of witchcraft. Is postmodern science also ambitious to go in the same direction, offering the promise of a "Viagra" to increase feelings?" *Ibidem,* p. 47.

[4] Medicine observes how moments of marital intimacy offer the chance for the biological side to experience the outpouring of substances, including oxytocin, throughout the body, but this can in no way guarantee a lasting relationship or emotional intensity in the relationship. Love cannot be reduced to a simple chemical reaction generated by neurotransmitters such as dopamine, norepinephrine, vasopressin (ADH) (both secreted by the neurohypophysis and possible to obtain by synthesis) and oxytocin. Chemistry will never be able to explain all the emotional states that man can have, nor will he be able to find organic explanatory formulas for human creativity, faith, mystical feelings, joy, etc. *Ibidem,* p. 48.

[5] Let's not forget that many sciences work with the spiritual part of the human being, not only Theology and the Church: psychology, aesthetics, philosophy, anthropology, etc. do this. For example, psychotherapy can bring to consciousness different psychic mechanisms, it can highlight the mental part of man, which goes far beyond the molecular level... *Ibidem.*

[6] In general, passion is defined as a very strong, persistent impulse, "for" or "towards" something, an impulse that engages the whole being, thinking and action. Some people are

concrete action. In fact, it expresses vital energies, transfers feelings and emotions into thoughts. Passion also gives autonomy, the subject can manage it alone, through his own creation, for example in art. He can also do it at work, where, if the vocation overlaps with the profession, the subject finds his full happiness and fulfillment. Without the thrill of passion, life is superficial, monotonous, demotivated.

If correctly oriented, passion helps us build an exciting life project, energizes us at work, provides us with energy towards future prospects. At any time, one can make a transfer of energy from the material to the spiritual, and the other way. While young many confuse instinct with love. But if tempered and controlled, instinctuality can be transferred as energy towards other planes of existence, besides the biological one. Uncontrolled, it can endanger other levels of life. In the world of medicine, the feeling is a psychic reaction to a psycho-physical event, an emotion that is in connection with the affective area and can sometimes be in contrast to rationality. But, if the passions can be evanescent, more or less intense, the feelings act more deeply, being much more lasting.

2. A colossal affective bareness. Affective paralysis

Sociological analyzes show that the number of single people is constantly growing: whether they are widows, celibates, young people who postpone marriage or divorced. It also ends up being very widespread and - as a result - categorized as "normal" the category of young people who have short, transitory, temporary relationships, made without a period of "courtship" as done in the past: simple adventures that will never materialize in relationships. They are superficial, small, inconsistent affective investments, indications of the affective fragmentation of the subject that promotes them. Fragmentation has invaded the universe of feelings, disintegration lurks in the emotional realm.[7]

Many contemporary people are paralyzed in terms of "affectivity": they are no longer willing to love, they no longer have the power to get emotionally involved, but they resort to surrogates: virtual love over the Internet, illusory encounters far from reality, fragile imaginations. We discover in the media reports so many infidelities, separations, divorces, emotional disappointments: they are always people characterized by an

totally involved, they do something with "thrill", energy and explicit enthusiasm. This category includes painting, sculpture, music artists that put passion in what they do. They have activities that, while executing them them, melt the notion of "time". *Ibidem,* p. 58.

[7] There is also a very timid return to romance, seen especially in young people from divorced families, probably as a need for safe reference points; but it is not a phenomenon of proportions. *Ibidem,* p. 58.

extremely low ability to love. You are not only born with the power to love, but you also acquire the power to love through habit and practice. And if today's society no longer explicitly invites you in this direction, you remain abandoned to your own personal states and intuitions.

We therefore find a colossal emotional bareness spread throughout the world.[8] There is also a new category of "wretched": people who have lost their meaning in life, who drag their lives further deprived of bright prospects, who are no longer enthusiastic about any hope. These are harder to help or heal. [9] Often, even those who still have the power to love do so in an immature way. They offer a mushy, very diluted, fluctuating and intermittent love.[10]

As long as the adult remains psycho-affective immature, family life will be a source of anxiety and tension. In the United States, one in two marriages falls apart; likewise, in the region of Northern Italy, characterized by maximum economic development. The rest of the marriages survive, but they do not mean a paradisiacal, idyllic life, but have other reasons for perpetuation: small children, economic, ethical or social status reasons, fear of the reaction of relatives, insecurity, etc .: that is, multiple causes that force the continuation of life together, but which have little to do with love. Why did he get here? Why has the power to love died out in us? How can we help today's man to reach psycho-affective maturity? Only by becoming spiritual, resorting to religious support, to the Source of love in the world that is God, will we find the resources for love and for full accomplishment.

3. Times of carnal inflation. Love is learned!

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[8] We all know how to define material poverty: it is about people living in conditions unworthy of a human being, deprived of fundamental rights and basic necessities: food, water, acceptable living space, job, perspectives, education and cultural growth, etc. Affective poverty, on the other hand, is a hunger for human warmth and an inability to love and to desire one's own good and that of fellows. *Ibidem*, p. 59.

[9] Those who cannot receive love, who do not feel loved and do not have the power to love, sink, slowly but surely, into loneliness. An imposed loneliness, devouring, excruciating, hard-to-bear, and not the result of one's own choice. We live, in fact, in a society incapable of true "hospitality", of gratuitous love (as it will be in heaven), a society disinterested in the weak, the poor, the powerless. In our hyper-technological world, people are dying from love starvation! Despite the performance of science and technology, the deep needs of the human being have not changed. The postmodern man is also looking for something to fill his heart. And the best food for the heart is love. *Ibidem,* p. 58.

[10] Psychiatrist Giacomo Dacquino states: "In Italy, on Valentine's Day, the turnover corresponding to candies and flowers bought amounts to 900 million euros; and yet so absent is that mature feeling that oxygenates a society that has lost the courage to love; this is because the mind is used in a great hurry and the heart very superficially. Very often the goal is sexual intercourse or the narcissistic trophy, not the construction of a common project". *Ibidem,* p. 98.

There is a mimicked, fake, apparent, facade love produced or expressed by the broadcaster only out of interest, in order to build (or save) a positive public image. Our age has threatened enormously the power to love of the human being, made it unavailable towards love.[11] Humans become less and less willing to love, and more and more tempted to disregard love, to no longer recognize it as the supreme value, as man did in other epochs that deeply marked by Christianity.[12]

One can love a lot and love badly, in an immature way. The new generation has not been taught how to love well and usefully, healthy and long-term.[13] Love must not only be long-lived, but even eternal. Today's people no longer have the exercise of long-term love. Their emotional resources are depleted very quickly, and love turns into hatred. Hatred is, in fact, a disappointed love.

The couple love was also heavily distorted. Young people give up "courting", the pleasure of staged discovery, in order to reach the end, the conclusion, as soon as possible; many aim for sexual intercourse, the narcissistic trophy, and not the construction of a common, long-term project.[14] Love is therefore impoverished, parasited, weakened, deprived of simplicity, delight, amazement, poetry and pudicity. Thus, they forget that

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[11] Very often the external progress has meant internal regress: we have reached the edges of the solar system, but we have become increasingly underdeveloped inside: we are superficial, indifferent, competitive and aggressive, all to the detriment of inner values: affectivity, availability, dedication. We became emotionally coarse, but rational-cerebral sharper. We have a acute, cold, selfish thinking, interested in our own gain, fierce, proud of ownr performance, but emotionally insensitive. Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi,* p. 108.

[12] It is true that love and the disposition to love have been heavily aggressed from multiple directions, in more recent times: they have been trivialized by television (in movies, the American formula "I love you!" Was demonetized), instrumentalized by trade, simplified to consumerism, twisted into eroticism, mutilated in everyday life, with life focused only on the exterior. Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi,* p. 108.

[13] In the past, the Christian-oriented society had several radical, fundamental, intangible points of reference, which didn't have to be negotiated, because they were seen as coming from Heaven; therefore, sometimes they may have been too rigid; today's society has gone to the other extreme: boundless indulgence, superficiality, relativism, an option for the ephemeral, even in feelings. In the past, promising the future wife love until death meant emotionally securing her; today, this statement is seen as a form of labeling her as "gullible" and naive. Few still believe in neverending love. (n.n.)

[14] We live in times of sexual inflation and ostentatious sexuality; as a result, the constellation of affective values is in recession: infantilism dominates, the world abusively exposes its own shortcomings, indulges in its own ignorance, boasts deeds that should be ashamed of. Superficial models triumph in fashion trends, and many suffer from a unvoiced horror of not living up to the standards and canons imposed by the media. Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi,* p. 108.

love precedes man and goes far beyond him; it is a much broader, more complex, deeper reality than a man can live, encompass and assimilate in a lifetime; without realizing it, people opt for a daily emotional genocide, killing the countless chances to love and express themselves with love, chances that life offers to everyone generously.[15]

Today's people are not only strangers to each other, but they are also strangers to themselves. There is a lack of attention to inner necessities. The society programmed them to pay attention only to their external, public needs, to what they think would increase their prestige to others. We tend to do everything that seems urgent, but not what is important. Most often what is proposed as urgent is not really important.[16]

Psycho-affective disorders are difficult to spot, but are more widespread than previously thought. People tend to consider others happier than themselves, but that's because they don't know how to decipher the pain hidden in the lives of others. The fact that there are more and more psycho-emotionally ill people is shown by the fact that 70% of those who turn to a psychiatrist do so not because of an established mental illnesses, but for a devastating discomfort of their life, for a paralysis of enthusiasm, for a dwindling of the joy of living. Most are disappointed in love or at work. So psychiatrists are forced to go beyond the models of classical psychiatry to enter more into the universe of emotional experiences.[17]

Often life gives us the chance to live happy moments, of maximum emotional intensity, which we miss either out of ignorance or insensitivity, fatigue, haste or fear. But this whole destructive arsenal is present in our lives because only one thing is missing: transcendence! That is, the focus to

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[15] Gaining love is not an easy action, as the movies sometimes show, but requires effort, passion, selflessness, insistence, sometimes even pain. Those who have not reached psycho-affective maturity always live simplistic, superficial love, without depths, emptied of enthusiasm and passion. Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi,* p. 109.

[16] Interpersonal communication is very deficient, which is why the rate of aggression increases. Currently, the leading cause of anxiety and depression is emotional pain, as a result of: marital failure, exhausting worries about the future of children, worries about sexual performance, pain caused by mourning, etc.

[17] After Saint Valentine, the saint of couples, is celebrated, follows Saint Faustin, the saint of the lonely, of the unmarried, of the single, of the bachelors, of the unmarried. Confessors meet many people, women and single men, who have long been looking for someone to offer them a bit of human warmth. There are also married people who are suffocated by loneliness, even if they live together, because they are overwhelmed by thousands of tasks financially remunerated, but for which they pay a very high bill from an emotional point of view. The feelings we experience give us serenity or depression. And behind the feelings are hidden thoughts, right or wrong reasoning, and positive or negative concepts. It is our responsibility to decrypt them and opt for love. Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi,* p. 110.

the world beyond, to the true, not perishable values, which "the thief does not steal and the moth does not consume" as the Savior said.[18]

4. Relational immaturity with the woman

Statistics show that the number of people living alone has increased in recent decades: this is the case of young people who are afraid to live on their own, without thier parents, and to assume married life; they keep postponing this decision. There are many young people who are very dependent on their mother, who live their lives with her in a fusional relationship from a psychological point of view, not having the power to fly away from their native nest to build their own life.[19]

We thus see the emotional poverty in the world. In addition to the material poverty of those who live in conditions unworthy of a human being, deprived of basic necessities (food, housing, employment, future prospects, a minimum of cultural life) there is emotional poverty, a hunger for human warmth, of love. Love imbues life with meaning and a lot of color. Without it, existence becomes bleak. The new poor are people who have lost their meaning in life, who only "survive", deprived of prospects, because they have no hope for the future; this second category of poor is much harder to help than the first.

Not being loved and not offering love leads to a strangling loneliness. This is because we live in a society incapable of universal hospitality, which is disinterested in the poor and the weak. And in our technologically advanced world, the world is starving. Of hunger for love. Despite technological advancements, the deep needs of the human being haven't changed. The human being will always be looking for something

[18] The great "luck" on this earth is not to find a person to love us and to love back, but the essence of the problem lies in our ability to love in a mature, healthy way. We need to learn to love! And this is one of life's purposes: to learn to love. If we master this capital ability, we are blessed to live forever in the eternal world of God, where love is a breathable, happiness-generating energy. Giacomo Dacquino, *Liberta' di invechiare. Un'arte che si impara*, Torino, Societa' Editrice Internazionale, 1992, p. 166;

[19] Postmodern young people tend to have short relationships, without intense emotional involvement, preferring the strategy of a life sprinkled with many adventures, which, however, do not have lasting ties; so their life is one of emotional fragmentation. The lives of young people are sprinkled with many infidelities, betrayals, multiple simultaneous relationships, emotional paralysis as a result of a chaotic relationship to emotional life and love disappointments. In addition, "virtual" love is becoming more common on the Internet: illusory encounters, far from reality, transitory. Giacomo Dacquino, *Relazioni difficili. Trovare la via della serenità nell'amore, nella sessualità, in famiglia, sul lavoro*, Milano, Mondadori, 2006, p. 75.

that will be able to fill his heart with love. Only mature love is able to oxygenate a society that has lost the courage to love.[20]

Statistics show that last year in Italy there were about 5,000 marriages in which the bride was older than the groom. In this type of relationship, the man unconsciously seeks the maternal dimension of the woman, and the woman is attracted to the model of a husband and son. Such a husband loves his mother-mother in a possessive way, being dependent on her and having a vital need for her.[21]

The psychology of the husband-son blends perfectly with that of the mother-wife, a woman who, although married, remains predominantly a mother (regardless of whether or not they have children). This type of wife is more interested in relating to her husband as to a child, protecting him, suffocating him and releasing him from any responsibility, and she will be less interested in procreating and raising children. She is usually a woman who experienced as a child the divorce between her parents, losing her trust in them. She boasts that she learned from childhood "to rely only on herself." This attitude, apparently proof of a strong "I", actually masks a deep insecurity. It hides, from a psychoanalytic point of view, the childish omnipotence that is not properly overcomed.[22]

It is not easy to restore a love relationship that has already been "fractured" by many negative feelings such as: disappointment, fear,

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[20] The wrong reflex was picked up: the mind is quickly resorted to in a great hurry, and to the heart superficially and without consistency. And, in marriage, instead of seeking the construction of a common life project, validated by society, only a narcissistic trophy is pursued. If the mature person remains psycho-emotionally immature, the couple's life will become a source of anxiety and tension. Giacomo Dacquino, *Relazioni difficili. Trovare la via della serenità nell'amore, nella sessualità, in famiglia, sul lavoro*, p. 77.

[21] The truly mature adult is psychologically autonomous from life partnership. His addiction is a consequence of the relational immaturity with the woman, which is a consequence of a wrong pedagogy: he was for far too long around the mother, and too little around the father, which forced him to become a subjugated individual, not a brave leader. So as an adult, in the couple's relationship, he will play this role, he will enact the emotional transfer from childhood, from mother towards the wife. Giacomo Dacquino, *Guarire l'amore. Strategie di speranza per la famiglia di oggi,* p. 111.

[22] The woman who finds herself to be the life partner of a very dependent husband-son (usually the caress diminutives are: "My baby", "My precious", etc.) will have a very difficult life: the partner will want a permanently available mother (including from the point of view of conjugal life), and will not understand her when she will claim from him a participation in domestic life and towards the education of children. Because the husband will not assume certain masculine responsibilities in the management of household chores, his wife will have to assume his role, and she will gradually but steadily become stressed and aggressive, losing her self-esteem and slowly the love for this partner not adapted to realities. Giacomo Dacquino, *Bisogno d'amore. Superare l'immaturità psicoaffettiva*, Milano, Mondadori, 2002, p. 49,

sadness, anxiety, disgust, anger, lust for revenge. Certain crises in the couple's relationship are solved by looking for solutions in the past, using the history of the family of origin, clarifying the type of relationship each of the partners had with their own parents.[23] It is about a new training, a new education, through a couple psychotherapy that frees the husband-child from female subordination, teaching him to live "without the mother", and the mother-wife to stop negatively influencing the personality of her life partner.[24]

True love is a relationship marked by continuity, stability, prestige and a certain magnitude; it is not - in other words - precarious, fragile or fluctuating. Mature love is - according to the well-known Romanian expression, "clear as mountain water, but deep as an ocean". On the other hand, the immature, apparent, conventional, dilettante, pathological love is marked by discontinuity, always bears an interest and resembles a dirty, agitated and impure puddle. And yet, it is still water...[25]

Parents who love each other not only have a dialogue, but really communicate, and children easily notice this. Parents do this for the good of the couple and for the future of their children; their relationship is a responsible one, not one only out of interest or generated by a favorable context; the love relationship embalms the emotional atmosphere in the family and makes it pleasant and appealing. Children make direct contact with this pleasant emotional atmosphere, feed on it, but it also becomes a model for them to reactivate for the future, when they themselves will have their own family.[26]

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[23] For example, in the case of a husband who has replaced his mother-protector (or sister-protector) with his wife-protector by shaping a fusional relationship, we need to help this child to separate from the mother , which he would like to be permanently with.

[24] Giacomo Dacquino, *Bisogno d'amore. Superare l'immaturità psicoaffettiva*, Milano, Mondadori, 2002, p. 77.

[25] True love between adults is the best pedagogy for children, it is the best lesson for the next generation. If young people see that their parents are capable of high feelings, they will be shaped aware of the true values and depths of life. This will exercise them in sobriety and strengthen their life project. They will feel that these are things that are worth spending your life on, and even giving your life for. Love is an energy that convinces them that life is a very serious thing, that it deserves to be lived with total involvement. The first contact with love the children must therefore have is in their family of origin.*Ibidem,* p. 68.

[26] It is a proven fact that young people, as adults, tend to love and express their love exactly in the way they saw their parents doing it, when they were children. If in the family of origin they experienced a predominantly tense emotional climate, with quarrels, invectives, reproaches and perpetual expression of dissatisfaction, they - almost automatically - will later tend to reactivate a similar atmosphere in their family, considering it natural. The unconscious speaks for itself. In conclusion, we will say that the period of growth is cemented in the unconscious of children and becomes a paradigm of life. The "normal" for

The postmodern world is very confusing, it is a world in which it is not at all easy for some to orient themselves. The rapid mutations that recently took place regarding behavior, mentalities, values or fashion, have deeply shaken the way each individual conceives his self-fullfilment, how each person is considering his life project, of building a „happy future". Many of us at a certain age can be very surprised by the answer a young man can give today about how he considers his future self-fullfilment: prestige, brand clothing, a lot of money, multiple erotic experiences (ie marital and relational infidelity), nightclub life until 40 years old, etc.

The social and cultural transformations of the last decades have also radically influenced the way of life of the couple and the family. The way we live our lives changes - whether we like it or not - depending on the shock waves in society. In order to stop or at least reduce the slide on a slope that other eras would immediately have labeled as immoral and irresponsible, selfish and hedonistic, it is necessary in the new context to offer new rules of conduct and new patterns of behavior, that are perceived by today's world as fresh, appealing, consistent, axiologically validated. It is urgently needed to remove the rancid notions and flat language, obsolete values and outdated realities, in order to replace them with others, of maximum impact for the new generations.[27]

But in order for the family to be or become a protective space, a source of inner warmth and perpetual joys, it is necessary to heal it, to restore it's credibility in the public space, to identify its current defects and to cure its immaturity, namely to recover a culture of affectivity for it, to learn how to build a harmonious reality, a civilization of love! Only this way will our future be marked by hope, enthusiasm and joy of living. Otherwise, the depression will sprawl all over, mutilating people's destinies. And our desire to live will be extinguished as we move forward in life.

Instead of concluding: Without love, unhappiness will hold hegemony in the society of the future

In the Western world, although there is much prosperity, there is also much unhappiness. Prosperity presumes material abundance, relatively

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them is not the "ideal", or as it would be ideal for things to stand, but the concrete reality experienced by them in the past. *Ibidem,* p. 78.

[27] After the shock that the penetration of technology in all sectors of life has generated in the world, it is obvious today - for many - the requirement to go to the essential, the fundamental, the consistent, the requirement to give priority to correct social rules of conduct and action. There is a great need to return to true values, to focus our attention on what could make us happy, respectively on a comforting emotional climate in private life, on the family as a place, space, "nest" to revitalize the energies consumed at the workplace. Giacomo Dacquino, *Paura di amare. Come evitare e superare i fallimenti affettivi,* p. 39.

easy fulfillment of the primary needs. On the other hand, as a counterbalance, loneliness and unwillingness to love are dominating hearts, respectively hypoaffectiveness, emotional anesthesia; and neuroses have flooded society.[28]

Along with this category of excluded people, a new category of unfortunates is consolidating, of those oversaturated with too much material well-being: stalked by obesity, obsessed with the need to defend their capital, tired of their battles for success and social prestige, unable to and dedicate their time to feelings, they are people who have forgotten that their true identity is given by what they are[29], not by their earnings.[30]

The new world believes that there may be intimacy without inner involvement, love without continuity, security without effort, gain without sacrifice. In fact, from a psychoanalytic point of view watching reality, the whole world seems stuck in a phase of infantilism, a stage of growth when the child is a prisoner of magical thinking, when he thinks he can easily get whatever he wants, without effort.

The solution would be to stop seeking to remedy social evils without resorting to inner, individual restoration through the Church. Excluding God from everyday life is a program of unhappiness.

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[28] In this opulent society, whole categories of "excluded" began to appear, crushing in numerical terms: by the tens of thousands. If at the beginning the society managed to integrate the emigrants, staged but certain, now with their number becoming overwhelming, and the penetration rate of the western perimeter is almost machine-gunned, it no longer succeeds. So the new categories are excluded from a decent roof over their heads, from a stable and long-term job, from access to education, from health insurance. Giacomo Dacquino, *Paura di amare. Come evitare e superare i fallimenti affettivi,* p. 69.

[29] The relationships became more and more fragile and deficient, both in the family and at work, being marked by tensions and discomfort, because love was diminished and everything became precarious, knowing the risk of deterioration and disintegration. *Ibidem.*

[30] In a society that is becoming more and more superficial and ruthless, colder and more distant, more unwilling to any emotional involvement, in which material goods are given a higher importance than emotional ties, certainties disappear, fortifying beliefs disappear, trust in some in others disappears. The provisional acquires public sovereignty, everything is under the sign of the transitory and the mutations. Even the life partner is selected and greeted with wrong expectations, slogans like "Doesn't understand me!" poison the relationship, blaming and considering the other as being the cause of their own failures. *Ibidem,* p. 71.

