

PLATONIC IDEA OF TRUTH PLEASURE – MOTIVE AND MEANS OF HUMAN WILL AND ACTION IN EUGEN RUSSU'S VISION

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Abstract: *Mathematician and university professor, Eugen Russu had original and unconventional philosophical concerns about Man, Morality, Creation and Human Action. His main work of philosophical anthropology, published in 1940, is suggestively titled About Man. The present article dwells on his conception of pleasure in its instrument specification by which "Nature determines the same kind of actions, without explicitly making the purpose of the ensembles of facts that constitute Life visible to us". This study examines his conception of pleasure as a motive and means of human will and action. Eugen Russu postulates that it is very important not to limit the meaning of the term "pleasure" only to direct or material pleasures. Pleasure, he asserts, is of several kinds and is the equivalent of the accomplished deed satisfaction, and especially the path traveled until final achievement (the same way as the Platonic idea of truth: it is not the truth as such that is of particular importance, but the path followed for its discovery).*

Eugen Russu (b. 15.12.1910, Tecuci – d. 07.05.1983, Bucharest) was a mathematician, high school teacher (Iași, Târgu Mureș, Bucharest) and university professor (Bucharest). He had original philosophical concerns about man, morality, creation and human action. His philosophical anthropology main work, published in 1940, is suggestively titled *About Man*.

In a previous study¹ dedicated to his work, I insisted on his concept of pleasure as instrument by which "Nature sets the same kind of actions to us without explicitly making the purpose of the sets of facts that constitute

¹ See Constantin Stroe, *About man and his morality (Eugen Russu)*, in vol. "Studies of the history of Romanian philosophy", 18/2022 (in progress at the Publishing House of the Romanian Academy)

Life visible to us"². In the present study I will analyze his concept of pleasure as motive and means of human will and action. In this conceptual context, Eugen Russu notes it is very important not to limit the meaning of the term pleasure only to "direct or material pleasures". The pleasures, he says, are many and of "different kinds". For him, pleasure is the equivalent to satisfaction of the accomplished deed, and, especially, to the path traveled until its final realization (in the same way as the Platonic idea of truth: it is not the truth as such that is of particular importance, but the path followed for its discovery).

"Placement within the real ideal conditions produces an affective state of satisfaction, for which we can maintain the term pleasure..."³, he specified. From such a point of view, he notes the difference between primitive man, driven to satisfy his instincts or to fight for the conditions in which these instincts are satisfied, through the mechanism of pleasure, and the evolved man of today, who feels driven to live up to the conditions of his real ideal⁴, or to fight for their achievement by a mechanism of the same essence. So: instinct versus ideal, the realization mechanism being the same.

There is a difference not only for the same human individual over different ages, but also from one individual to another, as to the sum of the life conditions which do or do not ensure the attainment of pleasure.

Russu says there is another difference "not looking at the directions of life, but at its intensity. According to the individual and to the era in which he is located, the quantity of pleasures necessary for life is different. "We can call vital energy the need and urgency that, at a given moment, an individual feels in order to get this amount. It is the impetus for life in general, to gain pleasure"⁵.

The moment they direct their thoughts to a goal⁶, to an endeavour, which they ardently desire to accomplish, human individuals feel a vital energy within them, mobilizing and preparing them to get to that point. At

² Eugen Russu, Notes about THE MAN, Thought – Georgescu Delafras, Bucharest, 1940, p.41

³ Idem, p.39

⁴ "Since we are talking about real longings, desires that warm the whole being, towards which the individual feels totally, without reservations, trained, we will call the set of longings of this nature, real ideal" (*Ibidem*, p. 35). Russu attributes this qualification of real to it, to distinguish it from the theoretical ideal.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p.47-48

⁶ Russu uses the term *impetus* with the meaning of aspiration and that of tendency with the meaning of desire, inclination, propensity and sometimes even attitude.

the opposite side, when they do not want anything, their vital energy is absent or "sleeping", thus defining what is called a lack of "lust for life".

