

antioncology to point an accusing finger to the doctors who crush the hopes of cancer patients, the substantial issue is whether psychiatry, whatever its relation to hope, speaks truly. And this is almost equally hard to settle before and after reading *Doctoring the Mind*. Acting as the polemic and popularization arm for the view of mental illness presented in *Madness Explained*, this book is too close to biased journalism to offer a credible and decisive diagnosis of psychiatry. This would have been a daunting task in any case. We do not have similar diagnoses in any of the fields which deal with the mind, clinical psychology here included. No progress is made if one plays the exaggerated vulnerabilities of one discipline against the muted weaknesses of another.

It is true that we live in a maddening world. But it is ironic that, in the wake of those who saw in the image of the asylum the spectre of repression in the name of the general good, Bentall thinks that “[T]he dominant paradigm in psychiatry [...] failed to make a measurable contribution to the well-being of society as a whole”.¹ Who can claim such an achievement, one wonders. And even more than in the case of *Madness Explained*, one is reminded of what Clifford Geertz observed about the need for subtlety in psychological theorizing: “As with all such enterprises, there are a good many more ways of getting it wrong than there are of getting it right, and one of the most common ways of getting it wrong is through convincing ourselves that we have got it right – consciousness explained, how the mind works, the engine of reason, the last word”.²

Challenges of Ethics in Contemporary Society*
– Book review³ –

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The ethical substance of the current period, as announced by Gilles Lipovetsky, is incessantly affirmed and confirmed by the need for challenging from an ethical perspective the increasing issues and problems raised by the development of

¹ Ibid., 264.

² Clifford Geertz, “Imbalancing Act: Jerome Bruner’s Cultural Psychology” in *Jerome Bruner. Language, Culture, Self*, eds. David Bakhurst and Stuart G. Shanker (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 28.

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³ Mihaela Frunză, *Expertiza etică și bioetică. Studii de caz* (Ethical expertise and bioethics. Case Studies) (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2010), ISBN 978-973-726-558-6.

contemporary society. The interrogation from an ethical perspective is unavoidable, and thus creates a growing need for ethical expertise and experts in ethics.

Whether we are referring to corporate codes of business ethics, codes of media ethics, or the staggering questions raised by the field of bioethics, we are on the uncertain and unknown land of unprecedented development and of weakening guiding marks offered by tradition. The medical progress is the best example of the challenge of ethics for the contemporary human being.

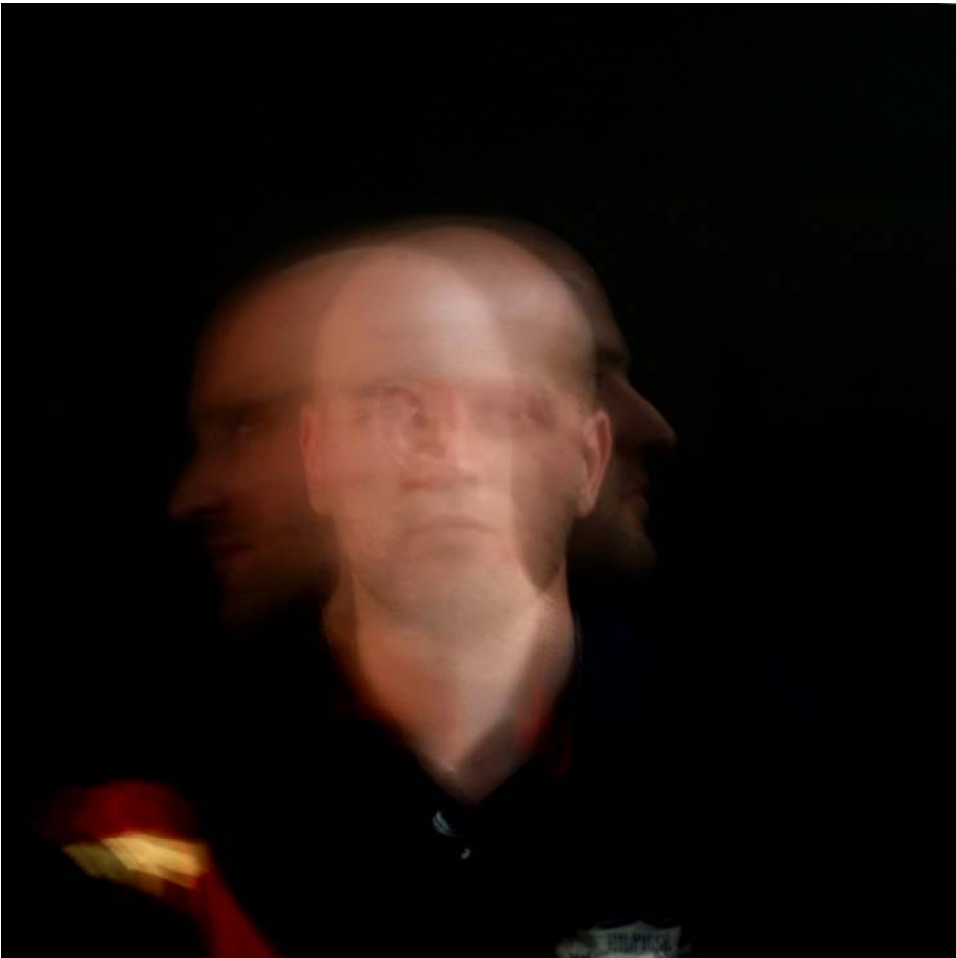
Mihaela Frunză's volume *Expertiza etică și bioetică. Studii de caz (Ethical expertise and bioethics. Case Studies)* approaches precisely this growth of interest towards ethics, the challenges continuously addressed by ethics, questioning principles and traditional categories and introducing new elements into the equation. Mihaela Frunză's approach proposes both a conceptual framework for discussions on bioethics, and an analysis of practical examples. Thus, a wide range of topics are thoroughly discussed in the articles that actually constitute the volume *Expertiza etică și bioetică. Studii de caz*, starting from the issue of transplantation, to the ethical questions raised by in vitro fertilization, to prayer therapy or the presence of religious discourse in the public space, etc.