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In Front of the World: the Birth of the Subject

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Abstract. *In the Orthodox Church, we often assume that some customs have only ritual significance, such as Baptism. It is somehow self-evident that the value of this custom belongs to our tradition, nation, or even superstition. For example, we tend to overlook the importance of Baptism in an ontological sense as a significant development of our own self-consciousness. Instead of being understood as the birth of the subject, the majority understand Baptism as primarily concerned with an immersion into a collective identity. This paper deals primarily with the emancipatory dimension of Baptism, which encourages the development of a responsible subject that is an active participant in life and history.*

Keywords: *Baptism, subject, Eucharist, responsibility, identity.*

1. Entering the Church - From Challenges to Custom

Today, it seems that Baptism is just another custom, and that its essence and value were exhausted long ago. The significance of what Baptism used to represent not only in the religious but also in the cultural milieu of past times seems to have lost its relevance today. Baptism has become a custom which is taken for granted, primarily to better incorporate us into traditional society. It is finally detached from its essence so that today even declared atheists baptize their children to follow cultural norms.

In Early Christianity, Baptism was an essential event for those who wanted to be incorporated into the Christian community. The Sacrament itself shaped the worldview of the newly baptized person. Therefore, the very entry into the Church was a revolutionary break with the mentality of rural Judaism and the Imperial culture of dividing people by their social value.

Baptism was imposed at the first apostolic council in 49AD instead of circumcision, leading to its later abandonment. Circumcision as a visible sign of belonging to the people of God was no longer obligatory, which made it easier for pagans to be religiously and socially integrated into Christianity. Importantly, Baptism also abolished the formal distinction between men and women before God. Circumcision itself was a sign of exclusivity because it concerned only men and was not open to women, thus excluding them from the inner Jewish life for more than five centuries.[1] Circumcision among the Jews as a visible sign of the covenant with God was intended primarily for men, indicating their importance. Baptism abolished

[1] Harry W. Eberts, "Plurality and Ethnicity in Early Christian Mission", in *Sociology of Religion* 58 (1997), no. 4, p. 314.

this distinction. In a relationship with God, gender no longer plays a role as a barrier in relationships.

After Baptism, the entrance to the Church was sealed with the anointment. In previous times the anointment was only given to emperors. Prophets and priests anointed the Jewish kings. However, in Christianity, every baptized person was anointed. In other words, entering the Church through Baptism and anointment, Christians from different cultural and social standing became equal in the community, i.e., they became kings and emperors – royal priesthood; "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1Peter 2:9). Their social differences lost their ultimate significance in the community of Christians. In Eucharistic meals, there was no place for discrimination or humiliation based on their social standing.[2] Social differences could not be erased or destroyed in the wider society, but they could become irrelevant in the events of Eucharistic meals. Thus, it was indicated in early Christianity that entering the Church through Baptism and anointment brought an entirely new ethos that Christians were supposed to witness. The entire value system is thus called into question before the new law of Christianity. Social and sexual differences became relative through the entrance into the Church.

As we have tried to show only briefly, Baptism was anything but a custom for the early Church. It gave rise to the first "revolution" in the Church because it led to the abandonment of circumcision as an exclusive male custom. Furthermore, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles fifty days after Christ's resurrection brought different languages. The collective Jewish identity of the apostles was de-centralized, i.e., their identities were defined in the context of their various locations and people they would meet in their mission. There is no more central place, no more language, no more authoritative seat of power, not even in Jerusalem. The old centers: the Torah, the Temple, the Sanhedrin, etc., were deconstructed, and the center of Christianity is no longer in the maintenance of Jewish identity but in the affirmation of a new personal Christian identity. This new identity is a dynamic one, expressed through the manifestation of spreading a Gospel through various languages. There is no single primary language, but each has become an authentic translator of the Christian message. No language has become the absolute norm for a new Christian identity, but all have been affirmed. In the same manner, no one nation was seen as superior, but rather every nation was valued. In other words, Christianity did not abandon ethnicities. Rather, it confirmed them as an inclusive concept in the context of the new faith.

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[2] Rastko Jovic, "Η «περιορισμένη επανάσταση» του Παύλου", in *Θεολογία* 86 (2014), p. 149-169.

Therefore, by entering the Church, a newly baptized person was supposed to abandon his old worldviews. It was a challenge for everyone who was baptized and the Empire itself because a different ethos spread within the official cultural policy. Even when imperial politics led to the official recognition of Christianity in the late fourth century, the masses of Christians were still questioned before their Baptism about their faith. The questioning of faith was not reduced to uttering any theological definitions, but the ultimate criterion was Matthew 25. Those ready to get baptized received queries in line with Mt. 25: Do you help the poor, widows, the sick, etc.,[3] or simply put: how much do you make of Christ's "living presence" in your life.

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me [something] to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?

'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, [even] the least [of them,] you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me [nothing] to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' Then they themselves also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matthew 25: 31-46).

1. After Baptism – "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword"

[3] Николај Афанасјев, *Ступање у Цркву,* Краљево, Епархија Жичка, 2008, p. 110.

Instead of being ultimately dependent on its cultural or ethnic identity, the baptized Christian acquired a relational and challenging relationship with the broader community. Even more, faith became a personal effort and not something given or imposed by family or other collective entities.[4] Moreover, Baptism became a call for each and every Christian to step into the world of responsible subjects. Predominant collectivistic understanding of faith in Judaism at the time would not allow the development of individuality. In other words, dependence on the family develops a person to become more conformist to its family.[5] Conformism to the family does not allow any change in one's life, which disables the possibility of individual development.[6] As an exclusive part of collective identity, the Christian faith is in danger to reduce itself into customs, traditionalism, and exclusiveness.

Already in the Gospels, we are warned to avoid a spirit of collectivism in order to work on strengthening human subjectivity. The emergence of subjectivity can be found in Christ's words, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34). Whenever it is necessary to justify war, divisions, conflicts, and violence, this Gospel quotation comes as an excellent excuse for any of mentioned topics. In the context of non-violence in which the entire New Testament is immersed, it seems a great injustice when the words of Matthew 10:34 are interpreted as a justification of a physical violence.

"For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household" (Matthew 10:35-36).[7] At the time of Christ, for Jewish believers, abandonment of their religious inheritance could have death as its consequence: Acts 6:11-14, 8:1-3, 21:20-21, 21:27-36, 23:12-15.[8] The significance and meaning of faith have been blurred and drowned in the intertwining of family relations. Strong family ties could not significantly spread Christ's message among the Jewish population, especially in rural areas. The tradition, which was shaped and kept in the family (household) and which allowed the survival of the people as the people of God, became a double-edged sword. The tradition in the Jewish context, maintained by the family, with its folklore and rituals,

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[4] Растко Јовић, *Динамика хришћанског идентитета*, Београд, ПБФ, 2018, p. 66.
[5] Θάνος Λίποβατς, *Φαντασιακή και Αληθής Ελευθερία*, Αθήνα, Πλέθρον, 2008, p. 55.
[6] *Ibidem*, 56.
[7] Safrai S.& Stem M., *The Jewish People in the First Century - Historical Geography, Political History, Social, cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*,Volume II, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976, p. 748.
[8] J. D. G. Dunn, „The Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2.11- 18)," *JSNT,* 18 (1983), p. 34.

became more and more an obstacle to Christ's message.[9] In all its forms, the spirit of collectivism shaped the limits of faith, which became a list of established rules and customs. The customs of eating, the observance of the Sabbath, and circumcision only supported the idea of Jewish election and preserved their sense of uniqueness.[10]

Faith became the property of community which expresses it through the adherence to the long-ago established customs. Deviation from this adherence means a betrayal of the family, and even more, the chosen people. Thus, the individual member has been reduced to an object within the collectivistic safeguarding of religion. Therefore, Christ attacks religious routines that became more important than human beings - "*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath"* (Mark 2: 27). He eats with sinners, violates the rules of cult purity, works on the Sabbath, and as the culmination of his confrontation - dies on the cross (tree) as a cursed person according to the rubrics of the Law (Deuteronomy 21:23).[11] "He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor 5:21).

2. Personal Love

The novelty of faith that Christ brought to humanity requires love, and to love means that faith requires a person. The sanctification of the subject begins with Christ's command, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Loving one's neighbor implies that a person loves himself to start with, and that is undoubtedly a sobering and challenging path of growing up and developing self-awareness. Personal faith is a liberating message because we are not subjugated by the faith that our family or any other community sometimes wants to impose on us. Still, we are called to take a step into the world of personal growth. As Christ's call to the true faith, the emergence of the subject results in a call to build a new quality of relationship within the human community.

Christ's message to love our neighbor as ourselves is found in the Old Testament (Gen. 19:18), but what was revolutionary in Christ's message is its inclusive interpretation. More than clearly, through the story of the

[9] Dunn J.D.G., *The New Perspective on Paul*, Michigan/Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2008, p. 109.

[10] *Ibidem.*

[11] This is later repeated by the Apostle Paul in Gal 3:13: "Christ has redeemed us from the curses of the law have become a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on to the tree."

Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37),[12] Christ shows that the neighbor is no longer just a member of the chosen people[13] but every human being.[14] His message of love for one's neighbor, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation, pointed to a new humanity and abandonment of the previous worldview in the form of a division into "us" and "them" as the basis of a collective narrative. The person is not invited anymore to love because of belonging to the same group of people. The person is asked to love other humans inclusively, whether or not they belong to the same cultural or ethnic background. The Story of the Good Samaritan is an invitation for members of the new faith to cross the borders of their respective collective identities into the space of conscious subjectivity.

Apostol Paul reminds us, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:2)." His invitation to Christians to reject conformism to this world means to be against collectivism because we need to be conformist only to Christ.[15] In essence, this conformism to Christ means the birth of a new identity, which brings a critical relationship to the reality in which we live. "Identity development is a process… it is a lifelong process, if one is open to learning, identity is in constant evolution."[16] The Church's mission should be in the constant identity development of believers; Her imperative is to make an effort to be a community composed of responsible and inclusive personalities, subjects of history who, in the best way, could be able to "iconize" the Kingdom of God in history.[17] Despite the clear awareness that the Kingdom "cannot be realized on earth as a secular creation,"[18] this does not need relativization of our efforts to go in that direction today.

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[12] Choosing to portray the Samaritan as good among the Jews, he was extreme an example used by Christ, given the well-known intolerance between the Jews and the Samaritans. Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972, p. 204.

[13] John E. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 4: Leviticus*, Dallas, Word Books, 1998.

[14] Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 33b: Matthew 14-28*, Dallas, Word Books, 1998.

[15] Kathy Ehrensperger, "Be Imitators of Me as I am of Christ: A Hidden Discourse of Power and Domination in Paul?" *Lexington Theological Quarterly 38*, 2003, p. 256.

[16] Donna Hicks, „The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy & Conflict Transformation*, ed. Raymond G. Helmick & Rodney L. Peterson, Philadelphia & London, Templeton Foundation Press, 2003, p. 131.

[17] Cf. Rastko Jovic, "Delusion of Truth: Church as Community," *Astra Salvensis* VI (2018), no. 12, p. 477-483

[18] Александар Шмеман, *Дневник оца Александра Шмемана 1973-1983*, Београд/Требиње, Епархија захумско-херцеговачка и приморска, 2015, p. 111.

The life of Christ was a call to imitate faith as an action, the good news that truly brings joy to its fruits (heals the sick, the poor, gives hope to sinners, comfort to the forsaken). The tradition whose bearers are family members (father, mother, mother-in-law) somewhat disables the spreading of Christ's good news, which relies upon conscious individuals. The Christian faith, therefore, far exceeds the rules of the collectivist spirit of religiosity.

Perhaps in that sense, the words of Christ are getting more obvious for a different interpretation: "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household" (Mt 10: 35-36). Christ suggests that we must go through a painful separation from the group identity on the path of faith. i.e., to awake our responsibility. The Lord's sword cuts off exclusivity and barriers that isolate human beings, separating the subject from the subjugation to the collectivistic yoke.

Epilogue

As Apostle Paul once tried to unite and include people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, he expressed and witnessed the Eucharist as a gathering in the Kingdom of God. It is precisely in this inclusive fellowship that Christ offered Himself as remission of sins. The effectiveness of the Eucharist has been in its inclusivity. Consequently, the inclusive identity witnessed and proclaimed in Lord's Supper truly is a genuine community and, at the same time, an event of forgiveness. Forgiveness will not be given to us if we cannot express the inclusivity of the Christian identity witnessed in the Eucharistic gathering.

The incarnation of Christ enabled the unification of every human being with God; human nature was brought in and anchored in the arch of the Holy Trinity. The event of the Eucharist is a local event, which means that it is conditioned by the language, the people, the culture of the given space. In union with Christ, every particularity is introduced and ascended into an event of cosmic dimensions. Moreover, Christ saves every particularity, individuality, every locality from the danger of closing in itself, isolating itself from the rest of the world, or translating it into fundamentalism and fear, the rejection of the other.

Entering the Church through Baptism and anointment advanced the essential sanctification of the subjectivity. A human being stands alone in front of the cosmos, born in Christ. A newly baptized person no longer loves their family for the reason of biological dependence, but because they become aware of the Christian imperative to "consciously" and "critically" love and value them. In other words, a human person can say, "I don't like my family for the reason of biology, because that's how I have to do -

unconsciously. Suddenly, I love because I am conscious of my identity, my role, and my being in the context of salvation – I am becoming aware of my subjectivity."

The Church has this enormous message that can unlock the possibility for a person to be not what it is, but what it can become. In the context of the importance of a new Christian/Orthodox identity, a constitutive element should encourage the responsible and inclusive freedom of believers. Orthodox identity is called upon to witness the authentic experience of what it is to be Orthodox, i.e., the identity which respects and accepts particularity as a base for the universality of its mission. It is a lifelong process to develop this new identity in which the Church needs to play the most prominent role being truthful to Her eschatological image.

The Principle of Graduality as an Important Part of Christian Conjugal Love

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Abstract. *This Contribution discusses ethical principle of graduality (the principle of gradual growth) as one of the ways, with which one can progress towards the achievement of ethical ideals in the application of the problematic situations of the spouses with family planning. This principle essentially means that moral norm commits objectively, but concrete individuals are able to respect it on different degrees according to their abilities. Here we want to point out the approach of the magistrate and the popes as well as various specialists to this difficult problem of human growth to know and observe the moral natural laws.*

Keywords: *principle of graduality, gradual growth, family planning, ethics.*

As one of the ways in which one can proceed to the fulfilment of ethical ideals, especially in the field of sexual ethics, the principle of graduality, i.e. the principle of gradual growth (sometimes referred to as the law of succession), is proposed in Catholic moral theology. This term also appears in official documents of the Church, such as for ex. in Article 34 of the Encyclical of John Paul II *Familiaris consortio* (FC), and he passed into this encyclical with part of the text from the homily of John Paul II to the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops of 1980 *On the roles of the Christian family in today's world*.[1] It is also located in Art. 9 of the 1997 Pontifical Council for the Family document - *A guide for confessors on some moral issues concerning married life*.[2]

The principle of graduality is mentioned in these documents of the Magisterium (but also in the works of theologians[3]) especially in connection with the regulation of conception in marriage and the difficulties of

[1] John Paul II: *Homily At The End Of The Fifth Synod Of Bishops*, *8 (25. Okt. 1980)*. In: Aas 72 (1980), P. 1083,Https://Www.Vatican.Va/Content/John-Paul-Ii/It/Homilies/1980/Documents/Hf_Jp-Ii_Hom_19801025_Conclusione-Sinodo.Html, Accessed 12. 05. 2021.

[2] Pontifical Council For The Family, *Vademecum For Confessors Concerning Some Aspects Of The Morality Of Conjugal Life,* 1997. In: Http://Www.Vatican.Va/Roman_Curia/Pontifical_Councils/Family/Documents/Rc_Pc_Family_Doc_12021997_Vademecum_En.Html accessed 12. 07. 2021.

[3] For Ex.: B. Honings, „Christian Conscience And Humanae Vitae," In: Tettamanzi, D. (Edit.): *Natural Family Planning. Nature`S Way – God`S Way*, New York, St. John's University Press, 1980; Possible First Edition (January 1, 1980), p. 204; J. Skoblík, *Přehled Křest'anské Etiky*. Praha, Karolinum 1997, p. 209.

accepting the doctrine of natural methods of family planning as the only ethically correct option (see HV 14-15).[4]

This is also mentioned in the above encyclical *Familiaris consortio*, which specifically states: „*Married people too are called upon to progress unceasingly in their moral life, with the support of a sincere and active desire to gain ever better knowledge of the values enshrined in and fostered by the law of God. They must also be supported by an upright and generous willingness to embody these values in their concrete decisions. They cannot however look on the law as merely an ideal to be achieved in the future: they must consider it as a command of Christ the Lord to overcome difficulties with constancy. "And so what is known as 'the law of gradualness' or step-by-step advance cannot be identified with 'gradualness of the law,' as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God's law for different individuals and situations. In God's plan, all husbands and wives are called in marriage to holiness, and this lofty vocation is fulfilled to the extent that the human person is able to respond to God's command with serene confidence in God's grace and in his or her own will.*"[5]

John Paul II however, it clearly shows that this is not a denial of unchanging norms that apply equally to all people as some one-sided interpreters of autonomous morality do. Piegsa emphasizes here that God's commandments cannot be seen as "target commandments" in the sense of an unattainable ideal (FC 34).[6]

Shortly before the publication of the *Familiaris consortio*, Piegsa adds, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote on the subject of "graduality": with this idea of "graduality" he is re-acquiring and concretizing the motive of "being on the road" for moral knowledge and practice. It is said that the whole Christian

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[4] Paul Vi: Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae* (Hv), 1968, Https://Www.Vatican.Va/Content/Paul-Vi/En/Encyclicals/Documents/Hf_P-Vi_Enc_25071968_Humanae-Vitae.Html (12.07. 2021). The Very Popular Message Of The Würzburg Synod Of German Bishops (Christlich Gelebte Ehe Und Familie, Beschluss Der Synode Der Bistümer In Der Bundersrepublik Deutschland 1975) Reads: "The Method Used Must Not Mentally Injure Any Of The Partners Or Limit His Ability To Love." This Message In The 1980s Appealed To Many Christians Of Various Denominations, Cf. Lüscher K., Böckle F., Familie, In: Böckle F., Kaufmann F.-X., Rahner K., Welte B., *Christlicher Glaube In Moderner Gesellschaft*, Herder, Freiburg Im Breisgau 1981, Tome 7, P. 141.

[5] John Paul Ii, *Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio Of Pope John Paul Ii To The Episcopate To The Clergy And To The Faithful Of The Whole Catholic Church On The Role Of The Christian Family In The Modern World*, 34 (Fc) Https://Www.Vatican.Va/Content/John-Paul-Ii/En/Apost_Exhortations/Documents/Hf_Jp-Ii_Exh_19811122_Familiaris-Consortio.Html (12.07. 2021).

[6] Cf. J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe*, Tome Iii, Eos Erzabtei St. Ottilien, 1998, P. 212.

path is conversion. However, the conversion takes place in far-reaching steps.[7]

Honings states that Italian bishops, addressing the same problem in their statement shortly after the issuance of the Humanae vitae, state that the couple should not feel depressed due to their falls. The Church, whose duty it is to teach good in its entirety and perfection, realizes that there is a law of advancement in action and that a person can advance, albeit still after imperfect degrees, but striving to reach for them and move towards the ideal. Similarly, the bishops of France taught that the encyclical Humanae vitae encourages us to chart a path. However, man progresses on the path of holiness with patient steps, sometimes falling, sometimes getting up. Every day is a small struggle, supported by hope, and every existence is mixed with good and evil. What is important, however, concludes Honings, is, despite this ambiguity in the understanding of life and love, the advance towards sincere fidelity to the truth.[8] So what does this principle of graduality, stated and recognized by ecclesiastical documents, mean?

According to Klimeš, the essence of this principle is already indicated in the New Testament in Luke: „Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. Rather, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins" (Lk 5: 36-37). Thus, a new person and his Christian maturity are also needed to receive and carry out the new teachings. On the subjective and practical level, however, adulthood, characterized by the fulfilment of God's will in everything, is reached gradually - step by step.[9]

In the modern Austrian moral theological Dictionary, there is a very brief mention of graduality. It is stated here that graduality indicates the fragmentation of moral commandments. However, the authors of the dictionary immediately add that a specific question of use can be e.g. much less universally applicable than the commandment of love. Furthermore, the authors state that by this term we also mean various subjective approaches to a certain commandment, which man, e.g. it is not able to adhere perfectly,

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[7] Kard. Ratzinger J. (Archbishop Of Munich And Freising), *Brief An Die Priester, Diakone Und An Alle Im Pastoralen Dienst Stehenden.* Munich 8.12.1980, P. 9 (Cf. Kommentar ´Kardinal Ratzinger: Nachtrag Zur Bischosynode´, In: Herder Korrespondenz 35 (1981), P. 57-60. Piegsa Adds, However, That The Importance Of The Law Of Graduality Has Not Been Recognized In This Commentary, Cf. J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe,* p. 213, Note 389.

[8] Cf. B. Honings, „Christian Conscience And Humanae Vitae," in D. Tettamanzi, (edit.), *Natural Family Planning. Nature`S Way – God`S Way*, St. John's University Press, 1980; Possible First Edition (January 1, 1980), P. 204.

[9] Cf. J. Klimeš, „Zamyšlení Nad Vademecum Pro Zpovědníky," in *Teologické Texty (Zb.)*, 8 (1997), no. 6, p. 210.

but nevertheless retains the intention to adhere to them more or less broadly. The authors also note other principles and terms related to graduality: *the principle of double effect, good, decision, conscience, wisdom, norm, value*. At the same time, however, they do not mention any other study literature on this term of graduality.[10] Still, see the direction they want to alert us to. Conscience, its formation and the need to make a decision with prudence play a fairly important role here.

On the other hand, several modern publications on sexual ethics completely ignore the term graduality.[11] And this applies not only to the so-called liberal, progressive moralists, but to the surprise of many conservatives.[12] In a detailed examination, we will realize the walls that divide the individual theological schools and even the walls between the official Vatican documents of the popes and many theologians. As we will state later, it is precisely in the case of the term graduality that this is an attempt by John Paul II to introduce it into official documents. Compared to FC, this attempt has a waiting period of almost 8 years at L´Osservatore Romano and a 14-year waiting period until the release of EV.

The correct statement of St. Bishop Augustine also contributes to the correct understanding of the principle of graduality, aptly saying that God does not command any impossible things, but admonishes him to do what he can, ask for what you cannot, and helps you to do it. he could.[13]

Indications of this principle can also be seen in the redemptorist Bernard Häring, who developed respect for subjective (according to Alfonso of Liguori[14]) and insurmountable ignorance in moral deeds into the theory of distinction between moral theology and pastoral counselling. Although

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[10] H. Rotter, G. Virt, *Neuer Lexikon Der Christlichen Moral*. Tyrolia Verlag, Innsbruck, Wien, 1990, p. 311.

[11] For Ex. B. Fraling (Sexualethik) Or G. Denzler (Forbidden Delight), *And The Same Lthk*, (Lexikon Für Die Theologie Und Kirche).