According to Eugen Russu, we can speak of a certain legitimacy: "The amount of energy spent is translated into the amount of pleasure obtained"⁷ or "the total amount of pleasure experienced must correspond to the vital energy consumed"⁸.

The need for a significant amount of pleasure can also result in the strengthening and special use of the will, as, for example, the acceptance of some present sufferings, in view of greater future pleasures.

At the opposite end, the use of reduced vital energy occurs when the individual is satisfied with "small leaps of pleasure and longer stay on the same stage" and, therefore, "limit to a smaller number of life plans"⁹.

An individual's life, if lived multilaterally "in several domain categories", sees each of them having a pleasure input. "This input will be reduced, so that the sum will fit all"; if that life is less lived, the leaps must be greater. Vital energy is not divided equally. If it is spent more in one area, it must be saved in another, at the expense of other ways of satisfaction. Vital energy also depends on the constitution and physical health of the individual but also, to a very large extent, on his mental health.

The manifestation of pleasure as human activity engine is detailed by Eugen Russu as follows: there are tendencies within the perimeter of an individual's real ideal components that are to be imperatively satisfied. There are also some secondary, weaker ones that can even remain unsatisfied forever. A secondary role tendency can be abandoned, as the individual easily abandoning it does not feel the need to see it as an aspiration. Of course this causes a displeasure which shows that it ought to, or "would have been better" if it were satisfied. This displeasure stops at a certain limit, which indicates that that particular tendency's fulfillment was not, however, imperative. Eugen Russu talks about the fact that some trends in what he calls the real ideal have a periodic trait and others do not. For example, nutrition is periodic, and for its fulfillment it assumes an attraction towards the state of pleasure. A tendency which, however, lacks periodicity also demands its achievement via the same attraction towards the state of pleasure, he points out. "But, Russu emphasizes, the role of life is not limited to a single satisfaction" but "it seeks to extract from a given individual as much facts or "experiences" as possible. This happens

⁷ *Ibidem*, p.48

⁸ *Ibidem*, p.65

⁹ *Ibidem*, p.48

because that state of pleasure related to any particular situation wears out, it cannot last too long"¹⁰.

The consequence is that man is in "eternal turmoil, in eternal evolution towards the complex" aiming at the need for a new pleasure gain, as the previous one has been exhausted. Man cannot stagnate, as it "eternally desires something higher or something else". When he reaches a desired state he feels pleasure, even "a feeling of triumph and satisfaction", this being precisely the pleasure that prompted him on the way traveled so far. "But, says Eugen Russu, gradually, the emotional temperature is lowering. The state he experiences switches from habit to indifference. The soul experiences dissatisfactions again, an organic pleasure thirst, the attachment to a new, different or higher longing. A new training for a new pleasure"¹¹.

According to Eugen Russu, happiness arises precisely from this continuous transformation. The reverse of happiness is sadness, whose content is the unpleasantness caused by the intervention of fortuitous circumstances that make the individual suddenly leave the pleasant situation in which he was. The grief is all the more vivid the more sudden the breakup was, and the newer situation he ends up in is at a lower level compared to the original one. The presence of the first situation in his mind and, therefore, the presence of dissatisfaction, lasts until the sorrow is consumed and a state of indifference arises.

As it can be seen, the essential role is played here by the situation of indifference. Russu specifies that this character of indifference is given to a situation by the idea of finality. But when "the idea of "definitely" turned out to be false", i.e. one loses something "without expecting it", and one realizes that the situation one lost was actually pleasant, regret arises which gives one the impetus for a call for recovery"¹².

In Eugen Russu's opinion, an individual placed in the situation of satisfying his desires, immediately and "automatically", sees the corresponding pleasures as anemic because of their certainty. Such an individual must discover areas in which to conquer his own pleasure, passing through the whole natural range of soul states, because otherwise he remains unfulfilled, "unhappy".

The activism promoted by Russu clearly emerges here. He very carefully notes the fact that "affective states are distributed in such a way as to always trigger action". This makes life a continuous manifestation of

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p.42

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.43

¹² *Ibidem*, p.45

energy, set in motion precisely by the appropriate dosage of affective states.