The author begins by analyzing the special relationship between the ethical expertise, namely the ethical experts, and philosophy, namely, the philosopher, emphasizing two different positions. On the one hand, the conviction that "nobody is an expert in ethics, not even philosophers" and, on the other hand, the affirmation that "even if all people have knowledge of ethics, philosophers are the only experts in ethics". After analyzing the two perspectives, the sceptical one and the exclusivist one, Mihaela Frunză attains the conclusion that she considers to be the most balanced version and, simultaneously, corresponding to the existing practical situation, namely the "democratization" of the ethical expertise. Among the various categories of potential experts from different professions, the philosophers are "a particular category, having both specific skills in moral tradition and general skills in applied ethics".¹ This special relationship of ethical expertise and philosophy is confirmed over the entire volume, regardless of the subject treated, testifying the author's philosophical background. Also, numerous examples of the use of philosophical concepts and philosophical perspective are given, as well as examples of the experience, coming from philosophers, in the field of bioethics (whether we refer to the direct interaction within the medical act or to philosophical analysis of paradigmatic cases or individual cases, represents an "advocacy for the usefulness of a philosophical expertise in investigating the complex issues of bioethics"). Reading in a philosophical key of interpretation both the classical themes of bioethics, and the recently developed branches, contributes to the "formation of a theoretical basis for an informed and applied reference, from the standpoint of applied ethics to the recently developed sub-domains of bioethics".²

After delineating the main direction and perspective of the proposed approach, the author goes on to the analysis of several particular questions of bioethics.

¹ Mihaela Frunză, *Expertiza etică și bioetică*, 19.

² Ibid., 25.



Irina Dumitrașcu, *Confused I*
Photography print, 50x50 cm, 2010
Website: www.bavardestudio.ro

The different postures and metamorphoses of the body involved in the act of transplantation are the starting point of the interesting analysis framed by the author in the article *Ethical options and metamorphosis of the body*. The article addresses the ethical issues implied by the concept of the body, belonging to the deceased donor, to the living donor, to the recipient or to relatives. In each of the previously listed cases, the body is a problematic entity, which justifies Mihaela Frunză's analysis.

Next to the dilemmas raised by the declaration of brain death, the author highlights another interesting aspect concerning the body of the deceased donor, an aspect that is usually ignored by the quantitative approaches, namely the invasive practices towards the donor's body, which comes to be considered manageable for being a recipient of precious goods: the organs. The same attitude is denounced in the case of the living donors, who are the subject of a "sacrificial violence" within

the “tyranny of the gift”, as stated by Nancy Scheper-Hughes. Mihaela Frunză rightly highlights that, even if we refer to living donors, the attention is focused mainly on the organs, the bodies of the persons involved being left in the background and the recovery is left to the donors’ responsibility.

If, besides the traumatic physical experience of the transplant, the donors have the feeling of having done something worthwhile and selfless, the recipients become subject to continuous medical actions. With the chance of a transplant, the receiver lives “in a permanent regime of intrusion”, that of medical tests and treatment. Resorting to Jean Luc Nancy’s text, *L’intrus*, Mihaela Frunză manages once more to bring into discussion the issues that are overlooked by the quantitative approaches and illustrates once again the special relationship between the field of bioethics and philosophy.