[12] Cf. A. Laun, *Aktuelleprobleme Der Moraltheologie*, Wien, Herder, 1991. And H. Even Weber, *Spezielle Moraltheologie*, Graz, Styria, 1999 And K. H. Peschke, *Křesťanská Etika*, Prague, Vyšehrad, 1999. On The Slovak Side E.G. Mráz M. Sj, *Špeciálna Morálna Teológia. Dekalóg.Prikázania Iv, Vi., Viii., Ix., X,* Bratislava, Aloisianum, 1996. Even Slovak Protestants Called The Encyclical Letter Hv "Moral Hypocrisy", Cf. I. Kišš, *Social Ethics,* Bratislava, Comenius University, 2006, p. 168.

[13] Cf. Augustinus, A.: *De Natura Et Gratia* (C. 43, N. 50). In: Http://Www.Augustinus.It/Latino/Natura_Grazia/Index.Htm (12.07.2021); Cf. Denzinger, H. J. D. *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum Et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei Et Morum* (Ds), Sess. Vi, Excuse Decree *Cum Hoc Tempore*, Cap. 11, 1536; Cf. Can. 18:), Http://Patristica.Net/Denzinger/, accessed 12. 07. 2021.

[14] Cf. Ch. E. Curran, *The Catholic Moral Tradition Today. A Synthesis,* Georgetown University Press, Washington, 1999, p. 192 – 193. Professor Charles E. Curran Is Still Considered A Rather Controversial Catholic Moralist, But His Works Significantly Advocate Many Aspects Of Christian Ethics.

insurmountable ignorance may refer to the realm of lack of knowledge, in the light of modern psychology, a similar approach applies to the existential status of the whole person.

It is Curran who states that the principle of graduality owes most to the teachings of Alfonso of Liguori, whose great contribution was the introduction of "reconciliation" into moral theology after the struggles of rigorists with laxists and probabiliorists with probabilists in the 17th and 18th centuries. Alfonse's research led him primarily to a case study and discussion of individual cases, while his great contribution was associated with distinguishing the primacy of the subjective field without denying the reality of the objective field in morality. A significant controversy in his time concerned the possibility of insurmountable ignorance of natural law. Could a person be ignorant of the requirements of natural law and sinless at the same time? Rigorists rejected the possibility of insurmountable ignorance of natural law, but Alfonse, with his recognition of the role of the subject, defended the possibility that a person may be ignorant in several distant aspects of natural law without any guilt or criminal responsibility. Alfonse, according to Curran, also surpassed St. Thomas Aquinas by teaching that an evil deed committed in insurmountable ignorance is not morally attributable, and may even be good and meritorious. Its penetration into the primacy of the subjective was gradually developed by theologians into the "principle of graduality."

Häring insists on the need for growth for all Christians, as all are called to holiness, but there is also an understanding of obstacles. An individual may be existentially incapable of meeting the requirements of objective morality at a certain time and under certain conditions. In doing everything an individual can exist existentially and while remaining in a state of openness to greater and better fulfilment of moral requirements, human action is formally good, even though we can materially evaluate it as evil. Pastoral counselling deals with the individual in his existential situation and thus differs from moral theology.[15]

According to Klimeš, the principle of graduality is actually a recognition and designation of the fact that not all people are morally or

[15] Cf. *Ibidem,* p. 193. Curran, Whose Interpretation Of Hv Is Not Sympathetic To Bishop Laun (A. Laun, *Aktuelleprobleme Der Moraltheologie*, p. 75), It Also States That The Encyclical Humanae Vitae Implicitly Suggests This Difference In Articles 19-31, Recognizing That Those Who Use Contraception May Not Always Be Subjectively Guilty. This Is How The Letters Of The Above-Mentioned Episcopal Conferences Actually Think. The Author Also Cites The Statement Of The Synod Of Bishops Of 1980, Which Recognizes The Principle Of Graduality, But Recalls That There Can Be No False Dichotomy Between The Teaching Of The Church And Pastoral Practice, Cf. Ch. E. Curran, *The Catholic Moral Tradition Today. A Synthesis,* p. 193.

physically able to fulfil the requirements of God's commandments, even though these requirements apply equally to all people. On the one hand, the real possibilities of the people are respected here, and on the other hand, relativism is avoided at the same time.[16] The Latin word *gradus* means degree - and thus the principle of graduality denotes the empirically observable fact that man matures in his life in stages and should reach the full fulfilment of moral order and thus a full life according to God's will. Thus, at the individual stages of one's development, one has the possibility and the obligation to satisfy certain requirements, but on the other hand, there are such requirements which, due to one's condition, one is unable to satisfy. E.g. a certain bad habit may not be overcome at a given moment.[17] This principle is therefore based on the fact - concludes Klimeš - that sometimes a person in his current situation is unable to fully respond to God's call, but that over time, with increasing perfection, he acquires the ability to fully realize and accept the ideals required of God.[18]

Skoblík gives a similar definition: the principle of graduality, according to which he teaches that the moral norm is objectively binding, but specific individuals can respect it to varying degrees.[19] However, this must not be interpreted as a denial of immutable norms, although there is a tension between objective duties and subjective abilities.

John Paul II states possible obstacles: "Decisions that go against life sometimes arise from difficult or even tragic situations of profound suffering, loneliness, a total lack of economic prospects, depression and anxiety about the future. Such circumstances can mitigate even to a notable degree subjective responsibility and the consequent culpability of those who make these choices which in themselves are evil. But today the problem goes far beyond the necessary recognition of these personal situations. It is a problem which exists at the cultural, social and political level, where it reveals its more sinister and disturbing aspect in the tendency, ever more widely shared, to interpret the above crimes against life as legitimate expressions of individual freedom, to be acknowledged and protected as actual rights."[20]

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[16] Cf. J. Klimeš,: *Princíp Graduality V Psychologickém Poradenství.* In*:* Http://Klimes.Mysteria.Cz/Clanky/Teologie/Graduali.Htm , accessed 28. 10. 2009.
[17] Cf. *Ibidem.*
[18] Cf. J. Klimeš, "Zamyšlení Nad Vademecum Pro Zpovědníky," in: *Teologické Texty,* 8 (1997), no. 6, p. 210.
[19] Cf. J. Skoblík, *Přehled Křesťanské Etiky*, Praha, Vyšehrad, p. 209.
[20] John Paul Ii, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (Ev), 18, Https://Www.Vatican.Va/Content/John-Paul-Ii/En/Encyclicals/Documents/Hf_Jp-Ii_Enc_25031995_Evangelium-Vitae.Html accessed 12. 07. 2021.

According to Honings, re-applying the principle of graduality to married life, spouses are required to "set a goal" in the first place. This is followed by the path to this goal, with the spouses taking steps that are possible for them in a particular situation. Ultimately, the characterization of the spouses' progress does not lie in their weaknesses or falls, or even in the difficulties of overcoming the path, but rather in perseverance in their efforts to advance on God's path.[21] Skoblík adds that although this progress would take a long time, the decisive factor for the couple is that they want to be on the road to fulfil the commitment (with the help of prayer, the sacraments ...).[22] Husbands who honestly claim that they are now unable to use natural family planning should not be blamed for sin, but rather be encouraged to trust in their own progress, which God knows above all.[23]

Auer adds to the Margo of the principle of graduality, i.e. gradual progress, that in the ethical questions of marriage, what is experienced at the end should not be put into play at the beginning - the sacrament and the institutional nature of marriage. It should start with what one experiences first - a loving partnership. Then, as if "by itself", there is a chance of true graduality.[24]

Kevin T. Kelly in his book *Divorce and Second Marriage* states that the principle (even the law) of graduality applies to the kind of dilemmatic situation in which two focus points must be left, even though they cannot be aligned with each other in the present. The first point of focus (we can call it *universal focus*) is the general value or law that concerns human persons in general, rejects the individual and is regardless of his individual situation. The second focus point (*particular focus*) includes the ability of the individual at his level, in the history of his personal development, as well as characteristic manifestations in his particular situation, which may have a special human character. The principle of graduality is oriented towards the growing convergence (or arrangement) of particular and universal focus, although it accepts that particular focus will be decisive when the individual makes his free choice "here, now and in this" specific situation.

Despite this explanation, however, decisions will always contain something unsatisfactory, as neither the particular nor the universal focus will ever be exactly the same. The principle of graduality thus recognizes that

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[21] Cf. B. Honings, „Christian Conscience And Humanae Vitae," p. 204.

[22] This Principle Was Named *Optio Fundamentalis* At The Ii Vatican Council, And One Of Its Zealous Disseminators Was Jacques Maritain, See I.-M. Szaniszló, *Úvod Do Základnej Katolíckej Morálnej Teológie I.*, Košice, Kňazský Seminár Sv. Karola Boromejského, 2008, P. 167.

[23] Cf. J. Skoblík, *Přehled Křesťanské Etiky*, Praha, Vyšehrad, p. 210.

[24] Cf. A. Auer, „K Etické Diskusi O Sexualitě A Manželství," in *Teologické Texty*, 12 (2001), no. 5, p. 178.

this process of balancing takes time. We could also point out the old school definition of *ens* and *essentie*: *ens* is what it is and *essentie* is what it should be.

In the case of certain individuals or in some particular conditions, the individual may not be open to greater than particular performance. He may never be able to achieve certain values, only gradually, if there is a change in the situation in which he has to live his life. However, this may even be beyond his control and may never occur. Kelly concludes that this discrepancy between the two focus points could be roughly what some moral theologians consider "non-moral evil." This is like their way of stating that the two focus points do not coincide completely.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the principle of graduality must not be limited to the subjective field of inner personal growth. The personal sphere cannot be separated from its social context.[25] Kelly also notes that John Paul II. in the above-mentioned Article 34 of the Encyclical *Familiaris consortio*, rightly warns against the abuse of the principle of graduality, which would take away all creative tension from a humanly unsatisfactory situation (one that is not properly achieved) by declaring that each situation is virtually independent and has its own law, would be tantamount to an extreme situational ethic.

According to Kelly, the principle of graduality is basically the statement that people can start from where they are - from the state in which they are. This is where they have to make their key decision and where they will include their current level of growth at all levels - emotional, psychological, intellectual, moral and spiritual. What is required of them is not some superhuman decision beyond their current abilities, but a decision that is made correctly according to their ability and capabilities, that is, it gives reasonable importance to the most important values to the extent that they see them. In addition, the obligation to start "from where you are" involves starting from their current interpersonal and social situation.[26]

One of the esteemed basic moral laws says that no one can be tested beyond his means. Finally, let us try to emphasize once again the ideas of John Paul II from FC 32, where it is said that artificial conception is in itself a moral disorder (*intrinsece malum*), as it contradicts the mutual donation of spouses. Nevertheless, as Piegsa points out, the 1989 L´Ossevatore Romano[27] contains a position which was later taken over in the Encyclical

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[25] Cf. K. T. Kelly, *Divorce & Second Marriage. Facing The Challenge*, Kansas City, Sheed & Ward 1997, p. 51 – 52.
[26] Cf. *Ibidem.,* p. 52.
[27] Sich Am Göttlichen Gesetz Ausrichten. Die Moralische Norm Von ´Humanae Vitae´ Und Der Pastorale Auftrag, In: L´Osservatore Romano 16.02.1989 (German Version 24. 02. 1989, P. 1 R. 6), Cf. J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und*

letter *Evangelium vitae*, which says that the Christian moral tradition has always emphasized the difference between *objective disorder* and subjective guilt. Thus, not only intentions and motives, but also different life situations and, above all, all reasons that may affect conscience or freedom of will ("*the Christian tradition has always emphasized the difference between objective disorder and subjective guilt ... it is legitimate to take into account various factors and aspects of a particular act of a person, and thus not only his intentions and motives, but also various life situations and, in the first place, all causes that could affect his conscience and his freedom of will*"[28]). John Paul II he himself draws attention to the distinction between method and ethics of action (this is not a technique, but ethics[29]), and yet a method separate from its own ethical dimension is often practiced functionally, even directly utilitarianly.[30]

Piegsa points out that it is important to realize here that, in contrast to situational ethics, which emphasizes the subjective situation in particular, there remains a balanced view of what this decision will cause and what it will not cause. This decision cannot change an "internal mess" to an "order", but can nevertheless affect the responsibility of the person acting to varying degrees. The quote in question is thus a rejection not only of situational ethics, but also of its opposite extreme, which in some cases - referred to as a moral disorder in itself (*intrinsece malum*) - does not recognize the reasons that reduce guilt. That is why the term "law of graduality" (gradual growth) has developed in both moral and pastoral theology, and even in some Magisterium instructions.[31] Nevertheless, this law cannot be confused with the so-called "The graduality of law".[32]

In 2008, on the 40th anniversary of HV, many theologians, bishops, and experts returned to the problems of marital sexuality. Surprisingly, none of them (according to our research) dealt with the principle of graduality. Nevertheless, the term used by Benedict XVI. in his address to the participants in the international congress at the Pontifical Lateran University

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Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe, p. 210-211.

[28] J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe.*

[29] Cf. Ján Pavol Ii., *Ako Muža A Ženu Ich Stvoril*, Metodicko-Pedagogické Centrum V Bratislave 2007, P. 338.

[30] Cf. *Ako muža a ženu ich stvoril*, p. 340.

[31] Cf. J. Piegsa, *Msf: Der Mensch- Das Moralische Lebewesen. Wahrheit Und Treue. Die Würde Menschlichen Lebens, Das Lebensrecht Und Der Lebensschutz. Geschlechtlichkeit Als Gabe Und Aufgabe,* p. 211.

[32] Cf. Fc 34.

on May 10, 2008, "sexual education"[33] and finally the term "path to growth to virtue"[34] could be very close in its content and use to the term graduality.[35] Finally, let us quote the words of Benedict XVI from his speech for the conference on the 20th anniversary of HV in October 2008: "*Technology cannot replace the maturation of freedom when love is at stake ... Reason needs a heart here.*"[36]

Finally, I would like to recall the grasp of the subject during the pontificate of Pope Francis and especially his encyclical focused on the family called *Amoris laetitia.*[37] In the first place, Pope Francis is in the complete integrity of the thought of John Paul II. and his exhortation by the *Familiaris Consortio.*[38] Of course, his path, called "divine pedagogy," seeks to help many who have difficulty on the path to holiness, but he does not oppose moral laws.[39]

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[33] Human Life International Österreich, Europäische Ärzteaktion, *Humanae Vitae. Der Glanz Der Wahrheit*, Wien, Immaculata Verlag 2008, p. 121. It Is Interesting That None Of The Other Important Theologians In This Collection Even Came Close To This Term (Possibly The Concept Of Ethics Of Activities Of P. Townley, Svd, Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 66). This Also Applies To Another Important Austrian Publication On The Anniversary: Casetti Ch., Prügl M., *Geheimnis Ehelicher Liebe. Humanae Vitae- 40 Jahre Danach.* Referat Für Ehe Und Familie, Salzburg, Erzdiözese Salzburg, 2008.

[34] Cf. Benedikt Xvi., "Humanae Vitae: Aktualität Und Prophetische Bedeutung, Botschaft Von Papst Benedikt Xvi," An *Den Internationalen Kongress Der Humanae Vitae,* Rome 3.-4. Oktobra 2008,p. 136.

[35] Psychological, Sociological and Pastoral Tasks Of Spouses' Development Could Also Be Added Here After O.H. Pesch, F.-X. Kaufmann, K.H. Mandel, „Ehe", in F. Böckle, F.-X. Kaufmann, K. Rahner, B. Welte, *Christlicher Glaube In Moderner Gesellschaft*, Herder, Freiburg Im Breisgau 1981, Tome 7, p. 68.

[36] Cf.: *Benedikt Xvi,* p. 139.

[37] These Ideas Come From The Lecture „De La Loi De Gradualité À La Pédagogie Divine" At A Colloquium On The Occasion Of The 8th Anniversary Of The Pontificate Of Pope Francis Under The Title „Dix Regards Prospectifs Sur Huit Années De Pontificat" Held In The Form Of A Video Conference On 16 March 2021 By Anne-Solen Kerdraon, Responsible For The Specialty Of Moral Theology At The Institut Catholique Paris,Https://Www.Youtube.Com/Watch?V=Jsw0signf58 accessed 12. 07. 2021.

[38] Pope Francis, Encyklical Letter *Amoris Laetitia*, 122/ 151/ 295/ 300/ 317/ Https://Www.Vatican.Va/Content/Dam/Francesco/Pdf/Apost_Exhortations/Documents/Papa-Francesco_Esortazione-Ap_20160319_Amoris-Laetitia_En.Pdf accessed 12. 07. 2021.

[39] Bordeyne Ph., *« Pédagogie Divine » Et « Loi De Gradualité » : Un Accent Majeur Du Synode De 2014 Sur La Famille*, Https://Diocese92.Fr/Documents/Pdf/Pedagogie_Divine_Et_Loi_De_Gradualite_-_Nanterre.Pdf (12.07.2021). Complete Article For A Visit On Fino C. (Ed.), *La Pédagogie Divine*, Paris, Coll. "Théologie À L'université", Ddb, 2015.

Ecology in the Revelation of John

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Abstract. *The topic of this paper presents the application of modern ecological hermeneutics to the text of the Revelation of John. Faced with the challenges of the global ecological crisis, the text of Revelation provides a timeless picture of the impending environmental problems that society is facing nowdays. In accordance to the roots of the ecological crisis and its impact on society, biblical exegesis can provide concrete solutions to this problem. The elaborated sections of Revelation in this paper emphasize the eschatological connection between man and nature and point them to each other. In addition, Revelation emphasizes the union of man and nature in Christ himself - the sacrificial Lamb, who suffers for people and nature. By changing first the individual, then the collective consciousness about men's attitude towards creation, humanity has the opportunity to replace the current picture of the state of the earth's ecosystem - symbolically presented as Babylon - with the potential for a new reality of creation - the New Jerusalem.*

Keywords: *Revelation of John, ecological hermeneutics, ecological crisis, man, creation, ecology, Lamb, nature, Babylon, New Jerusalem.*

1. Introduction

The Revelation of John is the only New Testament writing that is thematically and genre-wise apocalyptic. Exegetically speaking, the apocalyptic writings of the ancient and middle ages, from the Sumerian-Babylonian civilization to the Central American Indian civilizations, abound in the possibilities of diverse interpretations. The revelation of John is no exception in the milieu of apocalyptic writings of ancient civilizations. The exegetes of the early Church approached the interpretation of Revelation very carefully. Interpretations have changed over the centuries, and hermeneutic methods of interpretation have become diverse. Until modern times, the Revelation of John has been the subject of numerous researches.

What enables the book of Revelation to be one of the priority books in all generations of Christians, which is dealt with by both theologians and other branches of the social sciences, is a topic of the end of the world. The active anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ by the first Christians caused the book of Revelation to be interpreted almost literally at that time. As time went on, each generation of Christian exegetes actualized Revelation through the global events of the time, heralding the imminent or imminent end of the world. The world was changing, and the events and images of Revelation received numerous historical-literary, cultural, patristic, up to modern current interpretations.

The current socio-natural global circumstances have conditioned them to become even more relevant through Revelation and to point out the constant aspiration of humanity towards the Second Coming of Christ. The topic of this paper will be ecology in Revelation. The paper will first review the beginnings of

the actualization of environmental conditions as a specific problem of the world community. Quotes from Revelation related to ecology and the problem of nature conservation in general will be elaborated in detail. In the specific interpretations of the passages from Revelation, the literary-historical method of interpretation will be used, as well as the narrative method and the canonical method of interpretation. The main method of interpretation of Revelation will be the ecological hermeneutic method, one of the modern biblical methods of interpretation. This method will be presented through the interpretation of the sections of Revelation through the prism of modern ecological conditions that the world is facing.

2. Ecology as a problem of world civilization of modern age and the role of the Scriptures

The end of the 19th century brought two great changes to world civilization: the beginning of intensive industrialization and the beginning of the intensive decline of the Earth's ecosystem. The rapid progress of technology, primarily in the field of ore exploitation and other natural resources, the growing expansion of urban spaces at the expense of ecosystems has contributed to the disturbance of the previous natural balance between flora and fauna on the one hand, and man on the other. At the center of global consciousness are almost endless possibilities for advancing technology and increasing the potential for using everything the Earth has to offer.

Large corporations, governments of world powers, but also larger and smaller entrepreneurs and landowners exploit forests first, then ores and a relatively new discovery - oil. Industrialization, in addition to its undeniable devastating impact on the planet's ecosystem, also has a huge impact on the global way of thinking in humans. In terms of public opinion, until the middle of the 20th century, preoccupied with both industrialization and the two world wars, world opinion did not show significant interest in the natural environment.

The consequences of wars and human exploitation of planetary resources begin to become clear only from the end of the Cold War, when man's global preoccupation with potential new war conflicts ceases. Experts point to the problem of ecosystem damage, pointing out the still major problems: global warming, numerous extinct and endangered animal species, and irreversibly disturbed forest relief, which has contributed to the global deterioration of air quality, drinking water and plant diversity.

The disturbance of the ecosystem in the global thinking of man had to find a connection with Christianity, as the dominant cultural milieu of the developed countries of Europe and the USA until then. Christianity is facing the disruption of ecosystems precisely through the biblical understanding of the relationship between man and nature. Lynn White's 1967 article stirred up the

American public, directly blaming Christianity for the environmental crisis.[1] His argument is that the Holy Scriptures in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis place man above the entire creation. Man is the crown of God's creation, made in His image, and thus the most exalted creature in relation to other created forms of life.[2]

This attitude of God towards man, permeated throughout the entire Old Testament, served the advocates of increasing environmental awareness to emphasize the Holy Scriptures as one of the main problems of the ecological crisis. If the Scriptures treat man as a superior being to whom the whole creation is at his disposal, it is precisely this that is responsible for several facts:

- Man, being more sublime than the entire ecosystem, feels called to use the resources of the Earth at will, as his right guaranteed by creation;[3]
- Nature is subordinated to man and thus its importance and role in the salvation of the whole world is questioned;
- A clear distinction is made between the value of human life on the one hand, and plants and animals on the other.

Modern ecological consciousness deals with the human role in the world in a negative sense. Linking man's negative attitude towards nature with the Holy Scriptures necessarily leads the interpreters of the Scriptures to explore the relationship between man and nature, and the very relation of the Holy Scriptures to the environment, and thus to place the Holy Scriptures in the role of protectors of the environment.[4] Center of wiew for this "ecological" role of scriptures must become a loving God, revealed in His eternal love for mankind and whole Creation.[5]

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[1] Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* ,155 (1967).

[2] Kivatsi Jonathan Kavusa, "Ecological Hermeneutics and the Interpretation of Biblical Texts Yesterday, Today and Onwards: Critical Reflection and Assessment," *OTE* 32 (2019), no. 1, p. 231-250, p. 250.