Eugen Russu is of the opinion that final pleasure - as the first driving factor of an action - can remain as the only determinant only when the circumstances require a maximization of the work, an effort that exceeds the rhythm of pleasant activity. Such a case may occur when the ultimate pleasure or interest is of paramount importance. Demanding a maximum effort, mobilization of the full range of individual possibilities is also a call to the present organic resources but, in the same time, a warning given to them in order to temper - in the individual or his descendants - the forces that are necessary in the future. The rule is, he concludes, that unlike "pleasurable activities in themselves which seem to exercise and maintain existing forces, purposeful activities cause their strengthening and refinement."¹³

But he qualifies the above by observing that "it is not the activity appreciated as a thing in itself, with its objective meaning, which gives us the key to the transformations it causes", but an activity with a "soul atmosphere of pleasure" (but not a passive one, "in distressing tasting") with a full of momentum discharge tension and rhythm of vital capacities. He qualifies this mechanism of evolution, based on an intense rhythm of living as "a creative rhythm" and states that the most numerous are the cases when living happened in a soulful atmosphere of pleasant tension, in a creative rhythm.

It is fundamental that the soul rhythm in which an activity takes place should be natural and pleasant, not forced and artificial. Eugen Russu exemplifies with work (which often appears as something coercive and forceful) and school (where a forceful coercion hides under the deceptive appearance of complete freedom), situations in which activities "are "forcefully" carried out, with a heavy heart, constrained, with a soul full of insult and discouragement"¹⁴.

In the same range of activities carried out without the "living engine of pleasure" Russu includes "automatic activities", i.e. those that are repeated the same way, with the same concrete content, ad infinitum.

I have shown before (see above) that Eugen Russu speaks of a compensation effect when several and different domains of life are engaged, due to which the limitation to few domains results in the emphasis of life in them, in order to obtain the minimum necessary quantum for pleasure. This offset effect can only occur for independent domains. But when the fields are dependent and, above all, compatible, the act that leads

¹³ *Ibidem*, p.32

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p.52-53

to the realization manifests with a vital energy, a special intensity, unhindered by anything.

For example, if moral perfection is in contradiction with another type of pleasure, the latter, and even others, must be given up so that all the vital energy available to the individual is channeled to the desired direction: moral perfection. In this respect, it is clear that the individual will have all the more strength, the more his life does not find the necessary pleasure elsewhere and all the clearer as, this way, the total force is concentrated but diminished¹⁵.

But if the individual's aspiration is directed towards artistic creation this does not contradict to other tendencies, but, on the contrary, satisfies them on the same path, and the vital energy that would have discharged on several different paths is discharged on only one with the intensity gathered from all the tendencies. In this case the total force is concentrated, without being reduced, as in the previous example.

It is not difficult to see that Eugen Russu recommends that, in order to live a happy life, the individual has to harmonize his tendencies, desires, aspirations, so that they can be easily satisfied in common ways and, in the same time, avoid to opt for different tendencies and aspirations opposing each other. In short, he advises the individual to harmonize the components of his life and avoid disharmony.

But he is wise enough to point out that, although "a general remark can still be made", it is not possible to state "uniform rules in this regard, applicable to everyone, everything depending on the organic and spiritual conformation of each one¹⁶".

While the primitive man had a very limited sphere of pleasures, limited to those directly satisfying the individual - centered on the pleasure of nutrition and sex, the modern man - in addition to these two plans of life - has other individual pleasures: "putting the thinking faculties to work can give pleasure to Science; through sensibility he can taste the Beautiful in Art; through physical forces, in sports¹⁷". Although the latter are not subject to the declining pace of the former, they do not prove to be sufficient either.