Organ transplantation is the theme of the next article of the volume, in which Mihaela Frunză examines the topic from different angles, within the Romanian context. The author creates a statistical analysis of the transplantation situation in Romania, pointing out the paradox that “although Romanians manifested their attachment toward European-shared values, they scored lowest in Europe in public surveys regarding the openness towards transplantation”.¹ The analysis of the transplantation legislation in Romania clarifies the legislative aspects of the subject in question and emphasizes at the same time some of the problematical aspects, such as the public solicitation of organs, publicity for a person in order to obtain an organ, altruistic vs. paid donation, highlighting some of the gaps and shortcomings of the Romanian legislation.

In the Romanian context, where the population’s confidence in the Church has reached a remarkable level, the analysis of the relationship between religion and transplantation is an interesting aspect. Mihaela Frunză rightly considers that this level of confidence could influence the population’s attitude towards transplantation. But, at the same time, she mentions that, despite the theoretical openness of the Romanian Orthodox Church to transplantation, they took a public and vivid stance against it during the debates on the presumed consent, in 2008, stating that transplantation should remain in the paradigm of the gift of life, a paradigm that cannot be undertaken without the explicit consent of the person. Mihaela Frunză believes that this position justifies a pessimistic interpretation of the whole debate, that is to say the public opinion should be marked in particular by the fact that the Romanian Orthodox Church pronounced itself strongly against the presumed accord while the acceptance of the freely consented transplant by the church would pass into the background, thus influencing the general attitude towards transplantation in a negative way.

Consequently, despite the legislative openness towards living donor transplantation, the above mentioned limitations, the mistrust towards the Romanian health care system and the mixed public discourse of the Orthodox Church on the transplantation subject affects negatively the public attitude concerning organ transplantation. At the same time, Mihaela Frunză considers that these factors should and could constitute an element that would increase the responsibility of the

¹ Ibid., 66.

medical community and the larger academic community to make further efforts to increase public awareness and augment the positive attitudes towards transplantation.¹

At the intersection between ethics and religion lies, as well, the analysis made by Mihaela Frunză, Sandu Frunză, Cătălin-Vasile Bobb and Ovidiu Grad of a special category of donors: the living unrelated donors. Within this framework, the authors examine the particular case of the Jesus Christians religious group. This religious group is remarkable for the topic by the fact that its members are kidney donors to foreigners. Analyzing both the particular case of this religious group and the large category of living unrelated donors (LURD), Mihaela Frunză highlights different perspectives from which this type of donors can be analyzed in terms of ethics and different ethical attitudes towards them. Whether we refer to the suspicion of commercialism, the mental health of donors, the informed and independent decision to donate, or to the moral and religious motives and arguments invoked, LURD is a controversial category, causing interesting debates.

A possible solution for the long transplant waiting lists is xenotransplantation, a procedure that is still in its early stage, and this aspect motivates some experts to call xenotransplantation a medical experiment, rather than a treatment. The bioethical evaluation of xenotransplantation proposed by Mihaela Frunză highlights several concerns that are to be weighed. The effectiveness of these transplants, the risk of pandemics, the quality of the patient's life after the transplantation, are some of the factors that place the discussion about xenotransplantation into the field of the conflict between the role of the medical researcher trying to discover a new treatment and the role of the physician who should comfort and diminish the patient's suffering. Furthermore, other problematical issues are signalized from the perspective of animal rights and religious beliefs. Nevertheless, the author considers that the alternative of xenotransplantation remains open, but, at the same time, she emphasizes the fact that ethical reflections on this topic are indispensable.

The necessity and the importance of ethical expertise are confirmed in the case of fertilization in vitro, as well. Mihaela Frunză analyzes from an ethical point of view a highly-publicized case of using new medical technologies in reproductive practices, namely the case of the Suleman octuplets. The perspective of the approach is given by the conceptual duo responsibility/irresponsibility (the parents' responsibility on the one hand and the doctors responsibility, on the other) versus care (a concept of the feminist philosophy and ethics that designates a form of manifestation of attention, solicitude, sympathy, but also a type of practices central to individuals).² According to Mihaela Frunză, the approach provided by the ethics of care manages to best highlight the circumstances in which we can talk not only about the responsibility/irresponsibility of those involved, but also about the need to provide support to that family.

The phenomenon known as “re-enchanting the medical” or “the falling of the bamboo curtain”, or, at least, an aspect of the phenomenon is the subject of the

¹ Ibid., 93.