[3] John van Buren, "Critical Environmental Hermeneutics," *Environmental Ethics* 17 (1995), p. 264-266, p. 264. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „"Ecology – Main Concern for the Christian space of the 21st Century? Catholic and Orthodox Perspectives," in *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies,* 19 (2020), issue 56, p. 126.

[4] Holmes Rolston III, "The Bible and Ecology" in *Journal of Bible and Theology* 50 (1996), p. 16-26, p. 17.

[5] Inocent-Mária Vladimír Szaniszló OP, "How much justice are we able to do in our political society? Social ethical and theological reflections on the virtue of justice and its implementation for a development of our post-communist countries also in the period of COVID-19 pandemic", *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 17, pp. 91-113, p. 94.

3. Ecological method of interpretation of Revalation

The ecological hermeneutic method is relatively new. In philosophy, ecological hermeneutics first develops as a concept of examining the human relationship to nature. It seeks to establish environmental awareness at the individual level, and at the global level, environmental ethics.[6] Ecological hermeneutics tries to answer the question of the notion of human existence in correlation with nature. Ecological hermeneutics develops in the works of Martin Heidegger, Paul Reeker, Wilhelm Diltney and Hans-Georg Gadamer.[7]

From a philosophical point of view, ecological hermeneutics is applied to theology as a biblical exegetical method. In the early 1960s, an eco-theological current of texts appeared in the United States, observed in the works of Joseph Sitler and Richard Baer.[8] However, eco-theological texts began to be published en masse after an article by Lynn White in 1967, with a tendency to defend the biblical tradition from accusations of collapsing the natural environment.[9]

Theologians of that time published several professional texts in which they tried to emphasize the affirmative attitude of the Holy Scriptures towards nature.[10] Ecological hermeneutics opens an exegetical field of better research of the relationship between nature and man, and God and nature. Ecological hermeneutics emphasizes two types of critical thinking:

- Ecological critique of Christianity;
- Christian critique of cultural patterns of behavior that cause environmental damage.[11]

Ecological hermeneutics gained importance only by focusing the world public on existing ecological problems. Lin's already mentioned article caused the opening of a new field of biblical exegesis. Jurgen Moltmann pointed out that due to the new global problems, it is necessary to re-examine the Holy Scriptures and re-examine the role of nature in the world.[12]

The ecological method of biblical exegesis cannot be adequately applied to biblical texts alone. Modern environmental problems (air pollution, global warming, massive forest defloration, and extinction of animal species) were unknown to the first recipients of the Scriptures message.[13] Therefore, it is necessary to apply the literary-critical and narrative method of exegesis, taking

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[6] Martin Drenthen, "Environmental hermeneutics and the meaning of nature", *Oxford Handbook of Environmental* Ethics (still not published article) p. 1.
[7] Drenthen, *Environmental hermeneutics*, p. 1.
[8] Kavusa, *Ecological Hermeneutics*, p. 231.
[9] David G Horrell, "Ecological Hermeneutics: Reflections on Methods and Prospects for the Future", University of Exeter, UK, November 2014, 3.
[10] Kavusa, *Ecological Hermeneutics*, p. 232.
[11] *Ibidem,* p. 236.
[12] *Ibidem,* p. 234.
[13] Wesley Smith, "Becoming More Mindful of Creation," *Caring for Creation,* Texas, The Center for Christian Ethics Baylor University, 2012, p. 65-72, p. 67.

into account the cultural-social context. With the application of these methods to the biblical text, the ecological lesson, viewed from the prism of the message of the Holy Scriptures to today's recipients, can find its application in the everyday life of the world. The affirmative relation of God to nature, represented above all in the wise and prophetic literature, serves as a good basis for setting up a constructive critique of the present society and its relation to creation. Altered socio-cultural awareness of human society, that adult men are not owners of women, children, property and nature,[14] requires new research of biblical texts and search for an ecological message that is relevant to the current socio-cultural global milieu, which is more in favor of mutual independence. The modern age requires new theological focuses, and the world ecological crisis as a modern problem of society has opened the door to the introduction of ecological exegesis in biblical studies.[15]

4. The Revalation of John and ecology

4.1. Rev 5:13 - The Lamb of God as the link between man and nature; ecological motive

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

Even in the very introductory chapters, one of the main motives and protagonists of the action is introduced into the narrative of the Revelation of John: the Lamb. The Lamb, Christ, received authority from God the Father to judge the world and was given to open the scroll with the seven seals that marked the beginning of the end of the world. The Lamb is identified in glory and parts, and power and authority with the One who sits on the throne, and the whole universe calls to them. Transcendental beings, angels (Rev. 5:12) together with the whole creation (Rev. 5:13) praise the Lord. The common exaltation of praise metaphorically shows the identification of everything created in one primary goal: praising and glorifying the Creator.[16] The relationship between the Creator and the entire creation shows that there is no essential difference between angels, people and nature in the domain of eschatological reality. The eschatological identification of people with nature is one of the ecological messages of Revelation, because it binds man to creation not only in the earthly, but also in the future life.

The relationship between the Creator and the entire creation shows that there is no essential difference between angels, people and nature in the domain

[14] van Buren, *Critical Environmental Hermeneutics*, p. 266.

[15] Smith, *Becoming,* 68.

[16] Peter S. Perry, "Things having lives' : Ecology, Allusion, and Performance in Revelation 8:9," *Currents in Theology and Mission,* 37 (2010), no 2, p. 105-113, p. 112.

of eschatological reality. The eschatological identification of people with nature is one of the ecological messages of Revelation, because it binds man to creation not only in the earthly, but also in the future life.

However, if the Lamb is viewed as Christ himself, and not as a motive representing Christ, and is considered as an unquestionable motive of sacrifice, the question may be asked: Could the Lamb, if a motive or metaphor, be given one or more interpretations? If the answer were in the affirmative, ecological exegesis, with the previously confirmed unquestionable identification of the Lamb of Christ with the sacrifice he made for the world, could ask the question: why was the Lamb taken as a symbol of sacrifice?

Putting the question in a dialogical perspective, the ecological interpretation leads to the conclusion that the image of the Lamb being sacrificed is important not only for people, but also for nature. The allegorical identification of Christ with the lamb in the ecological interpretation can represent the identification of the God-man with the creation, that is, to confirm Christ's sacrifice through the ecological prism in the correct confession of the Church: Christ is the Lamb of God who sacrifices himself for the life of the world and its salvation. The ecological interpretation of the Lamb as a symbol of the union of man and nature through the God-man Christ does not deviate from the teachings of the Orthodox Church. Consulting Rev. 5:13, this image received eschatological confirmation that the whole world, the whole creation, is called to be saved and to praise the Lord, since it is united precisely in the sacrificed Lamb of Christ.

4.2. Rev 8, 7-12 - four trumpets

The first concrete mention of the role of ecosystems in Revelation is the trumpeting of the 4 trumpets that mark the beginning of the great suffering of the human race. The Lord's wrath due to human evil first pours out on living and inanimate nature, indicating the unbreakable connection of human sin with the destiny of nature.

7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The seventh verse of the eighth chapter of Revelation shows the beginning of the earth's suffering because of human sin. Suffering affects a third of the country - τὸ τρίτον τῆς γῆς. The noun γῆς in the primary meaning refers to the soil, and as the suffering of the grass is specifically mentioned in the further course of the verse, the writer of Revelation could describe the fertile soil, the sown fields on which there is no fruit yet. The beginning of the suffering of the Earth received its final form in Rev. 16: 3-4, where the final suffering of nature through the pouring out of 7 cups of the wrath of the Lord. One third of the trees and all the grass, concrete dominant forms of relief of

Asia Minor[17] The first recipients of Revelation were to present the consequences of human sin as something that would touch them, something that would actually happen in their place. The gradation of the suffering of the natural environment starts from fertile soil, as the basis of plant growth, through trees as a source of oxygen and next to stone, the basic building material, to grass, a clear association with the Kingdom of Heaven. Since the time of the Old Testament, greenery has been an unequivocal allusion to the Garden of Eden, paradise.[18] It should be mentioned that the word grass χόρτος can refer to grass, greenery, and grain. Used with the adjective χλωρὸς - green, unequivocally refers to grass and green low vegetation.[19]

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

From the suffering of the soil and the basic forms of vegetative growth - ground plants and trees, God's wrath passes to the sea. Water (sea, rivers) is one of the sources of food for the Israelis, but also for the coastal region of Asia Minor. The sea surface that becomes blood prevents the life of sea creatures and the navigation of ships, which in ancient times was the dominant form of traffic, transport and trade in the Mediterranean.

When the water relief suffers, the symbol of blood as an impure factor and pollutant dominates. There is a clear analogy with Exodus 7: 20-21, the conversion of water into blood by Aaron in Egypt. The heritage of the Old Testament, along with the Gospel, is one of the foundations of the faith of the first Christians. The description of the suffering of the sea and later, rivers and springs due to blood, shows that the primary recipients of Revelation are either Jews by birth, or are familiar with the heritage of the Old Testament. Otherwise, the analogy with the Book of Exodus would be ineffective to readers. Also, the analogy with the passage from Exodus 7: 20-21 shows the power and authority of God over creation and sinful people. God justly punishes unjust and sinful people, and punishment is first suffered by the creation for which people are responsible.[20]

A key part of the relationship between God and the flora and fauna is giving epithets to living creatures in the sea. In the Greek original, the phrase

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[17] The origin of the Revelation of John dates back to around 96 AD, and the city of Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, is taken as the place of origin by most exegetes. In the area of Ephesus, there was a Christian community led by the disciples of John the Theologian.

[18] Jame Shaefer, "Valuing the Goodness of the Earth" in *Caring for Creation*, Texas, The Center for Christian Ethics Baylor University, 2012, p. 11-19, p. 15.

[19] In interpreting the words from the Greek original, the English Standard Version of the Greek edition was used, taken from the site: "Interlinear Bible," Google: https://biblehub.com/interlinear

[20] Perry, *Things having lives*, p. 110.

ἔχοντα ψυχάς - having souls (lives) was used. The term ἡ ψυχὴ in ancient Greek philosophy refers to human, clearly separating him from the rest of the living world. In the New Testament, the term also predominantly refers to humans, while in Revelation 8: 9, sea creatures are given this epithet. By identifying humans and sea beings with the common defining term of life (soul), mankind is called to determine its relationship with God through the image of the suffering of sea beings.

Universally speaking, man's guilt draws not only anger at him, but also at the animal world. This verse of Revelation can be interpreted as a kind of lament of the writer of Revelation over water souls who suffer because of human sin.[21]

Revelation definitely encourages readers to think about creation, emphasizing the moment of suffering of creation as an eschatological presentation of the unbreakable connection between human and nature.[22]

The created man from the Book of Genesis is placed above all created beings and still life, both to govern them and to be responsible for them at the end of the world and time.

10. Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

11. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

The third trumpet of wrath brings plague on rivers and springs of water. The writer unequivocally connects the downfall of the work with the existence of people in its primary form. If the first two trumpets destroyed the creation to the extent that they leave man in a shortage of food, the third trumpet destroys drinking water, bringing death to anyone who drinks water. The gradation of the impact force on the ecosystem is reflected in the comparison of 4 subject verses: the first trumpet brings hail and fire from the sky that falls to the ground, the second trumpet a whole mountain that is thrown into the sea, and the third a star that falls from the sky. This gradation indicates the gradual increase of the ecological catastrophe with the increasing negative impact of man on nature. The star that falls on the springs of water is called Pelen Ὁ *Ἄψινθος* , and it brings bitterness to the waters and makes them unfit for drinking.

Modern global environmental research predicts a shortage of drinking water in the coming centuries. According to a study by the World Health Organization, in 2017, 71% of the world's population had daily access to clean and uncontaminated drinking water, with a declining trend.[23] This is the result of

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[21] Perry, *Things having lives*, p. 112.

[22] Jonathan C. Augustine, "Environmental Justice and Eschatology in Revelation" in *Loyola Law Review,* 58 (2021), p. 325-348, p. 336.

[23] "Drinking-water", World Health Organisation, Google, Last modified June 14, 2019. *https://www.who.int/,* accessed 14. 06. 2019.

the harmful impact of heavy and purpose-built industry on rivers and springs, and precipitation, the correctness of which is endangered by massive gas vapors. The section on the four trumpets in itself imposes itself subject to the ecological method of interpretation. Revelation speaks very affirmatively about nature, bringing it into equality with man, precisely the soul, the common factor of humans and animals. The plant world Revelation does not view it on the same level as animals and humans, which it describes as having souls, but it clearly indicates the dependence of human existence on nature.[24]On the other hand, no part of Revelation emphasizes human rule over nature as good. In the further text of Revelation, in the section on Babylon and the New Jerusalem, human rule over the world is presented as seen by the advocates of environmental protection: as repressive and exploitative over the rest of creation.

4.3.Rev 18, 1-19; 21, 11-17 - Babylon and the New Jerusalem as a depiction of man's relationship to creation

The passage on Babylon from Rev. 18: 1-19 brings a perfect allegory of human disobedience to nature. In the section, an angel shows John the city of Babylon, which is portrayed as a lavish harlot. Babylon is the meeting place of all sin, immorality and fornication, human greed and desire for power. It is these facts that are sublimated in the motif of Babylon show the human impulses the Man's bad attitude towards creation is expressed by the motif of Babylon, which leads people to use the resources of the Earth for personal enrichment and to satisfy their own non-essential needs. The people who destroy the earth in Revelation are mentioned in Rev. 11:18: at lead to the destruction of both the human race and nature.

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

The term nations in the Greek original reads τὰ ἔθνη, people who are angry are those who do injustice to God's witnesses in the earlier course of Revelation 11.[25]

The Lord rewards His dead servants by destroying the nations, those who corrupt the earth - το ς διαφθείροντας τὴν γὴν. The nations mentioned in Revelation are represented by the negative symbols in Rev. 11: 8 - Sodom and Egypt, the nations that killed God's witnesses. [26]

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[24] Perry, *Things having lives*, p. 114.

[25] Eliezer González, "The "Destroyers of the Earth" in Revelation 11,18 – Who are they?" *DavarLogos,* 14 (2015), p. 91-107, p. 95.

[26] González, *The Destroyers of the Earth,* p. 96.

The motifs of Babylon, Sodom and Egypt can be viewed through ecological interpretation as negative symbols of developed civilizations that do not care in their progress, both for eternal salvation and for the Earth's ecosystem. The description of the fall of Babylon is the best presentation of the essence of the negative attitude of entire nations towards creation. Those who lament the fall of the great city are in order:

- kings and rulers of the earth; in Rev. 18: 9-10, kings are represented whose relationship with Babylon is described as fornication. They represent world governments that, for the sake of their personal sinful desires, mourn the lost civilization, not caring about the damage it has done to God's creation.

-trader; trade is portrayed in Revelation in a distinctly negative light, beginning with Rev. 3:17, where trade in the coming centuries is made conditional on the worship of the Beast (global world powers). The merchants mourn Babylon for the income from the trade they lost, and the inability to cash in the exploited ore and other earthly goods.

-sailors and ship captains; this primarily refers to maritime trade, which in the ecological light can be interpreted negatively, because it implies the exploitation and appropriation of water surfaces for personal gain by states and individuals.

The specific metaphor of Babylon for the first recipients of Revelation represented the Roman Empire. Rome served as a timeless symbol of all the coming world superpowers with the moral values of its imperial culture and the destruction of both people and relief, caused by constant conquests. From the ecological aspect, Babylon (Rome) represents a human repressive attitude towards everything created.[27] In the modern context of the ecological crisis, the city of Babylon serves as an indication of the bad motives of world governments. By hinting at the end of the world and the judgment of Christ, they should be made aware that their attitude towards creation conditions their future existential and eschatological well-being, which can only be achieved through a careful attitude towards creation.[28] Contrary to the motif of Babylon as a current, but also future image of the world governments' attitude towards creation, Revelation offers an ecological solution by presenting the motif of the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is presented as a city of perfect dimensions and great beauty, which the Lord brings down to earth. Ecological exegesis interprets the New Jerusalem as a new creation of God, a human potential realized in this world.

For the first recipients of Revelation, the New Jerusalem is a paradigm for Babylon precisely by comparing the moral values represented by Rome and the messages of the Gospel.[29]

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[27] Augustine, *Environmental Justice*, p. 339.

[28] González, *The Destroyers of the Earth,* p. 94.

[29] John E. Stanley, "The New Creation as a people and city in Revelation 21:1-22:5: An alternative do despair", in *The Asbury Theological Journal* 60 (2005), no 2. p. 25-38, p. 28.

Rome is portrayed as negative because of the specific life context in which Revelation was written. The repression of Rome towards the Church in Asia Minor caused the bad attitude of Rome towards Christians to be reflected in the repressive attitude of the Roman Empire towards the conquered territories.[30] The New Jerusalem is what people can do with creation if they change their attitude towards nature. The fact that the New Jerusalem descends from heaven to earth unequivocally gives people hope that they can make paradise on earth. Modern society, pressed by the decay of ecosystems, is looking for a message of hope, a picture of a potential solution to the problem. The Church should insist on the concept of the New Jerusalem as its contribution to global environmental dialogue. Contrary to the gloomy reality which, from a scientific and socio-cultural aspect, does not offer a solution to the problem, the New Jerusalem offers a picture of an arranged place to live, a cherished creation that provides people with a place of the presence of God Christ. The kingdom of God is presented as realistically possible on earth.

5. Summary

- Book of Revelation contains some major points of ideal relation of man towards Creation. Writer of the Book judges those who „destroy the Earth".
- Ecological crisis and environmental issues of modern age are in close relation with men's understanding of Scripture. By misjudging God's planned role for man as ruler instead of a guardian of Earth, men did their best to rule over Creation, making it's flora and fauna ill.
- Christian Churches must use their significant influence to press the issue of ecology in mainstream culture and politics. Revelation of John may become a stronghold over which Christian Churches will base their ecological sphere of influence, in relation with ecological hermeneutics as base point of spreading ecological issues in global occurances.

6. Conclusion

Revelation of John is an underutilized ecological potential for modern society. The Christian Churches can use their influence on world affairs to deepen the awareness of global opinion on environmental protection. The Revelation of John offers the possibility of a critical consideration of the relationship of modern man to the ecosystem of the Earth, on an individual and global level. The message of hope and the motive of the New Jerusalem is a picture of the potential of people to renew the Earth on which they live, to which they are existentially attached, as well as the one for them. Ecological exegesis uses the ecological hermeneutic method of interpretation in order to place the sections of Revelation in the service of actualizing the message of revelation in the present day. The anthropocentricity of Scripture, the emphasis

[30] Stanley, *The New Creation,* p. 28.

on man as the created ruler of the world, must adapt to modern environmental challenges, not deviating from the original timeless message of Scripture. Modern man must become aware of his responsibility to the rest of creation. He must use his role as the manager of the creation in order to protect and restore the creation, because he will identify with the creation when the real events of the end of the world occur. Together with animate and inanimate nature, man will praise the Lamb the Christ, in whom God, man and nature are united in eternal existence.

The problem of diminished ecological consciousness of people must be solved by the direct intervention of the Christian Churches, which must take on the role of the manager of creation. The Church must stand out by emphasizing the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Tradition as affirmative towards the preservation of the environment, and be committed to a concrete solution to the problem. Ecological awareness must be emphasized in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, first of all on the level of the individual, through the religious community, all the way to the common attitude of Christians about the faithful preservation and real application of the ecological message of Revelation.

Not being a Pharisee: thoughts on rule-following in Serbian Orthodoxy

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Abstract. *This article considers the rich Serbian Orthodox discourse about rules. Using ethnographic data from the central Serbian town of Kraljevo, it argues that – at the level of everyday religious practice – people find ideas about rules and right practice incredibly generative for evoking the abstract concepts of sincerity, repentance, and belief. Orthodox faith is elusive, and people frequently evoke in terms of that which it is not.*

Keywords: *Serbian Orthodoxy, rules, liturgical life, belief, orthopraxis, Serbian Orthodoxy, rules, liturgical life, belief, orthopraxis.*

In their seminal essay on the anthropological study of Eastern Christianity, Chris Hann and Hermann Goltz (2010) consider the relationship between 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxis' in the Orthodox Tradition.[1] Historically, a common analytical approach has been to understand that relationship in dichotomic terms – the split between what the official Church teaches and what people 'actually do', between 'scriptural' and 'popular', between 'doctrine' and 'lived religion'. Hann and Goltz caution against such a binary model, advising us to consider the 'complex combinations' between belief and practice.[2]

In this short paper I consider the interplay between belief and practice in ethnographic terms. In particular, I speculate about how the rich Orthodox discourse about rules and right practice actually generates a discourse about sincere belief. The Orthodox liturgical world is replete with ideas about rules: about how to behave in church, how to bow and cross oneself, how and when to fast, and how to venerate icons. Church bookshops are packed with literature offering spiritual guidance. At the same time, there is a counter-discourse which critiques any insistence on rule following. This stance claims that what matters is not pro-forma performative piety, but the depth of faith behind it. What really matters, people claim, is the *essence*, not the form. I argue that – at the level of everyday religious practice – ideas about rules are incredibly generative for thinking about what 'Orthodox faith' actually is. Orthodox faith is elusive, and frequently evoked in terms of that which it is not.

I make this argument by drawing on ethnographic data from fieldwork in and around the central Serbian town of Kraljevo. It has been

[1] C. Hann, & H. Goltz. 2010. „Introduction: the other Christianity?," in C. Hann & H. Goltz (eds.), *Eastern Christians in anthropological perspective,* Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, p. 1-29.
[2] *Ibidem,* p. 16.

widely noted that whilst the majority of the Serbian population identify nominally as 'Orthodox', only a very slim minority attend church on a regular basis. This paper considers the latter group, the demographically-diverse network of people who strive to live 'liturgically'. That is, beyond asserting a nominal Orthodox identity they seek to live a life 'in the faith', focussed around taking regular divine communion, confession and praying. Many of these people – especially the older generation – grew up during Yugoslav socialism, and received no religious training during their childhood. They came to Orthodoxy only later, during the 1990s, as socialist Yugoslavia collapsed and the Church offered compelling answers to a moment of social turmoil.

What one encounters in such circles is not only people practising their faith (physically going to Liturgies, taking Divine Communion) but also people thinking openly and self-reflexively about what it means to be 'Orthodox'. Thus, as much as it is characterised by churchgoing, Kraljevo's liturgical world is also shaped by discussion about what it is to be a good 'believer', as well as well as gossip about – and praise and criticism of – other churchgoers and their piety. In such a context, ideas about 'rules' have an important social function. My interlocutors are well aware of all the practices that they ought to engage with as Orthodox Christians: following the Liturgical cycle, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays and for each of the four main fasts, as well as taking Divine Communion. At the same time, there is an awareness that simply blindly following such activities in themselves is not enough. As others have noted, in the Orthodox Tradition, what matters is the *meaning*, following the 'spirit' and not the 'letter' of the rule.[3] But that 'sincere' faith is slippery, famously hard to define and gauge.