Eugen Russu thinks that, in addition to strict individual aspirations-tendencies, at a given moment, one finds additional society useful aspirations in the soul of today's man. In other words, through socialization man aims at turning from a blind instrument of Nature to a stronger instrument of life. The satisfaction procured by achieving such endeavors can no longer be so easily limited because, "while strictly individual

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p.68

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p.71

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p.71

pleasures, sooner or later, wear out, the social utility satisfaction and thirst can always be like meeting new faces. Perhaps we obscurely sense that life in general plays a much more important role than that portion contained in an individual even if that individual is us¹⁸". Which means that in every individual one can simultaneously find purely selfish tendencies and tendencies of satisfaction through altruism. Man's mastery consists in not letting them come into conflict, but coordinating them, in the sense of fully experiencing purely selfish tendencies and correlatively neglecting altruistic ones and vice versa: highlighting the altruistic tendencies and correlatively satisfying selfish ones with indifference.

In the same biunivocal relationship register, Eugen Russu also records the link between intention and deed. The existence of a "well-proportioned dosage" plays an essential role between the imagined intention and the actual possibilities of achievement. That is, there must be "a mutual conditioning: the intention determines setting the forces, poses the problem of a great result and their execution under such conditions educates them along the lines that prove necessary, while the forces of achievement also determine the level, or even the nature, of intent, according to their actual possibilities¹⁹".

Secondly, the individual must also imagine the affective state related to the urge, because this causes the pleasure expectation, it is the engine that drives the impulse to/for the act. Only the obtained image changes along the way, by joining the affective state determined by the path, which can be placed in the meaning but also in the action. In such a circumstance, the deed is carried out to its end only "if the resultant between the expectation of the final pleasure and the eventual pleasure of the deployment of the forces overwhelms the inconveniences encountered²⁰". Thirdly, "the proportioning between achievement forces' intent and maximum effect should be done from the beginning, as fairly as possible", resulting in the requirement that "imagining the goal should be simultaneous with the most accurate representation of the ways of achievement" announcing to the "resources of being that effort is needed. "Imagining the goal means the conviction that it is useful, the path that it is necessary, the effort²¹"

According to his own confession, all the above are three very simple truths, explicitly exposed by him with the aim of proving that in the present man they are not respected in most cases "and, because of this failure to

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p.72

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p.74

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p.74-75

²¹ *Ibidem*, p.75

respect the natural way of thinking, an obsession has the effect of a false soul formation, sick experiences²² and, in the extreme, real and terrible illnesses".

If it is about something imagined and not real, another fact of life is achieved: dreaming ("the dream"), a dream with its own goal and not the image that serves to train in a real way towards it. Here it is no longer a question of "proportioning between intent and the possibilities of action, nor is it of imagining the ways of achievement, but of the imagination that travels easily and with its own power". Everything - actual possibilities, ways to get there - must give the impression of being real. "The dreamer only oscillates between the fantasyland he creates and the concrete reality into which he fatally falls back." And, once back in reality, "the more times he lived the dream, the more he realizes that he deliberately deceived himself, that he lives on a false plan²³". That's why, Russu points out, "the habit of living in dreams forms a structure incapable of fitting into action²⁴" and, as a result, it becomes difficult to live in real life.

In this created ideational context he analyzes two types of dreamers: the first is represented by those who, although they "achieved all the components of the real ideal", destroyed the possibility of its achievement "through damping the momentum by dreaming and not by educating the respective forces", "or when the tendency to dream was provoked by certain causes (...) only the domains of life that were provoked to the dream were falsely lived and exhausted. There are life plans left in him (in the individual) that can be truly lived. He may still have initiatives of his own, untamed in the imagination, which have remained alive and healthy. Such initiatives can be used to discharge the accumulated vital energy; without realizing it, the individual will strongly seek their gratification²⁵". Pleasure will be obtained most of the time, in an intense way, but also in another area, usually in an artistic field: poetry, painting, sculpture, music, etc. The artistic form that appears as a compensation, but also as a sublimation of experience, is "still an imaginative experience, which, however, ends this time with a positive satisfaction: that of creation".

²² Eugen Russu warns that one can arrive at ill-thought-out aspirations ("desires") for two reasons: 1) the improvement of the imagination "which becomes capable of rising far above the immediate reality and creating almost clear situations, thus determining an almost transposition fill"; 2) "because in this imagination of the situation there is a pleasure, in a much easier way than the real one", which he calls "the pleasure of dreaming" (*Ibidem*, p. 75)

²³ *Ibidem*, p.77

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p.76

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p.80

This "transfer" of vital energy was seen by Freud from another point of view: the sexual instinct is "repressed" and has to be "sublimated" in other areas such as literary creation (see in detail pp. 80- 81).