² Ibid., 149.

following article of the volume. In a preliminary phase, Mihaela Frunză makes some terminological specifications on the conceptual duo religion–spirituality, and she avoids subsuming them to the polarity institutional versus personal because this latter polarity eventually involves a “disqualifying characterization”. For those unfamiliar with the phenomenon of complementary and alternative medicine, the importance it enjoys lately, as reflected by the growing number of courses in medical training or by the number of articles in the literature, is surprising. However, the claim for a scientific analysis of prayer therapy raises reservations on several levels. Mihaela Frunză analyzes three of the most relevant studies on this phenomenon and she identifies three types of difficulties. First, there are the methodological problems. Is it scientifically acceptable to study the effects of prayer on a group of patients; moreover, is it possible to constitute a pure control group? The methodological suspicions analyzed by Mihaela Frunză are various, but the scientific study of prayer therapy involves difficulties of different types, such as the ethical concern with reference to the informed consent of patients or to the negative effects of such an experiment on suggestible patients. A very interesting perspective on the studies on prayer therapy is provided by the public–private debate based on the fact that these studies bring into the public sphere an activity usually practiced in private.¹ From a religious point of view, as well, the implications of these studies are at any rate problematic, if not unacceptable. Despite the fact that prayer as therapy is widespread and widely practiced by patients and their relatives, its acceptance in the area of medical techniques is seriously called into question. The attempts to reallocate the phenomenon from the sphere of the patient’s intimate life into the realm of scientific studies on efficiency and probability, generate problems of different nature. However, the author does not definitively reject the possibility of accepting prayer therapy by the medical branch, emphasizing in this respect the importance of capturing the scientific experiments and tests through medical language, in order to overcome some of the difficulties mentioned above.

In the attempt to present the challenges addressed by ethics to contemporary society as completely as possible, Mihaela Frunză, together with Sandu Frunză, propose a comprehensive analysis of the Romanian public space debate initiated by the introduction of electronic passports. The context in which this debate occurs and is conducted is influenced by several factors, addressed in detail by the authors.

The sometimes aggressive debate, as demonstrated by some of the examples given by the authors, triggered by the introduction of biometric passports, is the starting point for an extremely interesting analysis of the Romanian context. The authors report a dual presence of religion within the Romanian situation: on the one hand, its massive presence within the public space, and the discourse of the crisis of assuming a Christian morality, on the other. This duality is present throughout the entire analysis. Without pronouncing themselves in favour of any of the parties involved in the conflict, Mihaela Frunză and Sandu Frunză highlight a crucial fact for understanding the discussion, namely that, in the Romanian context,

¹ Ibid., 201.

secularization, and all the inherent aspects of this phenomenon, are perceived as a “painful reality”. Another decisive factor in shaping the framework of the analysis is the mutual influence of religion and politics within the Romanian society. This influence affected the decisions of the Romanian parliament regarding the legislation related to electronic passports.

This dispute is just one example of the presence of the religious discourse within the public space and of the religious influence on politics. Moreover, it demonstrates once more the importance of bioethics centres in managing the conflicting relationship between religion and the effects of scientific and technological development in modern society. The authors state that the discourse of the Romanian centres of bioethics is generally a theological one, and it fails to create a neutral space for debate, a space favourable for the development of critical thinking, dialogue and tolerance.¹

In fact, the entire range of the themes addressed in the volume emphasizes the importance of the ethical discourse in capturing the nuances and complexities of the approached cases, but also the fact that the ethical discourse and expertise coming from a philosophical background constitute an indispensable perspective for the investigation of issues related to bioethics and constitute “the theoretical basis of an informed and applied approach, from the viewpoint of applied ethics to all these recent subdomains of bioethics.”

Reconsideration of literary accents*

– Review –

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Keywords: the 18th century, *historia litteraria*, correspondence, pietism, Enlightenment, science organisation

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This review focuses on László Szelestei N.’s book about some unknown faces of the 18th century. The volume is apparently a collection of studies, dealing with ideas and personalities connected to the selected period of time. However, Szelestei’s literary historical work not only fills gaps in the Hungarian image of that age, but it modifies the accents of it. As he creates occasions to get acquainted with a personal destiny or career, the ideological background unfolds in an authentic, experience-like representation. The reader can get detailed pictures about figures

¹ Ibid., 245.

* Szelestei N. László: *Eszmék és arcok a 18. századi Magyarországról* (László Szelestei N., *Ideas and faces from the 18th century Hungary*) (Budapest: Universitas, 2010), 233 p., ISBN 978-963-9671-33-1, ISSN 1219-8552