Let me begin by introducing Miroslav,[4] a retired man in his early sixties. Growing up in socialist Yugoslavia, Miroslav did not have an Orthodox upbringing. It was only later in life that he engaged deeply in the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church, studying its tradition of praying, fasting, and liturgics. Today, he is very active in church circles. Once, after the Liturgy, he spoke to those of us who were sitting around, drinking coffee. Miroslav wanted to impress on those assembled that simply going to church was not enough to achieve salvation. He spoke in a parodic fashion, mimicking other churchgoers:

[3] A. Forbess, A. 2010. „The spirit and the letter: monastic education in a Romanian Orthodox convent," in C. Hann & H. Goltz (eds.), *Eastern Christians in anthropological perspective,* Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, University of California Press, 2010, p. 147.
[4] All names are pseudonyms. Some biographical details have been changed.

> "I go to church, maybe I go to Vespers on a Wednesday, I go to the Saint Sava temple – especially when the Bishop is serving. I go to Holy Trinity church on Sundays!" [Beats his chest with his fist three times, imitating a highly self-contended person]. But basically we're just like Pharisees. You can't have salvation without repentance. You need to be repentant from the moment you leave the house."

Miroslav then proceeded to explain calmly and didactically how repentance is a constant *state* in which Christians should strive to live. Overall, his overall point is clear: Zealous churchgoing effectively amounts to nothing if it is not coupled with an ongoing penitent state of mind. Performative pious practice without substance is no better than the activities of the Pharisees, the sect so roundly criticised by Jesus in the Gospels. What is interesting, however, is that Miroslav's ideas about abstract concepts such as 'repentance' and 'salvation' are scaffolded on a caricature about more everyday aspects of Orthodox life: going to the Liturgy, going to Vespers. He tried to define Orthodoxy against the more practical piety he assumed those present would recognise.

However, Miroslav's assertive stance on churchgoing is not necessarily appreciated.

On another occasion, Miroslav criticised the increasingly common practice of celebrating saints' days (*slava*) over a period of several days. For Miroslav, the saint should be celebrated solely on the day marked in the calendar, *without* a 'second' or 'third' day to accommodate all the friends and family who could not make it on the first. However, when I asked Ivan (a man in his early fifties) about Miroslav's position he responded brusquely and dismissively, with a sharp sweep of his hand: 'Leave Miroslav! He's a professional Orthodox'. Ivan liked to talk about the centrality of 'love' in Orthodoxy, and was concerned that I might take Miroslav as a good model.

One has to appreciate the extent to which other people in these churchgoing circles were both irritated (and sometimes amused) by Miroslav's peremptory nature. People joked about what they saw as his pride and arrogance. And, paradoxically, many accused him of the very self-righteousness that he saw himself as cautioning against. Note, too, Ivan's use of the term 'professional Orthodox'. This is an insult used to describe somebody who is seen as engaging in Orthodox ritual life unreflectingly, as if it were a professional task, without any sincere feeling for their acts.

At one level, this is a disagreement between two self-identifying believers – something which is not at all uncommon. However, whilst Ivan and Miroslav have seemingly different stances, ideas about good practice and rules are fulfilling the same function for both men. Both implicitly

critique an idea of rule-following so as to evoke deeper truths about Orthodoxy. One could say that ideas about rules do two things simultaneously: they produce deep feelings of rightness amongst some people, but also heartfelt accusations of self-righteousness from others. Rules are generative, allowing different people to make claims about what it is to be a real Orthodox.

To develop this idea further, let me turn to Marija, a secondary school teacher in her late twenties. She did not grow up in a very religious family, and it was whilst she was studying in Belgrade that she became more interested in Orthodox life. During one of our conversations we spoke about the practice of wearing headscarves at church. Whilst some older women certainly observe this practice in Kraljevo, it is very common to see women at the Liturgy not wearing a headscarf. Marija is well aware of the logic behind why some women cover their head, but this is something which she does not feel currently drawn to do: 'I still don't have that feeling (*osećaj*) to wear a headscarf'. She then expanded further on her ideas about rules:

> „Each person does what he feels – and that's a characteristic (*odlika*) of Christianity. It's not written anywhere that you have to do something. You are offered the possibility to choose. You follow your feeling."

I am not sure that everybody would have endorsed her open-minded approach. However, what is noteworthy is that she uses ideas about rules as a means to describe Christianity in terms of the values of personal feeling and freedom. It is not 'written' anywhere – one has to follow one's own feeling. Similarly, in Serbian churchgoing circles one sometimes hears Orthodox Christianity being contrasted to 'Islam'. In such examples people use a straw man idea of what Islam is about (blind, subservient rule-following) and pit it against the inherent freedom supposedly found within Orthodoxy. Again, ideas about rules are used to summon up a sense of what Orthodoxy is really about.

Thinking about the history of Eastern Christianity, the anthropologist Vlad Naumescu has identified 'the ethical, theological and political load placed on ritual orthopraxy'.[5] He argues that, at certain moments, orthopraxy (right practice) can turn into orthodoxy (right belief). I have been less concerned with 'right belief' in a doctrinal sense. Rather, I

[5] V. Naumescu, „Becoming Orthodox: the mystery and mastery of a Christian tradition," in S. Luehrmann (eds.), *Praying with the senses: contemporary Orthodox Christian spirituality in practice* (ed.) Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2018, p. 33.

have started to explore how orthopraxy generates a discourse about the more elusive questions of sincerity, repentance, and belief. Orthodox Christians would generally insist that Orthodoxy cannot be reduced to rules. However, rules are extremely useful for thinking about what Orthodox faith is.

„Not being a Pharisee: thoughts on rule-following in Serbian Orthodoxy," *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 18, p. 195-199.

Parenthood Post-marital Failure is not Always a Gender-neutral Issue: A Personal Recollection

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Abstract. *Single parents who find themselves in such a position through marital separation and/or divorce are not single parents by choice, but are compelled by circumstances. Due to cultural factors – and thus from legal and other perspectives – it is notable that their day-to-day responsibilities may well be determined by their gender. This article, based on a case-study from Malta, presents a number of factual recollections of a parent who, after the breakdown of marriage, became a single parent of a young daughter. It gives insights into the difficulties encountered in raising and educating a child to the legal age of consent through recollections from everyday life, ranging from use of gendered public restrooms to behavioural and educational ones. It also highlights that most of these difficulties, notably with respect to the former, would not have arisen had the parent's gender been female.*

Keywords: *parenting, single parenthood, single father, single family, gender, separation, Malta.*

Introduction

Research on the consequences of divorce on children and adults conducted by Amato identified that the dissolution of marriage may generate significant changes in people's lives,[1] a conclusion which may equally apply to marital separations, especially those which are turbulent. Instability affects the immediate and future emotional, behavioural and educational well-being of the children. The consequences of emotional and behavioural problems may last decades,[2] although younger children have been found to have fewer problems after divorce than older ones.[3] Children of single parents perform academically less well than those of two-parent families; whilst economic deprivation is mainly the case with single-mother families, interpersonal deprivation is the scenario for single-father ones.[4] Research at the University of Malta has focused on single parenthood, notably single mothers and their plight.[5] A comparative study of family literacy programmes published a decade

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[1] P. Amato, "The consequences of divorce for adults and children", in *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (2000), no. 62, p. 1269-1287.

[2] V.J. Felitti and R.F. Anda, "The Relationship of Adverse Childhood Experiences to Adult Health, Well-being, Social Function, and Health Care", in R. Lanius, E. Vermetten and C. Pain (eds), *The Effects of Early Life Trauma on Health and Disease: The Hidden Epidemic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 77-87.

[3] P.R. Amato and B. Keith, "Consequences of parental divorce for children's well-being: A meta-analysis", in *Psychological Bulletin*, (1991), no. 110, p. 26-46.

[4] D.B. Downey, "The school performance of children from single-mother and single-father families: Economic or interpersonal deprivation?", in *Journal of Family Issues*, (1994), no. 15, p. 129-147.
Although children from single-mother and single-father families perform similarly at school, they are outperformed by children from two-parent families (Y. Nonoyama-Tarumi, "Educational achievement of children from single-mother and single-father families: The case of Japan", in *Journal of Marriage and Family*, (2017), no. 79(4), p. 915-931).

[5] The following is a selection: M. Vella, *Young single mothers: Are they a burden to society?* B.A.(Hons) dissertation, University of Malta, 2003; G. Bonnici, *Housing and lone mothers: A study of Housing Authority issues, 1996-1999*, B.A.(Hons) dissertation, University of Malta, 2006; B. Cilia, *Lone mothers and the labour*

ago stressed the importance of policies in education as the father was becoming a more 'visible parent'.[6]

The latest comparative study, published in November 2020, addresses trends in single parenthood throughout the EU.[7] It includes a number of conclusions and policy recommendations for short- and long-term investments to improve the position of single parents.[8] A recommendation which relates to the former is "to facilitate joint physical custody, examine and remove barriers",[9] whilst one relating to the latter involved the reconsideration of "the gendered nature of single parenthood".[10] With respect to Malta, Nieuwenhuis established that (i) it fell within the group of EU countries with highest poverty rates; (ii) the share of low-educated single women with child(ren) has declined substantially, a finding associated with a decline in poverty; (iii) in-work poverty rose markedly; and (iv) the growth in employment did not allow single parents to escape being at risk of poverty. Citing Chzhen and Bradshaw, the study notes that Malta is one of the Southern EU States in which single parents residing in multi-unit or multi-generational households produces higher estimates of single-parent households.[11]

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market: The situation in Malta. B.A.(Hons) dissertation, University of Malta, 2006; R. Darmanin, *'Super mum': The lived experience of single mothers at university*, B.Psy.(Hons) dissertation, University of Malta, 2006; E. Mifsud, *Like a Phoenix rising: Separated women struggling through motherhood*, Dip. Soc. Stud. dissertation, University of Malta, 2006; and B. Fenech, *The increased incidence of single-mothers: A change in values?* B.A.(Hons) dissertation, University of Malta, 2011.

Only one dissertation addressed widowers as single fathers, namely A. Catania, *Widowers as single fathers: social and practical aspects*, B.A.(Hons) dissertation, University of Malta, 2006.

[6] A. Rose and C. Atkin, "Family literacy programmes: a comparative study of gender roles in England, Ireland and Malta", in *Early Child Development and Care* (2011), no. 181(6), p. 775–790.

[7] R. Nieuwenhuis, *The situation of single parents in the EU*, Brussels, European Parliament, 2020. Retrieved on 02 September 2021 from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/659870/IPOL_STU(2020)659870_EN.pdf.

[8] This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, reached the following noteworthy conclusions: (i) single-parent households are mainly led by women, (ii) "single parents do have higher rates of living in a household with low work intensity, at-risk-of-poverty, or material deprivation"; (iii) over the period 2010-2018, at-risk-of-poverty rates for single parents in the EU did not improve although the "rates of severe housing deprivation, severe material deprivation, at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion, and very low working intensity decreased"; (iv) "both parents continue to be involved in the care of their children after separation or divorce, and an increasing number of children live equal amounts of time with both parents. This practice of joint physical custody is associated with good outcomes for the well-being of both children and parents"; (v) "separating parents can retain (joint) legal custody in most cases (given that they had it prior to separation), which also suggest that the large variation across Europe in how common it is for children of separated parents to live with both parents relates to other factors"; and (vi) parental leave for fathers has the potential to create more gender-equal caring relations that last even when parents separate (*Ibidem*, p. 76-77).

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 79.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 78.

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 75.

Y. Chzhen and J. Bradshaw, "Lone Parents, Poverty and Policy in the European Union", in *Journal of European Social Policy*, 22 (2012), no. 5, p. 487–506.

This article will focus on the factual recollections of the author as a single parent in Malta of a young daughter until she reached the legal age of consent of 18 years.[12] At the time only matrimonial separation was possible.[13] Divorce legislation in Malta came into effect in late 2011; annulment by the Catholic Church – divorce the Catholic way – was the only option.[14] The article gives insights into the difficulties faced in raising the child by providing examples from daily life ranging from personal hygiene to education: – difficulties which would have been non-existent if the parent's gender were female. It explores the pragmatic realities which go beyond theoretical and policy frameworks. Relevant to the factual incidents referred to in the article are the following: (i) the joint custody was agreed amicably and formalised through mediation, (ii) during school weeks, the child spent the weekends (from Friday after school until Monday morning with the father) and, during holidays, she spent a week alternating with the other parent. Although she slept at the home of the grandparents of both parents and at relatives/friends, this was not regular and thus she was neither exposed to multi-generational nor multi-unit households. To appreciate the context in Malta, this article includes a section illustrating cases where men were discriminated against, and classifies recollections of the author under two themes: (i) issues arising in taking a female child to public restrooms, and (ii) issues relating to the personal hygiene. It concludes by noting (i) how this parenting style impinged on one's career and (ii) on significant others, namely grandparents, partners and friends, who provided support. One element that needs to be given serious consideration is the issue of child abuse.

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[12] The theme of the author being a single parent was brought up in a film directed by Matthew Carbone entitled *Bijografija tal-Prof. Perit Lino Bianco - 24 05* (2014). Retrieved on 06 September 2021 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBgyQMXoKIU). This 27-minute documentary was one in a series prepared by ONE TV with respect to prospective candidates for the European Parliament elections of 2014.

[13] Traditionally, Malta is Roman Catholic. Article 2 of the *Constitution of the Malta* explicitly states (Retrieved on 19 August 2021 from https://www.parlament.mt/media/82078/constitution.pdf):

> "(1) The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion.
>
> "(2) The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong.
>
> "(3) Religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Faith shall be provided in all State schools as part of compulsory education".

[14] See S. Abdilla. *Marriage annulment in the Catholic Church: Divorce Catholic style? The Maltese Situation*, LL.D. thesis, University of Malta, 2012.

Malta was one of the three remaining states which did not permit divorce; the others being the Philippines and the Vatican City. The question posted in the Maltese divorce referendum resembled the one included in the Irish divorce referendum of 1995.

For the text of the divorce legislation in Malta, see *Civil Code of Malta*, Act XIV of 2011 (Retrieved on 19 August 2021 from https://legislation.mt/eli/act/2011/14/eng/pdf). For a legal opinion on the more onerous alimony obligations contemplated by the said legislation, see T. Sciberras Camilleri, "Divorce and... maintenance", in *Times of Malta* (August 19, 2011) (Retrieved on 19 August 2021 from https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/Divorce-and-maintenance.380840). For a concise historical background to secularisation in Malta, see R. Pace, "Growing Secularisation in a Catholic Society: The Divorce Referendum of 28 May 2011 in Malta", in *South European Society and Politics* (2012), no. 17(4), p. 573–589.

The context

Child abuse is a challenge for paediatric practice. Due to its multi-factorial and socially complex aetiology, its eradication at source is a mammoth task. By 2007, the authorities in Malta established tracking and processing protocols ranging from social and legal to policing aspects.[15] The *Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act* was enacted in 2020.[16] Following the introduction of mandatory reporting standards in terms of this Act, any professional who is in contact with children is legally obliged to report suspicion of child abuse or face prosecution. They will be exempt from prosecution if the suspicion proves to be ill-founded.[17]

Aware of such haunting, potentially abusive reality which men face, often encouraged by third parties in case of matrimonial problems, single fathers have to cope with realities which are not an issue if the parent is the mother. Of course, one may argue that the converse applies, when the parent is a woman and the child is a male – an observation which applies throughout this article – but this scenario is still less frequent in Malta.[18] Paternity and maternity are not only about nature but also about nurture. There is a perception that associates men with abuse. Thus, there still exists a particular prejudice against them. Abuse is the exception not the rule. Malta is a child-friendly country with zero tolerance for abuse, especially of the vulnerable: children, the aged and persons with special needs. Although the country advocates gender equality and gender neutrality, society still does not implicitly tolerate certain roles being undertaken by men. Respectful individuals can end up victims of this mentality. There are several cases in Malta where the lives of men are being ruined – including being suspended and/or resigning from their work, having their personal and professional reputation destroyed, being exposed to heavy legal fees, and sometimes imprisonment – and these problems can also impact on their relatives, whether members of the nuclear or the extended family, a significant issue in a small island state where people know each other. All it takes is for someone to allege abuse. Two seminal cases are those of Emanuel Camilleri and André Callus, a teacher and an assistant head of a secondary school, respectively. These cases also illustrate how the young are corrupted, a point not taken up by the public authorities.

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[15] S. Attard Montalto and M. Mangion, "Child abuse in Malta: a review", in *Malta Medical Journal*, (2007), no. 19(2), p. 6-11.

[16] Laws of Malta, Chapter 602: *Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act*. Retrieved on 20 August 2021 from https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/602/eng/pdf.

This act substituted the *Child Protection (Alternative Care) Act* (Laws of Malta, Chapter 569) "to provide for protection orders for minors, for alternative care and for suitable protection for those minors deprived of parental care or in the risk of being so deprived, and for matters that are ancillary or incidental thereto or connected therewith" (Laws of Malta, Chapter 602: *Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act*).

[17] For a brief report with respect to these standards, see Anon, "Professionals now legally obliged to report child abuse suspicions: Mandatory reporting standards come into force", in *Times of Malta* (13 April 2021). Retrieved on 20 August 2021 from https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/professionals-now-legally-obliged-to-report-child-abuse-suspicions.864558

[18] Surely, when it comes to reporting, it is non-existent.

Camilleri was undergoing matrimonial separation when his wife alleged that he had sexually abused his 10-year-old daughter. The man, convicted and jailed for almost 400 days, was released after the daughter pleaded guilty to perjury and claimed that she was forced to fabricate the story by the mother.[19] The police inspector investigating the claims against the daughter admitted that "the police went ahead with the case even though they had no hard evidence".[20] Although Camilleri was awarded financial compensation through the Court – his fight to prove his innocence took over a decade – his life was shattered and he only survived through the support of his second wife whom he married following his release from prison.[21] Camilleri faced difficulties in finding a job after his release, mainly due to mental health issues; he ended up as a bus driver.

Callus is a member of Societas Doctrinæ Christianæ, a society of Christian doctrine respected by the Roman Catholic Church and Maltese society at large.[22] He suspended himself from the society and from the school run by same society. It was reported in the media that he was accused of "violent indecent assault, harassment, offending public morals and corruption of a minor".[23] The boy claimed he was inappropriately touched during a swimming trip. He was remanded in custody until bail was granted almost simultaneously when the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) wrote to Prime Minister expressing its concern "at the way cases of alleged child abuse are being treated by the police force, especially where educators are concerned".[24] Callus was cleared of all charges of child abuse; the Court remarked

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[19] In September 2011, he was found guilty and sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment; this judgment was confirmed by the Court of Criminal Appeal in May 2013. He did not serve the full sentence as he was released from prison following legal proceedings. The case of perjury against the mother is still ongoing.

[20] M. Xuereb, "Father wrongly accused of sexually abusing daughter to seek compensation: Entire case 'a disaster'", in *Times of Malta* (30 September 2016). Retrieved on 19 August 2021 from https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/father-wrongly-accused-of-sexually-abusing-daughter-to-seek.626490. Through forensic science, it could have been easily proven whether the child had been sexually abused.

[21] See video in English, also with subtitles, at https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/watch-i-considered-suicide-after-my-daughter-falsely-accused-me-of.862914 (J. Arena, "'I considered suicide after my daughter falsely accused me of rape'; Emanuel Camilleri spent over a year in prison for a crime he did not commit", in *Times of Malta* (April 6, 2021). Retrieved on 21 August 2021 from https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/watch-i-considered-suicide-after-my-daughter-falsely-accused-me-of.862914). On winning his case for compensation, Camilleri publicly claimed that the victory was not a monetary by a moral one. For him, "it is not a case on compensation. It is a case of three words … wrongful conviction, innocent and miscarriage of justice."

[22] The Societas Doctrinæ Christianæ, locally known as M.U.S.E.U.M.), was founded in 1907 by cleric St Ġorġ Preca (1880–1962). It is comprised of lay men and women who take vows of obedience to the Church and of celibacy (L-Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta, *Socjetà tad- Duttrina Nisranija – M.U.S.E.U.M.* Retrieved on 21 August 2021 from https://knisja.mt/movimenti-kattolici/socjeta-tad-duttrina-nisranija-m-u-s-e-u-m/)

[23] W. Johnston, "Church school deputy head denies child sex abuse", in *Times of Malta* (29 August 2014). Retrieved on 21 August 2021 from https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/Church-school-deputy-head-denies-child-sex-abuse.533531

[24] C. Calleja, "MUSEUM member accused of defiling boy granted bail", in *Times of Malta* (2 September 2014). Retrieved on 21 August 2021 from https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/update-2-

"that while it was important that young children received sex education, the education authorities needed to make children realise the consequences of any false allegations they made".[25] Although at law genders are equal, and there are contexts in Maltese society which are accepted as gender neutral, there are specific ones which definitely single fathers are not at a par with single mothers in the eyes of those who enforce the law. Cases in point are taking female child(ren) to public restrooms and teaching them about personal hygiene – a traditionally female role – when still young. The obverse case, although a logically valid argument, is not the case in Malta.

Using restrooms in public places

Socialising, or at least going to an outdoor play area, is a must for a child. Having a bag with clean clothes, underwear, and basic first aid, food and drink supplies etc., when going outdoors is common to both genders. Playing on swings, slides etc., mostly in warm months, calls for a drink, with the consequence that one soon needs to use the restroom. Until recent years, most of the public sanitary facilities in Malta did not have restrooms for the disabled, a scenario which is still present in continental Europe. They were for either sexes. A mother could take her child, irrespective of gender, into the ladies' restroom but a father could neither take a daughter to the gents nor to the ladies. The only alternatives are to make a rushed and uncomfortable run for home, or to risk an 'accident'.

For a male parent, travelling alone with a young daughter can be difficult. Tours proved to be the best option; they have a predetermined programme – wake up, shower, have breakfast – and with transport arrangements fixed. The use of the restroom was always an issue on such trips, and it was necessary to adapt to the

museum-member-accused-of-defiling-boy-granted-bail.534122. Besides a deposit, a personal guarantee and signing at the police station once a week, the bail conditions included that he did not frequent places where children attend lessons at the Societas Doctrinæ Christianæ. The letter sent to the Prime Minister, signed by the President of MUT, is reproduced in full by Gozo News ("MUT writes to PM asking for investigation – Does not rule out directives", in *Gozo.News* (2 September 2014). Retrieved on 21 August 2021 from https://gozo.news/52100/mut-writes-to-pm-asking-for-investigation-does-not-rule-out-directives/). It requested the Prime Minister to scrutinise the methodologies employed in such investigations and amend the legislation, "to protect all parties concerned from the abuse of a system which appears to be flawed and incongruent. … This methodology is ruining the lives of educators … who end up being suspended from their work and/or having to resign, after their personal and professional reputation is literally rubbished on a simple allegation. The methodology apparently being applied … literally means that all one needs to do to 'get rid' of the educator who disciplined his/her son/daughter is simply turn up at the police station and allege abuse. [An] …educator would need years to clear his/her name. In the meantime the person passes through hell, …, with an automatic suspension especially if in the civil service, a rubbished reputation and thousands of Euro expenses in defence lawyers. The methodology in question is also proving to be a death blow for many initiatives taken by educators within the context of extracurricular activities, and an even harder blow on NGOs who provide voluntary service to children. Outings, live-ins, exchanges abroad and similar activities will most definitely be affected. The MUT has been inundated with calls and emails from educators in various schools and volunteers in various organisations expressing their concern."