"The second type of dreamer is the one who dreams about all areas of his life. The one who varied the pleasure of the dream in every way, applying it to all his initiatives, thus cutting off the possibility of turning them into a living act, for all the categories of pleasures he could have had²⁶". There are circumstances, Eugen Russu shows, when such an individual can be influenced from outside to imprint and desire another, new field of life, which he had not known before. Be careful, however, that the dreamer does not slip back into imaginary living, too imprinted by habit!

A principle conveyed by Eugen Russu is that it is not someone else who must guard one's psychological processes, but the person in question. He is the one who must realize that the domains in which he could have integrated disappear, one by one, into the abyss of hallucination, from where they can no longer be brought spontaneously, but only through his intervention, in order to be lived for real. Therefore, he must be educated as a man of action and not just allowed to continuously criticize, unconsciously linking all the circumstances that he faces to his ideal states which he dreamed (imagined). He must not be left to mourn in vain under their burden. Because this continued dissatisfaction state leads him again to the dream refuge, which worsens the situation, leading to psychoneurosis²⁷.

Eugen Russu sees "healing" as possible through "explaining the causes, through a self-critical look at the sick way of thinking and living, through the decision to change the style, interweaving thinking with achievement in the future. (...). Let this be a progressive training in thinking the intention only according to its achievement²⁸".

The "healthy life conduct" is obtained through a mechanism that integrates a sequence of steps, each being composed of: aspiration, drive, pleasure, possibilities, deed (action), achievement, happiness (if applicable). There must be close connections between these steps (elements) of the life mechanism. Most often they are intertwined, for example, intent and deed (see above), intent and possibilities, etc.

As for the last pair, Eugen Russu claims that concordance between its elements is necessary, i.e. between "what you wanted" (desire) and "what you could" (possibilities), in order for soul life to be fulfilled without disappointments and sorrows. In this respect, he prescribes the individual

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p.82

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p.82-83

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p.83

the permanent concern to seek educating himself for "the life in which intent is as closely as possible intertwined with the deed".

"Some philosophers or even important currents of morality have predicted this - a possible desire level lowering..., so that its level and the level of reality are the same", but this lowering does not allow for the exit from the indifference state, which is a false state, because "this is only possible through a forced attitude, imposed on the ego by a false reasoning, in which happiness is conditioned only by the correspondence between intention and deed, ignoring the other essential condition: the ascending rhythm²⁹". However, here the fact that "the natural role of life is in motion, not at rest" was eluded. In order to avoid disappointment instead of triumph, Eugen Russu proposes that individuals choose aspirations that are neither too high (overvaluation) nor too low (undervaluation) to the immediately accessible reality. Where life is devoid of a lively evolutionary movement, there is a risk of capping.

In this order of ideas, he formulates "several principles that can help improve each other: intent according to the forces; or forces depending on intent³⁰".

These are: 1) self-knowledge ("own knowledge") which must start from one's own states captured by subjective intelligence (the one "altered by one's own love, by preconceived ideas", and not by "the intelligence that dissects and schematizes external reality to derive causes, effects, laws") and go up to the achievement faculties related to the real ideal; 2) waiting, both with hope of a favorable event, and with fear, with hope of failure, of an unfavorable event for which the individual must be prepared - to be able to wait and bear both the good and the bad. This is because "continuous disillusionment means explicitly and currently waiting for a happiness that never comes. To wait in the same way for a misfortune means to unnecessarily subject oneself to a continuous imaginary threat³¹".

Asking for caution in any kind of activity, Eugen Russu states that "man is not allowed to play it safe. He does not have to predict events and wait for them. He has to fight. And the beauty of fight is the hope for success, without certainly predicting it, the doubt you are gripped by to liven up your nerves, to appeal to the full range of possibilities³²".