[25] Anon, "MUSEUM member cleared of child abuse allegations", in *Times of Malta* (24 September 2015). Retrieved on 21 August 2021 from https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/museum-member-cleared-of-child-abuse-allegations.585639

context. For example, on a trip to a theme park, a family consisting of a single mother, her daughter and grandmother struck up a conversation whilst having breakfast on an adjacent table. The mother shared her concern about getting lost as they went through the various attractions, thus both families decided to explore the park together. Going to the restroom in between attractions was no longer an issue, as the mother could take the young daughter when need arose whilst her daughter waited with the grandmother.

Teaching personal cleansing

When young, the child may be toilet trained but s/he needed assistance with showering as a matter of personal cleanliness, of staying healthy. Toilet hygiene – handwashing, especially between fingers, and proper drying hands after using the restroom – is gender neutral. When in good mood, s/he may insist on teaching others how to wash hands. The most critical – and surely not gender neutral – issue is shower hygiene. The daily routine to shower was no mean feat. Although able to shower on its own, a child needed directions on how to wash different body parts properly and how to dry them. This is where the gender of the parent matters.

If the child is not in the mood to shower, that is when matters became critical. In such a situation, if the father enters the bathroom and wash him/her, he would have been incriminated. Nor was it possible, if s/he did shower, to help her/him to get properly dry. The temperature in Malta is typically Mediterranean; summers are dry, hot, and sometimes humid. It is not a matter of being obsessive-compulsive about hygiene but in such a climate one desperately needs to shower and change into clean clothes regularly. Whether the child is female or male, such issues would not have arisen if the parent were the mother. Irrespective of how much a child protests, the mother can take her/him into the shower and get the job done, inclusive of drying.

Thinking outside the box

Recalling the account of Dora Diamant (1898–1952) when she and Franz Kafka (1883–1924) met a little girl in Steglitz, one fabricated a fictional alter ego, that of St Martin.[26] His feast falls annually on 11 November, the commencement of a forty-day fasting period before Christmas, a tradition which dates back to Middle Ages – the Quadragesima Sancti Martini – which later became known as the

[26] The narrative runs as follows: whilst on a stroll in a park in Steglitz, Kafka and his last love, Diamant, met a little girl who was crying because she had lost her doll. Kafka told her that he received a letter from the doll as she left on a trip. On asking him for the letter, he told her that it was not with him. He promised to meet the girl the following day with the letter. Each day of the subsequent three weeks, he met her in the park, each time with a new letter from the doll. The story ended with the marriage of the doll, and thus it was no longer possible for her to visit the little girl. Mark Harmann gave an interesting insight about this story; see, M. Harman, "Missing Persons: Two Little Riddles About Kafka and Berlin", in *New England Review*, 25 (2004), nos. 1/2, p. 227. For reading Kafka in the broader context of Jewish literature in German, see R. Seelig, *Strangers in Berlin: Modern Jewish Literature Between East and West, 1919–1933*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2016.

Advent.[27] In Malta, there is the cult of St Martin.[28] One of the traditional festive treats on the eve of St Martin's day is 'il-borza ta' San Martin', translated as 'St Martin's goodie bag'.[29] Kids look forward to receiving a borza, and parents pay schools token money for their child(ren) to get one. Another important event recalls St Nicholas, better known as Father Christmas. Children look forward to Christmas eve when Santa Claus brings surprise gifts overnight.[30] According to the legend, he comes through chimneys and places gifts by the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve. In Malta, it is not usual to have fireplaces and thus, in this case study, he came via a shaft. He was generous, delivering several stockings – actually pillow cases – full of gifts ranging from toys to cereal, from colour pencils to clothes.

St Martin's day and Christmas proved a lifesaver from late autumn to early winter. These two occasions provided inspiration to conjure up a story in which St Martin and Father Christmas are friends, who communicate with one another about each and every child. They surely reward good behaviour, such as obeying one's parents, doing homework on time, eating properly and showering every day. Father Christmas would bring a larger gift to children who behaved well after St Martin's delivery of his goodie bag. The father was privy of the email address of St Martin, a statement that triggered the child to have an email address herself, an address which she still uses today.[31] With respect to St Martin, she developed a rapport with him, albeit sporadic. Although St Martin's responses were not always prompt – he lived in other parts of the world, was very busy and might have been asleep when she sent it – he always replied. This proved a useful way to encourage her to develop good habits in terms of hygiene, self-organisation, and studying at the respective residences

[27] The cult of St Martin [of Tours] was revived by the French during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1. St Martin was subsequently considered a patron saint of France during the French Third Republic (B. Brennan, "The Revival of the Cult of Martin of Tours in the Third Republic", in *Church history*, 66 (1997), no. 3, p. 489-501).

[28] M. Drury, "Fruit, nuts & wine: Do you know the traditions of San Martin? Discover the traditions of the feast of St Martin in Malta and their origins", in *GuideMeMalta.com* (4 November 2019). Retrieved on 21 August 2021 from https://www.guidememalta.com/en/fruit-nuts-wine-do-you-know-the-traditions-of-san-martin

[29] In schools and at home, children receive a cloth bag with fruits and nuts with a 'St Martin's bun', the typically sweet. Traditionally, the bag symbolized the charity displayed by St Martin – known for using his military sword to cut his cloak to share it with a beggar clad in rags in winter – whilst others attribute it to indulgence before the fast. It includes an apple, an orange, a tangerine and a pomegranate, together with walnuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, almonds and figs. The abundance of such nuts and fruit falls around St Martin's Day is represented in the Maltese rhyme 'Ġewż, lewż, qastan, tin; kemm inħobbu 'l San Martin!', which translates in English as 'Walnuts, almonds, chestnuts, figs; oh how I love Saint Martin!'.

[30] St Nicholas, a Bishop who flourished in Myra in Turkey in the fourth century, had a reputation for charity, in particular for providing secret gifts to people in need. After the reformation he became unpopular, but he was 'rebranded', notably in England, as 'Father Christmas' who delivered presents to children at Christmas; 'Santa Claus' is the Dutch hybrid of St Nicholas in the USA. Over the years, both merged into the same figure.

[31] Getting the hang of writing emails proved to be an effective medium when the parent was abroad on a study/research visit.

of both parents.[32] The virtual debate was abruptly truncated in a more clinical manner than Kafka's marriage of the doll. This pseudo-game, which proved so beneficial, was unexpectedly aborted when a parcel, supposedly from St Martin, arrived at the address of a relative with whom the child was staying at the time. The child surely received the unexpected parcel; the father received a message admonishing him not to give a private address to third parties. The child was told that neither St Martin and Father Christmas existed, a fact that the child – a smart kid – was growing to realise albeit she was happy to play the role as long as gifts were delivered. … The passion to visit Lapland evaporated.[33]

A career changer

For the parent to resume studying became an unavoidable decision. At the time of matrimonial separation, one's professional practice was thriving – established as a leading consultancy office in the Malta offering services to government and private entities in environmental management and architecture. This was supplemented by part-time employment as an assistant lecturer at the university.

Initially, taking the child to the private office was an exercise in patience, although she got well with colleagues. Once, after office hours, an urgent meeting cropped up on a construction site of a minor project, a three-storey apartment block. The child was with the father. At the time, health and safety regulations in Malta were much weaker – no temporary hoardings or hand rails were fixed to stairs. On entering the block, the client closed the makeshift entrance and the child was asked to wait downstairs. One coming down, one noticed that she had climbed two flights up, and was standing against the wall of the stair well – the child was afraid to be on her own and wanted to be with her father. It was a heart-stopping moment, seeing her standing there in such a dangerous position. Tough as it may sound, a decision to change career for a lower-paid job that would allow the parent to live in a way that could truly be the father was taken. By the commencement of the upcoming academic year, the teaching and research commitment at the university was on a full-time basis and private practice became part-time. Besides the career change, upbringing the child necessitated the help and inclusion of significant others which proved of great assistance.

Significant others

At the time of separation, the child was still in primary school. Taking her to school and bringing her back on a daily basis was one way to see the child every day. On occasions when one could not take her to school, a female and a male colleague saw to it. On commencement of secondary schooling, the child used school transport. However, it was still necessary to be pick her from her mother's place and

[32] The occasional spelling mistake in the e-mails provided a context for a conversation which would have lasted a morning or an afternoon.

[33] One may argue that the child was being deceived. This was neither the intention nor the case. The child was a very smart, inquisitive kid. By the age of eight, the she solved the 3x3 Rubik cube within seconds; she comprehended the notion of algorithms after some attempts, lasting hours into the night; soon later she resolved the 4x4 Rubik cube.

take her to her paternal grandmother's from where she could take the bus to school. On the way back, the bus dropped the child at her grandparent's place and thus (i) it gave some leeway in time to take her to her mother's home and (ii) surely, she was being taken care of, fed and rested. On Fridays, the same grandparent washed her uniform and prepared it for the upcoming school day. These commitments increased, especially when the child was for a whole week with the parent or when he was abroad on study/research trips. Grandparents may not be kindergarten assistants nor nannies nor school teachers but they fulfil these roles – largely unacknowledged by society and at no charge which, at the current market prices, could amount to a third of the official minimum wage.

Partners and close female friends do fulfil similar roles. It can be particularly helpful if they are from the medical sciences. When a child is growing, s/he not only goes through hormonal changes, with all the feelings and emotions which are alien to the parent of an opposite sex, a case also applicable to grooming issues and the need to buy clothes, including personal items. A father helping a female child changing her bathing suit is highly unusual and, if it happens, it will be noted with suspicion with all the legal risks.[34]

Conclusions

Love and hate have identical chemistry but they are on either side of human emotions. They are analogous to the natural minerals diamond and graphite respectively – both are composed of carbon, thus have identical chemical composition, but they are physically different.[35] The deeper the love, the deeper the hate.[36] Marital separation-stress-adjustment is a key for the wellbeing of the child and the parent; irrespective of what happened between the adults, the child is the product of love. Having the backing of one's immediate family and good friends until the child reaches the age of consent is an unrivalled support for both the parents and the child.

As a single father, the child was not deprived economically but interpersonally. Further to the instances relating to the use of restrooms when the daughter was still young, there were other instances where the child was deprived because the parent was a single father. Neither a single-mother family nor two-parent family will send their child for a party or a sleep-over at a classmate of a single-father family. This is a form of interpersonal deprivation which is gender based. Having the presence of a woman – either a partner (that is, an unofficial stepmother) or a female relative (grandmother, aunt, sister) – is important to balance out this cultural prejudice.

Single fatherhood may take its toll on the physical and psychological well-being of the parent but it has a major benefit – more quality time with the child. Yet, in the

[34] Marriage breakdowns are cows which some 'professionals' enjoy milking. The bickering – in itself a sign of not letting the other party leave – is often followed by legal challenges which, irrespective of cost, the party which feels injured will go for. Most cases involve the introduction of doubts by a third party which s/he will water.

[35] These industrial minerals are on either side of Mohs scale of hardness.

[36] W. Jin, Y. Xiang and M. Lei, "The deeper the love, the deeper the hate", in *Frontiers in Psychology*, 18 (2017), 1940.

long-term, the observation included in Nieuwenhuis' study, that "children living with both separated parents seem to benefit from this living arrangement, and so do the parents",[37] is valid. As child grew older one could diplomatically negotiate plans for study, hobbies, adventures and travel. As in parasailing, irrespective of the allowable amount of line, the rope is the link to the base. When it snaps, one is swept away whilst the other is kept floating helplessly at the end of the parasailing rope. Irrespective of the uneven road in life, parenting is about raising children with selfless, unconditional love. Recalling Barack Obama's passionate speech on fatherhood, "what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child…. It's the courage to raise a child that makes you a father".[38]

Final Comments

One may argue that making reference to the existing literature on the gender-based challenges in raising children and/or the testimony of more than one person, will make the argument robust and provide a buffer against criticism from peers and/or activists. This article is not a journal of a person who is complaining. Its aim is to share personal recollections; instead of steering clear from such a political sensitive topic, the author opted to outline some hardships in raising a child which are not present if the parent is a mother.

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[37] R. Nieuwenhuis, *The situation of single parents in the EU*, Brussels, European Parliament, 2020, p. 78.
[38] M. Gavrilovic, "Obama's Father's Day Message", in *CBS News* (15 June 2008) (Retrieved on 10 September 2021 from w.cbsnews.com/news/obamas-fathers-day-message/).
Barack Obama (1961-), a father of two daughters, was abandoned by his father at the age of two.

"Parenthood Post-marital Failure is not Always a Gender-neutral Issue: A Personal Recollection", *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18, p. 201-211.

Creaţie şi Frumuseţe, pentru o Educare a Privirii
Creation and Beauty – for an Education of the Eye

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Abstract. *In the research entitled „Creation and Splendor, for an Education of the Eye", we summarized the main classical ideas by which Orthodox theology understands creation and man. Starting from the complex theology of Saint Maximus the Confessor and reaching contemporary theologians such as Seraphim Rose, Al. Kalomiros, Andrei Kuraev, Doru Costache, Ch. Yannaras, I. Zizioulas and David Benteley Hart, I tried to look at creation in a key of beauty and thus understand the greatness of the Creator. Only a look educated by beauty can understand the act of creation as a utterance of God outside. Also, over the course of a few pages, I argued why Pierre Teillhard de Chardin. it cannot be placed in the continuation of patristic theology.*

Keywords: *education, beauty, Creation, Saint Maximus the Confessor, Piere Teillhard de Chardin, Seraphim Rose.*

Dacă teologia romano-catolică contemporană a decis să propună o viziune teologică a creaţiei pornind de la Francisc de Asissi[1], teologia ortodoxă propune, de cele mai multe ori, o citire a creaţiei ce urmează linia trasată de Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul. O perspectivă holistică a operei Sfântului Maxim oferă posibilitatea de a observa anumite conexiuni între afirmaţiile acestui gânditor creştin de secol VII şi afirmaţiile oamenilor de ştiinţă contemporani[2]. Astfel, se poate afirma că teologii şi oamenii de ştiinţă pot avea o perspectivă de dialog pornind de la Maxim Mărturisitorul. Perspectiva religiei cu referire la ştiinţă cunoaşte numeroase valenţe. Voi aminti doar trei luări de poziţie: a) poziţia fundamentalistă: Serafim Rose[3]; b)

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1 Cf. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html, accesat 12. 08. 2021.

2 Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, Educational Aspects in the Spiritual Autobiography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta," *Astra Salvensis,* VII (2019), no. 14, p. 308.

3 Controversa răsunătoare în mediul ortodox dintre Serafim Rose şi dr. A. Kalomiros a fost pricinuită de părerile contradictorii asupra evoluţiei: Pentru Serafim, evoluţionismul nu este o teorie, ci, nici mai mult nici mai puţin decât o „doctrină- o credinţă care, în special, în teologie, oferă o alternativă deliberantă la creştinismul ortodox în privinţa mai multor dogme cheie." Evoluţioniştii prezintă omul ca pe un sălbatic, pe când creştinismul afirmă că omul a căzut din Rai, ceea ce pentru evoluţionism este de neconceput. În acest caz, a susţine doctrina creştină cu referire la creaţie şi a fi de acord cu teoria evoluţiei înseamnă să împaci Raiul cu maimuţa sau prin cuvintele părintelui să „alipească un Rai artificial unei creaturi de tip maimuţă." De asemenea doctrina căderii indică şi ea un punct nevralgic între evoluţie şi credinţă, afirmând-se că:, „despre căderea omului că este doar o cădere din

dialogul ambiguu: dr. Kalomiros;[4] c) „misticismul" evoluţiei: Pierre Teillhard de Chardin.

Misticul evoluţiei este comparat de unii teologi cu Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul. Comparaţia aceasta este interesantă şi parţial adevărată după cum se poate observa în cele ce urmează.

Sistemul savantului iezuit este unul problematic sau, după afirmaţia lui Ratzinger, „utopic".[5] Deşi contestată, viziunea francezului înseamnă şi „o mare speranţă că credinţa şi calea de acces a ştiinţelor la lume ar putea fi aduse sub acelaşi cap, sub Hristos motorul evoluţiei."[6] Marginalizat de ordinul iezuit, presat de autorităţile de la Roma, de Chardin nu renunţă la savant în favoarea teologului iar acest fapt reiese clar din corespondenţa sa.[7] Rezumând grosso-modo învăţătura expusă în *Fenomenul uman* se poate observa că teologul iezuit se diferenţează de adepţii evoluţiei prin faptul că

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imaturitatea cosmică: că atunci când oamenii-maimuţă, aflaţi într-o stare de naivitate, au evoluat în fiinţe umane, au dobândit un complex de vinovăţie – aceasta fiind căderea". Serafim Rose, *Cartea Facerii, Crearea lumii şi omul începuturilor,* trad. Constantin Făgeţean, Bucureşti, Ed. Sophia, 2001, p. 128-208. Serafim Rose prin întreg cuprinsul cărţii amintit se dovedeşte un fundamentalism clar. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "The social thought of the Orthodox Church reflected in the documents of the Holy Pan-Orthodox Council of Crete (2016)," in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies,* LXXV (2019), nr. 4, p. 3.

[4] Demersul doctorului Kalomiros de a concilia evoluţia cu doctrina credinţei este apreciabil. Kalomiros începe consideraţiile cu privire la dialogul ştiinţă religie arătând greşeala care se face atunci când privim cartea Facerii ca un tot. El susţine că trebuie să interpretăm cele şase zile ale creaţiei cu ajutorul Sfintei Scripturi şi al Sfinţilor Părinţi, iar „interpretarea ştiinţifică îşi găseşte relevanţa doar în lumina acestui principiu". Cu referire la om el afirmă: „Harul dumnezeiesc, energia creatoare a lui Dumnezeu, ne-a făcut să urcăm treptele care ne-au ridicat de la pulberea pământului la organismele unicelulare din apă, la trilobiţi, la moluşte, la peşti, la amfibieni, la păsări, la mamifere, la humanoizi, până am ajuns să devenim oameni". Lista elementelor surpriză, pentru cel ca Rose, continuă prin: au mai existat oameni pe pământ şi înaintea lui Adam şi a Evei, zilele creaţiei corespund erelor geologice, Dumnezeu a creat în mod evolutiv etc. (cf. Al. Kalomiros, Andrei Kuraev, Doru Costache, *Sfinţii părinţi despre originile şi destinul cosmosului şi omului",* ediţia a II-a, trad. Ioan Ică, Sibiu, Ed. Deisis, 2003, p.15-69). Teoriile lui Kalomiros au isterizat mediul monastic condus de Serafim Rose. Cu toate obiecţiile ce i se pot aduce sistemului doctorului Kalomiros, demersul este lăudabil şi, pe cât se vede, a influenţat pe teologii care credeau că Dumnezeu a creat ceva raţional şi că frica de a căuta adevărul nu are nimic în comun cu creştinismul.

[5] J. Ratzinger, *Biserică, ecumenism, politică,* trad. F. Băltăceanu şi M. Broşteanu, Bucureşti, Ed. ARCB, p. 303-306.

[6] C. Schömborn, *Plan sau întâmplare?Creaţie şi evoluţie din perspectiva unei credinţe raţionale,* Iaşi, Ed. Universităţii Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2011, p. 139.

[7] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Scrisori inedite,* trad. Dana-Ligia Ilin, Iaşi, Ed. Polirom, 2001, p. 84.

vorbeşte despre o mişcare direcţionată, pe când ceilalţi evoluţionişti vorbesc despre o mişcare hazardată. Vorbind în contextul mişcării hazardate, Teilhard arată cum mişcarea „duce de la geogeneză la biogeneză şi psihogeneză. Această mişcare înainte va fi finalizată doar atunci când cosmogeneza va deveni cristogeneză."[8] Cum înţelegem aceasta? „Teologul iezuit concepe un proiect ştiinţifico-teologic prin care încearcă să unească cele două teorii de explicarea universului, existente la acea vreme. Teoriile erau considerate de foarte mulţi oameni de ştiinţă ca fiind incompatibile, altfel spus iezuitul are în plan depăşirea teoriei domeniului curb autoînfăşurat şi cea potrivit căreia universul se extinde într-un degrade nemărginit."[9] Acelaşi Doru Costache este de părere că:

„el bănuieşte, în starturile infime ale universului, prezenţa rudimentară a unei „psyche"- utilizarea termenului grecesc trimite la o altă reprezentare a lumii decât cea reducţionistă a modernităţii, încercând să acopere „le dedans" şi „le dehors" în acelaşi timp-, a unui factor implicit care determină mersul lumii spre o stare de complexitate a fiinţei, a vieţii şi a conştiinţei, tendinţă care se actualizează în fenomenul uman (…). Demersurile creaţiei, conştientizate şi realizate deplin în om, nu sunt însă doar efectul unei legităţi natural, de vreme ce Omega există déjà actual, operând în profunzimea masei gânditoare, ascuns o vreme în biologie şi apoi luminând personal, ca de la Centru spre centrele gânditoare. Avem de-a face cu marea Prezenţă a lui Omega în toate fazele evoluţiei şi cu perspective unui univers dominant de energiile personale."[10]

Vorbind despre un univers „angajat pe calea prodigioasă a intensificării existenţei"[11] de la cuantic la mineral, de la mineral la vegetal şi animal, de la viaţă la conştiinţă, Teilhard de Chardin acordă o mare însemnătate iubirii:

„iubirea reprezintă o proprietate general a oricărei Vieţi şi, ca atare, uneşte, în diverse grade, toate formele cuprinse în material organizată (…). Iubirea în toate nuanţele sale, nu este altceva decât semnul mai mult sau mai puţin direct marcat în inima elementului de către convergenţa psihică asupra sa însuşi."[12]

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[8] C. Schömborn, *Plan sau întâmplare?Creaţie şi evoluţie din perspectiva unei credinţe raţionale*, p. 139.

[9] Doru Costache, „Pierre Teilhard de Chardin sau încercarea unei perspective integrale", în D. Popescu, *Ştiinţă şi teologie,* Bucureș ti, Ed. Eonul Dogmatic, 2001, p. 223.

[10] Doru Costache, „Pierre Teilhard de Chardin sau încercarea unei perspective integrale", p. 225.

[11] Doru Costache, „Pierre Teilhard de Chardin sau încercarea unei perspective integrale", p. 226.

[12] Pierre Teillhard de Chardin, *Fenomenul uman,* trad. M. Ivănescu, Oradea, Ed. Aion, 1997, p. 265-268. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Towards the social doctrine of the Orthodox

Faptul că vorbeşte de o dinamică a creaţiei bazată pe libertate şi iubire, faptul că vede în om cheia de citire a acestui univers, a făcut pe unii teologi să-l compare cu Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul:
„precum în gândirea sfântului Maxim, şi pentru de Chardin este vorba de mai mult decât de o simetrie static între om şi cosmos. Omul este centru al lumii şi cheie a universului, centru de perspectivă (contemplativ) şi centru de construcţie (unificator)."[13]

Afirmaţia acesta deşi veridică trebuie nuanţată întrucât părerile teologilor ortodocşi cu privire la Teillhard sunt împărţite. Dacă Evdokimov afirma, „geniul lui Teilhard de Chardin constă în a fi descris istoria cosmosului ca pe o evoluţie orientată către om. Dacă omul nu mai este centrul astronomic al universului, el se află acum în vârful acestuia, pentru că prin om, evoluţia cosmosului devine conştientă de sine,"[14] teologul grec Ioannis Zizioulas îl ridiculizează complet:„opiniile despre om ale lui Teilhard de Chardin n-au nimic de-a face cu teologia patristică."[15] Teologia catolică nuanţează la rândul ei teoriile savantului iezuit:

„Teilhard nu dorea un amalgam total, însă nu a putut să evite primejdia în întregime. Unde rămân legile intramundane, dacă toate forţele naturii trebuie să fie componentă integrală a lui Cristos cosmic? Sesizează oare Teilhard natura păcatului şi a păcatului strămoşesc atunci când consideră că acestea nu sunt înrădăcinate într-o hotărâre personală, ci sunt ca o folie întunecată a unei dezvoltări care nu a ajuns încă la împlinire, cum ar fi potrivit experienţei faptului că prin rindeluire trebuie să cadă talaş? A răscumpărat oare Isus Cristos efectiv păcatul sau doar a arătat că, o dată cu progresul evoluţiei, sporeşte claritatea?"[16]

Termeni precum: „diferenţă," „separare," „distanţă," şi „interval" regăsiţi în scrierile lui Maxim Mărturisitorul cu referire la creaţie, au menirea de a evidenţia radical transcendenţa lui Dumnezeu faţă de lume. Cu alte cuvinte, din bunătatea sa Dumnezeu a binevoit să aducă din nefiinţă făpturile (2 Macabei 7, 8) doar în virtutea dragostei şi bunătăţii sale. Creaţia „ex nihilo"[17] este afirmată în mai multe scrieri maximiene, iată două dintre

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Church: The document 'For the Life of the World' of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (2020)", in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies,* 77 (2021), no. 4, a 6545, p. 4.

[13] Doru Costache, „Pierre Teilhard de Chardin sau încercarea unei perspective integrale", p. 228.

[14] Paul Evdokimov, *Iubirea nebună a lui Dumnezeu,* trad. Teodor Baconski, Bucureș ti, Ed. Anastasia, Bucureşti, p.69.

[15] Ioannis Zizioulas, *Fiinţa eclesială,* trad. A. Nae, Bucureș ti, Ed. Bizantină, 1996, p. 56.

[16] Leo Scheffczyk, Anton Ziegenaus, *Isus Cristos, plinătatea mântuirii. Cristologie și Soteriologie,* trad. Wilhelm Tauwinkl, Iaşi, Ed. Sapientia, 2010, p. 98.

[17]„În principiu teologia nu vorbeşte despre crearea lumii din nimic, ci din nefiinţă. Cu toate că, dintr-un anumit punct de vederee aceasta este acelaşi lucru, în sensul său integral depăşeşte negreşit limitele strâmte ale gândirii scolastice despre nimic în legătură cu actul

ele: „Dumnezeu a adus toate lucrurile din nimic la existenţă”[18] şi, „a creat din nimic zidirea cea văzută şi nevăzută.”[19] Tot în cadrul paginilor din Ambigua, Sfântul Maxim vorbeşte şi despre raţiunile creaţiei. Dumnezeu creează făpturile prin propria Sa voinţă – potrivit *logoii*-lor[20] pe care i-a conceput şi cuprins în El din veşnicie. Terminologia (logoii) există şi în scrierile lui Origen şi ale lui Filon dar, potrivit cercetătorilor, numai la Maxim găsim o învăţătură sistematizată a acestora:

„în timp ce după Origen raţiunile există numai în unitatea fiinţială cu Logosul unic, după Maxim, existenţa lor reală şi logică este exprimată şi în diversitatea lor. Marea deosebire dintre Origen şi Maxim constă în aceea că Maxim respinge concepţia lui Origen despre creaţia văzută, ca diversificată numai prin căderea în păcat. Bunătatea creaţiei după Maxim, constă în creaţia însăşi, iar nu doar în unitatea ei cu fiinţa dumnezeiască”.[21]

Concepţia lui Origen despre materialitate, ca o decădere este anihilată de Maxim prin faptul că arată prezenţa Logosului în raţiunile creaţiei. Exegeţii au evidenţiat faptul că Maxim vorbeşte de o prezenţă graduală a Logosul în raţiunile creaţiei: „întruparea Logosului în logoi-i fiinţelor create la momentul creării lumii, întruparea Logosului în logoi-I Scripturii şi ai celor patru Evanghelii, când Duhul lui i-a inspirit pe profeţi; întruparea Logosului în trupul nostrum, când Duhul a umbrit-o pe Fecioara Maria.”[22]

Revenind la doctrina despre raţiunile creaţiei, J.-C. Larchet, afirmă că acestea sunt unite într-o unitate supremă în şi prin Logos, Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, astfel că orice făptură există, în potenţă în mintea lui Dumnezeu înainte de facera lumii. A nu se înţelege că dacă aceste raţiuni sunt în Dumnezeu ele pot fi considerate Dumnezeu. Aşa cum am arătat mai sus,

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creaţiei. Teologia doreşte în mod hotărât să exprime relaţia dintre Fiinţă şi nefiinţă, creat şi necreat. Altfel spus, atunci când vorbeşte de creaţia din nefiinţă, vrea să spună că lumea nu provine din Fiinţa Dumnezeiască, de aceea şi este nefiinţă. Cf. Nikolaos Matsoukas, *Teologia dogmatică şi simbolică II,* trad. Nicuşor Deciu, Bucureș ti, Ed. Bizantină, 2006, p. 108-109.

[18] Maxim Mărturisitorul, „Capete despre dragoste” în *Filocalia,* vol. 2, Bucureș ti, Ed. Harisma, 1993, p. 124. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Gnoseologia divină exprimată prin argumentul cosmologic – premise teologice”, în *Sămănătorul*, II (2012), no. 6, p. 20.

[19] Maxim Mărturisitorul, „Ambigua”, în *PSB 80,* trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, Bucureș ti, Ed. IBMBOR, 1983, p. 80.

[20] „*logoii*-după Sfântul Maxim nu sunt nici identici cu fiinţa lui Dumnezeu, nici cu existenţa lucrurilor din lumea creată”. Cf. J. Meyendorff, *Teologia Bizantină,* trad. Alexandru Stan, Bucureș ti, Ed. Neimira, 2013, p. 196.

[21] J. Meyendorff, *Teologia Bizantină,* p. 195.

[22] Lars Thunberg, *Omul şi Cosmosul în viziunea Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul,* trad. Remus Rus, Bucureș ti, Ed. IBMBOR, 1999, p. 70.

raţiunile ţin de voinţă şi nu de fiinţa lui Dumnezeu. Maxim vorbeşte de raţiunile creaţiei ca cele ce sunt unite în chip suprem în Logos şi există din veci în mintea lui Dumnezeu dar, afirmă el, acestea nu sunt Dumnezeu. În virtutea acestor afirmaţii putem vedea cum lucrurile prezentate de Sfântul Maxim converg către o concepţie dinamică despre lume. Mişcarea este un dar „făcut de Dumnezeu creaturilor sale pentru a permite desăvârşirea şi împlinirea lor; pentru făpturile înzestrate cu raţiune ea este totodată o cale de a-şi pune în lucrare libertatea, altfel spus spaţiul de actualizare voluntară a ceea ce potenţial este realizat în logos-ul firii lor."[23]

Unificator al trupului şi al sufletului, omul, potrivit lui Maxim Mărturisitorul este un mediator prin însăşi firea sa, dar şi prin vocaţie:

„omului i-a fost dăruită puterea de unificare, datorită relaţiei lui propriu-zise cu propriile lui părţi. Omul a fost adus la existenţă ca ultima dintre creaturile lui Dumnezeu, pentru că el trebuia să fie o legătură naturală între toate cele create, mediind între extreme prin elementele propriei sale naturi."[24]

Înainte de a arăta cele cinci direcţii de mediere la care este chemat omul, trebuie să consemnăm faptul că în el (în om) Maxim vede elementele întregii creaţii, aşa cum o arată în Mystagogia: „cosmosul întreg, constătător din cele văzute este om, iar omul constătător de suflet şi trup este cosmos."[25] Lars Thunberg găseşte trei motive ce l-au determinat să gândească despre om în felul acesta: „mai întâi, este profunda înţelegere a unităţii şi multiplicităţii. Apoi, este faptul că a înţeles în mod evident lumea creată în perspectiva gândirii hristologice, care a avut în mod necesar repercursiuni puternice asupra antropologiei sale. În sfârşit, influenţa capadocienilor în acest punct este foarte puternică."[26]

Pentru Maxim sufletul este inelul de legătură între Dumnezeu şi materie, el este creat de Dumnezeu având posibilitatea să unească aceste două polarităţi. Iată rezumatul pe care Larchet îl face scrierilor maximiene care vorbesc despre această chestiune: „ (...) i se cerea mai întâi să depăşească, unificându-le, următoarele polarităţi: 1) între natura creată şi natura necreată (sau între creaţie şi Dumnezeu); 2) în sânul naturii create, între făpturile sensibile şi cele inteligibile; 3) în sânul creaţiei sensibile, între

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[23] Jean-Claude Larchet, *Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul. O introducere,* trad. Marinela Bojin, Iaș i, Ed. Doxologia, 2013, p. 191.

[24] Maxim Mărturisitorul, „Scrieri", în *PSB 81,* trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, Bucureș ti, Ed. IBMBOR, 1990, p. 50.

[25] Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Mystagogia. Cosmosul şi sufletul, chipuri ale Bisericii,* trad. D. Stăniloae, Bucureș ti, Ed. IBMBOR, 2000, p. 26.

[26] Lars Thunberg, *Antropologia teologică a Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul: microcosmos şi mediator*, trad. Anca Popescu, Bucureș ti, Ed. Sophia, 2005, p. 152.

pământ şi cer; 4) pe pământ, între Rai şi lumea locuită; 5) în umanitate, între bărbat şi femeie."[27]

Se poate observa că omul este chemat să sesizeze logoi-i spirituali ai făpturilor create, pentru a le dărui lui Dumnezeu, în fond, înapoindu-i darul, pentru a-i aduce prin ele mulţumire, pentru a face o liturghie cosmică. Se vede limpede că „Liturghia cosmică" depinde de dispoziţia omului.

Creaţia. O „gramatică" a frumuseţii

Teologia neopatristică prin, Ioannis Zizioulas, unul dintre exponenţii ei principali, propune o abordare în cheie personalistă[28] a teologiei creaţiei, mai concret spus, „atunci când o fiinţă acţionează ca persoană şi nu ca individ în întrebuinţarea creaţiei, nu numai că o înălţă la nivelul omului, dar o priveşte şi ca totalitate, ca universalitate de fiinţe legate între ele."[29] Mitropolitul de Pergamo alături de Christos Yannaras glosează în favoarea unui personalism euharistic care, în cazul de faţă, are rolul de a evidenţia că în taina Euharistiei întraga creaţie este reînnoită:

„acest paradox al afirmării şi al negării lumii în Liturghie, adică transfigurarea lumii care nu distruge, renaşterea care nu o creează ex nihilo, refacerea care nu este reînoire din început este, în Euharistie, însăşi manifestarea tainei lui Hristos în timp şi spaţiu. În Hristos Adam cel vechi e reînoit fără a fi distrus, firea umană e asumată fără a fi schimbată, omul se îndumnezeieşte fără a înceta să fie om."[30]

„Ale Tale dintru ale Tale" înseamnă, pentru teologul grec, tocmai faptul că lumea (stricăcioasă cum e) este primită înăuntrul bisericii „pentru a nu rămâne aşa" ci pentru a fi transfigurată, fără a înceta să rămână lume, aşa cum omul se îndumnezeieşte fără a înceta să fie om.

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[27] J. Cl. Larchet, *Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul. O introducere,* p. 205.

[28] Pentru o critică a personalismului lui Zizioulas a se vedea: Jean-Claude Larchet, *Persoană şi natură. Sfânta Treime-Hristos-Omul,* trad. Dragoş Bahrin şi Mihaela Bojin, Bucureș ti, Ed. Basilica, 2013, p. 273-532; Grigore-Dinu Moş, *Ortodoxie şi Occident,* Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Renaşterea, 2013, p. 302 passim; Ioan Ică Jr., „Persoană şi/sau ontologie în gândirea ortodoxă contemporană", în *Persoană şi comuniune,* Sibiu, Ed. Arhiepiscopiei, 1993, p. 359-385; Idem, *Mystagogia Trinitatis* (teză de doctorat), Cluj-Napoca, 1998, p. 90-91 passim; Robert Lazu, *Farmecul discret al teologiei,* Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Dacia, 2001, p. 64-73; Ciprian-Iulian Toroczkai, *Tradiţia patristică în modernitate,* Sibiu, Ed. ASTRA Museum/Ed. Andreiană, 2012, pp. 82-83; Pentru o critică echilibrată asupra personalismului şi teologiei lui Yannaras a se vedea: Mihail Neamţu, *Bufniţa din dărâmături. Însomnii teologice în România postcomunistă,* ediţia a doua, Iaș i, Ed. Polirom, 2008, p. 363-373; George Remete, *Fiinţa şi Credinţa, II. Persoana,* Bucureș ti, Ed. Paideia, 2015, p. 530-560.

[29] Ioannis Zizioulas, *Creaţia ca euharistie,* trad. Caliope Papacioc, Bucureşti, Ed. Bizantină, 1999, p. 87.

[30] Ioannis Zizioulas, *Creaţia ca euharistie,* p. 15.

Potrivit lui I. Zizioulas şi Ch.Yannaras viziunea euharistică a lumii, sau la Yannaras „evenimentul ecclesial", a dinamitat trăsăturile religiozităţii instinctuale, cu alte cuvinte a mutat accentul de pe individualism[31] pe comuniune, a accentuat iubirea şi raţionalitatea anulând iraţionalitatea şi sentimentalismul.[32] A exclus orice înţelegere totalitaristă a credinţei.[33] Argumentele în favoarea acestor afirmaţii sunt implacabile, deoarece, toate trimit la modul de existenţă pe care îl întrupa Hristos:

„Hristos nu mărturisea el însuşi despre sine (...). Faptele lui semnalau cine este, identitatea şi adevărul existenţei lui . Nu a declarat şi nici nu a sugerat că ar fi fost întemeietorul unei religii. El însuşi întrupa şi prezenta pentru om un nou mod de existenţă."[34]

Modul de existenţă propriu lui Hristos este dragostea, sau cum o mai numeşte profesorul Yannaras „perfecţiunea imperfectă" întrucât este relaţie. Atunci când are în vedere cuvântul „dragoste", Yannaras nu efectuează o reducţie la concept dar nici nu clasifică dragostea ca virtute simplistă ci ca:

„libertate existenţială: refuzul activ de a identifica existenţa cu entitatea fizică individuală, cu predeterminările, limitările, necesităţile ce o guvernează. Şi acest refuz activ este posibil când existenţa se realizează ca relaţie liberă de imperativele naturii, ca transcendere a sinelui, sacrificiu de sine."[35]

Libertatea absolută[36] este şi în teologia lui Zizioulas standardul existenţei. Doar în virtutea acestei libertăţi făpturile create pot spera la mântuire întrucât doar prin ea pot transcende proprile limitări. A renunţa la libertate este un mod de a renunţa la un dat propriu omului, un mod de a

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[31] Christos Yannaras, *Contra Religiei,* trad. Tudor Dinu, Bucureşti, Ed. Anastasia, 2011, pp. 13-19.

[32] *Ibidem,* p. 20-24; Aceiaşi viziune o găsim şi la Zizioulas: „ viziunea euharistică a lumii şi a societăţi nu permite şi nici nu admite autonomia moralei sau reducerea ei la reglementări juridice absolute, fără nici o legătură cu timpul şi cu varietatea persoanelor. În viaţa liturgică ortodoxă moralitatea nu izvorăşte dintr-un raport juridic cu Dumnezeu, ci din metamorfoza şi înnoirea zidirii şi a omului în Hristos." Ioannis Zizioulas, *Creaţia ca euharistie*, p. 21.

[33] Christos Yannaras, *Contra Religiei,* p. 25-32.

[34] *Ibidem,* p. 43.

[35] *Ibidem,* p. 44.

[36] Aici Zizioulas se află sub influenţa clară a gândirii lui Berdiaev, mai corect sub mirajul sintagmei: „libertatea îl precede pe Dumnezeu." Nikolai Berdiaev, *Sensul Creaţiei. Încercare de îndreptăţire a omului,* trad. Anca Oroveanu, Bucureș ti, Ed. Humanitas, 1992, p. 142-156. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Nicolas Berdyaev – The philosophical and political relevance of a spiritual autobiography," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 76 (2020), no. 1, a5933, 2020, p. 5.

renunţa la propria umanitate în favoarea animalităţii: „suntem obligaţi să căutăm chipul lui Dumnezeu în libertate."[37]Libertatea cu care a fost înzestrat omul este o bucurie pentru întreaga creaţie sau, potrivit teologului în cauză, „dacă omul abandona dreptul la libertate absolută, automat întreaga creaţie şi-ar fi pierdut speranţa de mântuire."[38] Adam nu a depăşit limita libertăţii atunci când a căzut, el, doar, a întrebuinţat greşit libertatea primită. Dumnezeu îi respectă decizia şi proniază în continuare, dar ţinând cont de alegerea omului.

Revenind, creaţia are nevoie de libertatea omului întrucât prin ea însăşi nu se poate mântui. Dumnezeu creând din nimic nu a înzestrat-o cu mijloace pentru a transcende neantul, dar a implementat în ea raţiuni ce sub corijarea omului primesc un sens: „totul e raţional în lucruri şi în energiile componente, ca şi între ele (...) Raţiunile lucrurilor şi raţiunea umană au implicate în ele sensuri continuu noi, care ies la iveală prin aplicarea raţiunii umane la raţiunile lucrurilor."[39]

Crearea omului conferă sens creaţiei: „Dumnezeu şi lumea trebuie să fie în comuniune, şi mijlocul ales pentru această comuniune este umanitatea."[40] Teologia susţine în unanimitate că paradigma omului este Hristos[41], iar modul de existenţă a lui Hristos are la bază libertatea şi comuniunea. Mărturia contemporanilor lui Hristos confirmă acea relaţie de libertate şi dragoste pe care Fiul o are cu Tatăl şi cu Duhul:

„proclamarea acestui mod de existenţă pe care l-a întrupat Hristos şi la care este chemat fiecare om se face prin Evanghelie (vestea cea bună) a Bisericii: mesajul libertăţii existenţiale pe care evenimentul eclezial îl fixează drept obiectiv. Vestea cea bună a Bisericii este rezumată prin predicarea dragostei"[42].

Odată cu Întruparea, umanitatea primeşte vestea cea bună a libertăţii, mai corect spus, atingerea atestată istoric a Hristosului Înviat proclamă lumii libertatea existenţială: „Învierea ca semn trimite la un nou

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[37] Ioannis Zizioulas, *Creaţia ca euharistie*, p. 78.

[38] *Ibidem,* p. 83.

[39] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă,* vol. 1, ediţia a II-a, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucureşti, 2007, p. 365-366.

[40] Ioannis Zzioulas, *Prelegeri de dogmatică creştină,* trad. Florin Caragiu, Ed. Sophia, Bucureşti, 2014, p. 182.

[41] Pentru Zizioulas, „omul nu este o entitate statică, autonomă. Personeitatea implică deschiderea fiinţei. Ea este, prin urmare, o categorie relaţională, exprimată prin comuniune în libertate şi iubire. Un om în Hristos devine o persoanaă adevărată prin intrarea în aceiaşi relaţie filială care constituie fiinţa lui Hristos". Norman Russell, *Învăţătura despre îndumnezeire în tradiţia patristică greacă,* trad. Dragoş Dâscă, Iaș i, Ed. Doxologia, 2015, p. 501.

[42] Ch. Yannaras, *Contra religiei*, p. 53.

mod de existenţă. Acest mod îşi propune să îl realizeze evenimentul eclesial comunial. Moartea este foarte împovărătoarea, insuportabil de absurdă, o limitare existenţială a naturii umane. Şi Hristos îşi asumă în existenţa lui istorică această absurditate, moare ca să semnaleze că şi moartea poate fi trăită ca libertate a relaţiei cu Tatăl, adică drept viaţă nelimitată."[43]

Vestea cea bună este un mod de relaţie, o experienţă a unei relaţii. Într-o asemenea experienţă accentul cade întotdeauna pe strădanie şi încredere.[44] Atunci când omul trăieşte conform paradigmei hristologice, creaţia va înceta să suspine în aşteptarea infierii. (Romani 8, 21-23).

O altfel de concluzie

Din afirmaţiile precedente se poate constata faptul că, teologia neopatristică propune viziunea personalistă pentru o teologie a creaţiei. David Bentley Hart care citeşte creaţia în cheia frumuseţii, vorbeşte despre crearea lumii ca un fel de joc, o artă de dragul artei ce vorbeşte despre măreţia artistului. Creaţia este de prisos lui Dumnezeu, ea vine din neant, fiinţele create neavând fundament ontologic prin ele însele: „creaţia nu are prin urmare fundamente; ea este prezentă în Dumnezeu, fără să posede altă esenţă în afara caracterului său de rostire liberă (...). Creaţia este o rostire a lui Dumnezeu în afară."[45] Creaţia este, potrivit lui Hart, o „splendoare" ce corespunde frumuseţii divine: „iar acestă frumuseţe a Treimii, această ordine a perihorezei lui Dumnezeu, este însăşi mişcarea încântării, a persoanelor divine una în alta, şi astfel analogia între frumuseţea lumească şi cea divină e un fel de analogia delecationis. Încântarea lucrurilor create exprimă încântarea distanţei infinite a lui Dumnezeu. Pentru gândirea creştină, deci desfătarea este premisa oricărei epistemologii solide: încântarea este cea care constituie creaţia, iar astfel numai încântarea poate să o cuprindă, să o vadă cum trebuie, să –i înţeleagă gramatica. Numai

[43] Ch. Yannaras, *Contra religiei*, p. 55.

[44] Aici Yannaras înclină înspre teologia spirituală a lui Grigorie de Nyssa: iubirea este elementul extatic care, potrivit lui Grigorie, caută permanent să scoată sufletul din sine însuşi pentru a se uni cu Dumnezeu: „extazul nu este o experienţă în care sufletul este răpit chiar şi pentru un moment din succesiunea timpului într-o stare eternă. Nu există o stare de odihnă definitivă pentru suflet: în iubirea sa pentru Dumnezeu el este în continuare tras şi scos din el însuşi". Andrew Louth, *Originile tradiţiei mistice creştine. De la Platon la Dionisie Areopagul,* trad. Elisabeta Voichiţa Sita, Sibiu, Ed. Deisis, 2002, p. 137.

[45] David Bentley Hart, *Frumuseţea infinitului. Estetica adevărului creştin.* trad. Vlad Dărăban, Iaș i, Ed. Polirom, 2013, p. 323.

iubind frumuseţea creaţiei- numai văzând că întra-devăr creaţia este frumuseţe, înţelegi ce este creaţia."[46]

Afirmaţiile lui Hart sunt veridice doar pentru cei care au reuşit să-şi convertească privirea. Pentru fiinţele ce rezonează cu Sartre, pentru care „actul privirii mă transpune într-un subiect ce-şi devorează obiectul"[47], nu poate exista o splendoare a frumuseţii. Educarea moarală a privirii şi a dorinţei sunt condiţii indispensabile. Contrele lui Hart se îndreaptă apoi înspre sistemul filosofic elaborat de Hegel:[48] „cu alte cuvinte, creaţia nu este un act de a învinge, un act de cucerire, o afirmare necesară a puterii divine împotriva întunericului sau neantului"[49]. Dumnezeu ce a adus lumea din nefiinţă nu are nevoie să poarte o luptă cu lumea pentru a Se dovedi suprem. Această mentalitate a bântuit teologia protestantă (Barth, Jungel, etc.) şi are ca contrapondere, potrivit lui Hart, lumea ca dar[50], ca rod al iubirii.

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[46]*Ibidem,* p. 324.

[47] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Fiinţa şi neantul,* trad. A. Neacşu, Bucureşti-Piteşti, Ed. Paralela 45, 2004, p. 364-365.

[48] Pentru o critică din perspectivă religioasă a filosofiei lui Hegel a se vedea Nicolae Turcan, *Începutul suspiciunii. Kant, Hegel şi Feuerbach despre religie şi filosofie*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Eikon, 2011, pp. 83-149.

[49] David Bentley Hart, *Frumuseţea infinitului,* p. 329.

[50] Concepţia despre Dar în viziunea lui Hart se completează cu cea propusă de J. Milbank, ambii gânditori fiind împotriva teoriei darului dezvoltată de Derrida. Cf. *Ibidem,* p. 332-342.

„Creation and Beauty – for an Education of the Eye," *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 18, p. 213-223.

Family and its Image in Virgil Gheorghiu's Work

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Abstract: *Family constituted and still constitutes until today, an important segment of the society. In this research we will try to see how it is reflected its image in the works of one of the most important writers from the Romanian exile, namely Virgil Gheorghiu (1916-1992). Novels with autobiographical content like: The man who was travelling alone, together with the memorial writings, will constitute important sources of our investigation, together with the studies and articles dedicated to him during the time. We will try to emphasize on one side what his family meant to him and on the other, how he saw the family and understood it and its social, cultural and religious role. The research will bring into attention an aspect of the life and the work of the Romanian writer that has not been investigated until now and in the same time, to emphasize the aspects of actuality that can be found there.*

Keywords: *family, 25th Hour, Communism, education, Romanian exile from France, novel.*

1. Introduction

Important writer of the Romanian culture from the French exile, Virgil Gheorghiu passes today through a process of re-discover of his ideas and works[1], both in the Romanian space, but also in the foreign one. Translated into 40 languages and screened with Anthony Queen as a main character,[2] he was for sure one of the authors who promoted the Romanian culture in Occident and fought against the communist abuses there. In the same time, he managed to valorise in his books, the Romanian culture, its tradition and its ethnographic treasures.[3] For all these reasons, he can be surely considered one of the important Romanian contemporary writers.

Conscious of this fact, we have decided to investigate in the following rows the way how the family is reflected in the works that he wrote. We will focus there on the image that the family had for him and his work and in the same time, on the way how, both as a priest and as a writer, the Romanian understands its value and its meanings.

2. Family and its image in Virgil Gheorghiu's work

[1] Thanks to works like: Thierry Gillyboeuf, *Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu – scriitorul calomniat,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2019; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Between theology, literature and life: Virgil Gheorghiu and his biography," in *Meta: research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology and Practical Philosophy,* vol. X (2018), no. 1, p. 252-257; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Conflictul dintre Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu şi Monica Lovinescu, reflectat în memorialistica exilului parizian," in *Crisia,* XLVII (2017) p. 183-188; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, Ştefan Josan, Elements of spiritual autobiography in the literary works of Virgil Gheorghiu", in *Research and Science Today,* 1 (2016), no. 1, p. p. 83-88; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Omul din spatele *Orei 25*. Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu în dosarele Securităţii," în *Sargetia – Acta Musei Devensis,* Serie nouă, nr. VIII (2017), p. 373-381; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Virgil Gheorghiu's Literary Activity Reflected in Securitate Archives," *Astra Salvensis,* VI (2018), no. 12, p. 149-155.

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_cH0zvDGJ4, accessed 12. 03. 2020.

[3] Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Virgil Gheorghiu, *Dracula în Carpaţi – Roman inedit,* Editura Sophia, Bucureşti, 2019", in *Sebeşul povestit,* VIII (2020), no. 15, p. 37-38.

The departure point of such a research should surely be considered the memorial writings that the author published, namely the two volumes of them.[4] In the first one, the author speaks about the education that he received from his mother and about aspects that will be later deepened in books like: *Why did they called me Virgil?*[5], about the way how his father, also evocated in a book, educated him in the spiritual matters, but also about the difficulties of the life of the family of a priest from a small village, that must pass not only thorough the financial challenges, but also thorough social ones, like the change of the calendar.[6] The fact that the family was so pour that in certain moments, the children suffered by hunger, together with other aspects are therefore emphasized there. In the same time, the author insists on the role given by his parents to the education of the children. The eldest of the six brothers[7] will be therefore sent from a school to other in order to receive a good education.

Due to the financial difficulties of the family, he will not be allowed to go to the Seminar and become a priest, but he will haft to choose the King's Military College from Chişinău. Without being a point of stop, this place will constitute the one which will allow to the future writer to discover his skills in the literary space and to become known in the world of the letters and writers.

Reading his memorial writings, written somewhere in the end of author's life, one can see how important was the family from him. As it can be seen also from the later letters that he wrote them from France during the exile period,[8] the writer saw his father as a strong model, fact that will determine him later to orient towards the priesthood and his mother as a formative presence. In the same time, for him, family meant not only mother, father, sisters and brothers, but also the grandmother that will help him to continue his military studies and other relatives like his aunt, that was married with a Russian prince.[9] Probably due to the fact that he lived in the exile, fact that will increase the missing feeling that he had about them, probably also for other reasons, he will keep them a very positive image and will always wrote about his relatives and his parents.

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[4] See: Virgil Gheorghiu, *Memorii – martorul orei 25,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2017; Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu, *Ispita Libertăţii. Memorii,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2019.

[5] Virgil Gheorghiu, *Pourquoi m'a-t-on appelé Virgil?,* Monaco Ville, Les Editions du Rocher, 1990.

[6] Fact that will be later evocated also in booke like *Dracula in Carpathian Mountains.* See: Virgil Gheorghiu, *Dracula în Carpaţi,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2019.

[7] As Thierry Gillyboeuf mentions: He is the eldest of six brothers (including four sisters: Elena, Lucia, Florica and Rodica, who died at an early age, and a brother Nicolae, who will also become a priest). His father, Constantin Gheorghiu, born in 1895, studied for eight years at the "Veniamin Costachi" Seminary in Iasi, finishing school even in the year in which the Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip assassinated in Sarajevo Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sofia Chotek. To avoid his son leaving for the front, the young Constantine's mother arranged his marriage. This is how he got married on October 10, 1914 to Maria Scobai, born in 1897, the daughter of a priest from Blebea, and was ordained as a priest in Valea Albă, a few months later." Thierry Gillybeouf, *Virgil Gheorghiu – scriitorul calomniat,* p. 7.

[8] Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Omul din spatele *Orei 25*. Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu în dosarele Securităţii," p. 374; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Corespondenţa lui Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu cu părinţii săi, reflectată în documentele Securităţii," in *Tabor,* XI (2018), nr. 3, p. 72-76.

[9] Virgil Gheorghiu, *Memorii – martorul orei 25,* p. 269.

The departure to Zagreb, forced by the fact that he married a Jewish lady, namely Ecaterina Burbea Schneck,[10] fact that will create him troubles both with the Legionary Movement and with the racial laws, will determine him to write them. Therefore, in the autobiographical novel entitled: *The man who was travelling alone,* he will emphasize this aspect:

"When he returned to his office, he began a letter to his father. He never typed letters to Izvor (the native village, our note). He prefers to write them by hand. He only had good news for home. He told them about his life in Zagreb, his literary magazines and all the small events of his existence. As he wrote, he began to smile. He shared with his parents a great victory.[11]"

Although he was far away, the writer was always informed about his parents and their life.[12] Therefore, their complicated situation during the Second World War and later, at the beginning of the Communism, will not be unknown to him. Moreover, their sufferance after his departure, will be also emphasized to him. As it can be seen from the letters that he sent them from Paris, but also from the way how he evocates them in his writings, the writer was deeply attached to his parents. For him, they represented something almost saint, due to the fact that, despite of their poverty, the priest and his wife managed to send him to study and encouraged him in his work as a writer and publisher.

Another dimension of the family that can be found in his memorial writings is the related with his wife. He will fall in love with Ecaterina Burbea Schneck[13] after seing her defending a women that was considered a criminal. Shortly after this moment, he will declare his love and will marry her, as he writes in the memories:

"On July 29, 1939, the Black Tulip and I got married. We knew we couldn't live without each other. On the morning of our wedding, I went to my newspaper. I asked two of my colleagues, whom I found there, Dumitru Banu and Stan, to accompany me to the city. I didn't told them why, it just didn't last long. They accompanied me to the town hall in blue. Each city hall in Bucharest is named after a color. They witnessed our marriage. The mayor was very surprised and happy to receive and marry us. His name was Ispir, he was a boyar from Buciumeni. The village of vineyards and Natalia Negru, wife, in turn of the two unfortunate poets, Iosif and Anghel. We were in a great hurry to get married, because it was July 29, 1939. Exactly thirty days after World War II broke out. It was our wedding present."[14]

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[10] Mirela Drăgoi, „Histoire et Recomposition Identitaire dans les Mémoires de Virgil Gheorghiu", in *Intercultural communication and literature,* 21 (2014), no. 1, p. 41.

[11] Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu,*Omul care călătorea singur,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2010.

[12] For example, in the same book, he writes: "A few weeks passed. Then others. It simply came to our notice then. Matisi wrote to Izvor through every courier, but never received a reply. One day, one of his letters returned to Zagreb. The Romanian Post had written on the envelope: *The recipient was evacuated from Izvor. The new address is unknown.*
With the letter in his hand, Trajan enters the minister's office.
- Why was my father evacuated from Izvor? asked the minister. I no longer understand anything.
The minister unfolded a map of Romania. He asked her to show him where the Spring was.
- "The Russians are now in northern Moldova," the minister said. Don't you see that the front line passes exactly through the Spring? There are fights in those parts. Right at the Spring. It is normal that the civilian population was evacuated." *Ibidem,* p. 203-204.

[13] Constantin Cubleşan, *Escale în croazieră,* Cluj-Napoca, Grinta Press, 2011, p. 17.

[14] Virgil Gheorghiu, *Memorii – martorul orei 25,* p. 479.

The fact that she was a Jewish[15] will cause him a lot of troubles, as mentioned previously, will not affect their love. The two ones will remain together until the death and although, as Gheorghiu will mention in a letter to his parents, they will not have children,[16] they will leave together a rather good life. Even at when the writer will be already aged, he will dedicate her books and the couple will travel together all around the world.[17] On the road from Zagreb to Paris, when the two ones will pass thorough the American camp in Heidelberg, one of the most painful moments from their life will be the ones when the two ones will be separated.[18]

The parents and the matrimonial aspects are therefore the main aspects related with the family that can be found in Virgil Gheorghiu's work. They say a lot about the way how he saw them and about the values that were, according to him, defining for the understanding of it. Love, respect, fidelity were the keywords of the understanding of the topic. Moreover, together with terms like mother and father, for him *house* is also related with the idea of family. This is the reason why the writer will be more than scared when he will be sent by the Romanian Army in the notorious campaign against the Russians and will get in contact with some prisoners that have not felt the lack of the house.[19]

The idea of family is also depicted in the works dedicated to the war. In his masterpiece, namely *The 25th Hour* Gheorghiu will speak about different families and the way how the war destroyed them. Illustrative is, for example, the confession of a German officer who lost all the members of his family during the conflagration. This aspect determined him to come closer to the idea of nation and to replace in his brain the family with the nation. At the end of the events, when his country will be defeated too and he will haft to lose also this aspect, the only remaining solution will be the suicide:

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[15] „Of Jewish origin, Ecaterina Burbea was born on September 7, 1916 (two days before the birth of Virgil), in Galaţi, on the right bank of the Danube; she is the daughter of Eleonora Schenk, director and owner of *Galați noi,* the biggest magazine in Lower Moldova, and Ion Burbea, an independent parliamentarian who was chairman of the Danube Commission." Thierry Gillyboeuf, *Virgil Gheorghiu – scriitorul calomniat,* p. 27.

[16] Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Corespondenţa lui Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu cu părinţii săi, reflectată în documentele Securităţii," 74.

[17] Therefore, for example, as Thierry Gillyboeuf shows: "At the end of 1978, Virgil Gheorghiu and his wife left for Lebanon, in Beirut on fire, at the invitation of a friend. One of them, Father Mansour Labaki, invites him to attend services and accompany the war orphans in the "Foyer of Joy," tells him about his parish in Damour, and convinces him to write a book about Lebanon. Thierry Gillyboeuf, *Virgil Gheorghiu – scriitorul calomniat,* p. 95.

[18] Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu, *Ispita Libertății. Memorii,* p. 308.

[19] "Oh, the appearance of these prisoners, when you start talking to them, is heartbreakingly tragic. Their lives are stripped of the most beautiful things. In the camp where they live, no one sings, hums, prays and dreams of anything. I didn't see anyone crying, or with their eyelashes steaming with melancholy. Everything that happens around them is indifferent. They don't miss home, they don't want to win, they don't want anything. I spend my time sleeping, or talking, for hours, the greatest platitudes. They talk unimportant, stupid things, and I haven't seen a single one, in the twelve hours I've been with them, glancing, tearful or Welsh, over the barbed wire fence. Nowhere, in their ranks, is there any human manifestation." Virgil Gheorghiu, *Ard malurile Nistrului,* Făgăraş, Geea Press, 1993, p. 18.

"-Now the Fuhrer is dead too! continued he. Germany no longer exists! I lived only for it. When I was young, I also liked horses; but that was a love of youth! All my ideals have died before my eyes, one after another: my wife, my daughter, the Fuhrer and my homeland! Now it's my turn. In half an hour, the Russians will be here. Until they arrive, I would like to fulfill the last duty of my life!

Hilda was in tears. She had thought the giant would sleep with her in her bedroom. She thought he would tell her he was hungry, and she would feed him. And then he saw him dressed in a parade uniform! "I'll do whatever you ask me to do!" Do you want to go somewhere first -? she said, looking at his uniform.

- I'm not going anywhere! he replied. This is the last path of my earthly life!"[20]

The idea of family will come again into debate at the end of the war in the context of the arrival of the Russians in the Romanian lands. Then, it will be related with another keyword, namely the protection. Conscious of the moral and social troubles caused by the Red Army, the writer will use his skills in order to condemn their attitude in his books. Therefore, many of the dialogues betwwen the characters of the the book will also face this aspect. There is such an example:

"You are not a fascist either, Mr. Governor, but I do not think you would agree to stay with your wife for even 24 hours in the Bolshevik occupation zone," Trajan said. Not for political reasons, but for fear of cruelty and terror. I personally do not think you have the courage to enter their area without a uniform and without a strong guard. It's fair to ask us, two defenseless people, why are we running away from the barbarian hordes, armed with the latest model of American automatic rifles?"[21]

Family is also used by the Romanian writer in the critics of the Communist societies. There, he does not properly speak about the relevance of the social cell in the evolution of the world, but about the way how its misunderstanding can cause damages to the social life. It was notorious in the aforementioned period that in Romania, the rulers were, between 1965 and 1989, Ceauşescu family. In those years, being a relative of the presidential couple constituted a reason strong enough for one to be promoted in the ruling structures. The studies, the competences or all the other elements with an axiological value were not important as soon as this criterion was accomplished. This aspect constituted, in those decades, the cause of some social diseases. Virgil Gheorghiu does not miss the occasion to emphasize it and to speak about the way how it was encountered in his native lands, as part of the complex corruption process that existed. In *God in Paris,* he therefore offers such an example, described in detail:

"Horodincă did not receive any education for his profession. He is a relative of the president. In kinship lies his only merit. In the Romanian People's Republic, all management positions are entrusted to the president's family. The president's wife is a member of the Academy of Sciences, director of the Institute of Nuclear Physics, president of the Institute of Chemistry. Participates in international meetings as a scientist in atomic physics. He receives the same honors as Einstein, Oppenheimer and von Braun. His scientific training is reduced to a few months of

[20] Virgil Gheorghiu, *Ora 25,* Paris and Bucharest, Les Editions du Rocher and Omegapress, 1991, p. 214.
[21] *Ibidem,* p. 214.

study at the school of midwives. Horodinca is no more qualified than the president. That's why Baxan wants to get rid of him."[22]

Later, in book like *The Spy*[23] or *The Great Exterminator and the Great Orthodox Council,*[24] he will also bring together the two topics, namely the family and the Communism from the Romanian space. This time, he will emphasize the way how Bucharest dictatorial regime used the family as a tool of punishment and as a way to accomplish his tasks. In the first one of them, a spy that claims to be the wife of the man who managed to run away from Romania and become a kind of exiled people in France, comes and manages to help to the death of that man, considered to a danger by the regime. The situation is similar in the second one, when the relatives and the family are used as ways of pressure in order to convince the ones who are against the regime to stop, or to kill them, in case of a refuse.[25] Due to the fact that it is a kind of a leitmotiv, this aspect can be also found in other books, like *The Heidelberg Unknowns,*[26] where another interesting aspect is brought into attention, namely the interest of the Communist countries for the death bodies and their repatriation. In a complex novel, Gheorghiu manages there to present an interesting story, where although the family is not the main topic, it has an important role.

Conclusion

As it could be seen also in our presentation, family is a topic that can be recurrently found in the work of Virgil Gheorghiu. While in his memories and the autobiographical novels he speaks about his own family (mother, father, sisters and brothers, or about his wife and the relationship with her), in the literary novels, the author emphasizes aspects like the way how the war can destroy the family, the relevance of this category of the relationships for the evolution of the society or the way how the communist society from the Romanian space, but not exclusively,[27] understood and used the family as a tool for their works with political content.

As it could be seen, in his conception, family is related with the idea of home, but also with aspects like love, respect, fidelity, care and other similar ones. In loved with the young Jewish lady called Ecaterina Burbea, the Romanian writer will

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[22] Virgil Gheorghiu, *Dumnezeu la Paris,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2016, p. 27-28.

[23] Virgil Gheorghiu, *L'Espionne –Roman,* Paris, Librairie Plon, 1971.

[24] Virgil Gheorghiu, *Marele Exterminator și Marele Sinod Ortodox*, Făgăraş, Agaton Press, 2008.

[25] Here, as it is shown in its foreword: "The alarm signal in this novel is about the possibility of using, this time, not the masses, but even the human person, the insignificant, the insignificant, the individual, who according to the novelist has an energy equal to the atomic and can form the basis of a new sociology. The ideological manipulation of this energy of the social atom, which is the individual, can dramatically change the compass head of the eschatological direction, orienting it not biblically towards heaven, but humanistic, towards a land that has assassinated its angels ." Ioan Neculoiu, „Marele Exterminator, sau căderea din itinerarul eshatologic în cel terestru", in Virgil Gheorghiu, *Marele Exterminator și Marele Sinod Ortodox*, Făgăraş, Agaton Press, 2008, p. 8.

[26] Virgil Gheorghiu, *Necunoscuții din Heidelberg,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2015.

[27] Because, for example, in *The Sacrificies of the Danube,* he also presents the way how the family is understood and threatened, but this time in the Bulgarian context. See: Virgil Gheorghiu, *Sacrificații Dunării,* Bucharest, Sophia Press, 2020.

marry her, despite of all the risks. He will refuse the formal divorce that could bring him the freedom and the possibility to not lose his job, and the two ones will remain together for many years, until the death of the writer. Moreover, the love between the two of them will increase in the second part of their life and the writer will dedicate her some of his later books. In the same time, due to the fact that they will not have the possibility of the personal meeting due to the fact that he will spend more than a half of his life in the Romanian exile from Paris where he will leave a complex and partially controversial life,[28] his relationship with his parents will know new nuances and his love for them will be expressed thorough the passages that he will dedicate them in his books.

[28] Cf. Neagu Djuvara, *Amintiri din pribegie (1948-1990),* Bucharest, Humanitas Press, 1996, p. 164-167; Mircea Eliade, *Europa, Asia, America.... Corespondenţă A-H. Volumul 1,* Bucharest, Humanitas Press, 1999, p. 385, p. 441, p. 459, p. 468, p. 481; Afif Hadam, *Harmonies et Conflicts de Valeurs chez Constant Virgil Gheorghiu,* Bucharest, Bucharest University Press, 1996; Sanda Stolojan, *Nori peste Balcoane. Jurnal din Exilul Parizian,* Bucharest, Humanitas Press, 1996, p. 22-23 ; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Opera lui Virgil Gheorghiu, între literatură şi autobiografie", in Ilie Rad (coord.), *Anuarul Colegiului Studenţesc de Performanţă Academică 2015-2016, nr. 3,* Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, p. 263-271; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, Elemente ale spiritualităţii ortodoxe în opera literară a lui Virgil Gheorghiu", in *Symposium,* nr. 23 – "Cultural Transparency and the Loss of Privacy in the Era of Digital Technology: How Is This Shaping Our Becoming and the Ethical Dilemmas Related to It", The Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality, *New York,* 2016, p. 63-73, for more information about this aspect of his life.

„ Family and its Image in Virgil Gheorghiu's Work," *Astra Salvensis,* IX (2021), no. 18, p. 225-231.

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