The active attitude promoted by Eugen Russu, in his view, involves abandoning repetitive thought, "confident in one's own strength" and the certainty of the intended effect, as a fact accomplished, and embracing,

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p.93

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p.94

³¹ *Ibidem*, p.97

³² *Ibidem*, p.101

orienting towards creative thought, which is frequently associated with inspiration. "Inspiration comes to the one who has certainly not believed in it, so as not to live the fact as accomplished too soon. Our powers of divination remain alive and alert, when our soul lives in the present, when the thought has not transposed you to see how good that already done would be, but a doubt about obtaining the result keeps you in the real and present situation: you aim towards, you just want, you want to find"³³.

Seeing himself as a fighter against the circumstances of life, man must prove his will. "In a test of will the outcome is doubted and our being unconsciously hardens itself with more strength to succeed. When the test is successful, then this leads to the self-qualification as a man of will, which together with the formula "will overturns mountains" establishes a mental atmosphere of anticipated security, of looking at success with "confidence", incapable of causing a maximization of the forces of achievement"³⁴.

Eugen Russu speaks of a myth of the will, which he sees created in a time when man appeared as a master. In fact, he was "only an instrument for the manifestation of some vital evolution laws that he did not create", misinterpreting a "natural tendency to persevere". However, "the impact mechanism is more nuanced than we thought", says Eugen Russu apodictically.

The nuance in question refers to the difference in principle between mechanical determinism, mostly specific to the material world, through causality of the type: under the same conditions, a cause necessarily has the same effect, and the soul domain specific determinism where "the soul is full of unpredictability". The laws of soul manifestation are not known in the same way as the immutable and necessary laws of the material world. This is where Eugen Russu derives his thesis from. According to it, if in the field of inert matter knowledge the human intelligence must "work with a plan", "the action on matter must be planned", in the soul field knowledge the intelligence no longer proceeds this way. Because in this last field, says Russu, "there is a whole past, so many phenomena happened in it and all of them have an importance, all of them have left their mark, all of them are so dependent on each other that intelligence can no longer separate precise qualities, in limited number. The consequence of this is to be predicted on the basis of simple and fixed laws"³⁵.

It is true, however, that even here one can "plan", in the sense that one can conceive "the basic plan of known things that have happened and which we think will happen again under similar circumstances". But here

³³ *Ibidem*, p.100

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p.107

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p.108

the previously established intellectual plan no longer has the same value and meaning, because it must be taken into account that the natural, continuous change of the soul happens. Therefore, a new and important part of the soul content changes the overall circumstances of the phenomenon.

Acting in accordance with a pre-established plan, in Eugen Russu's opinion, "means obeying as a slave the orders you received from someone else", although this contradicts the fact that, as he also says, the human soul has a tendency of independence, free will, which manifests itself even in relation to his past self.

He notes that there are enough people who have managed to remove this requirement of free and actual determination and "therefore to conform to pre-ordained facts, at least in their formal and external part if not in the rhythm of the soul which cannot be determined according to provisions³⁶".

But he is also the one who notices the existence of the strong-willed man in society, who does not accept revisions of attitude, hesitations, reconsideration. The man of will has neither doubt nor certainty of success. He knows he must execute, like a disciplined soldier, higher orders which he has no right to discuss. Hesitations - if any - can only appear in making the decision, otherwise the deed follows the course indicated from the beginning, according to the "plan", methodical and continuous, uninterrupted and equal. Although uncompromising and "scrupulous in duty", the man of will is seen by Russu as a slave of his ambitions. In the case of a strong-willed person, the experienced soul fact is the ferocity to the deed derived not from the actual pleasure of the activity or from the attraction of its direct result from the decision (the result weighed until the decision was made). Once taken, the decision is the only engine of the deed, which is performed monotonously and tenaciously, without the rhythm and undulations of an action dictated by pleasure.

From this point of view, he asserts that the will manifests only where the mechanized and continuous rhythm of action it provokes is sufficient - in this case in living, creative actions. Where a rich, varied, dynamic soul content is needed, the will alone cannot bring it about.

Hence his conclusion that "the most authentic and wonderful human creations do not have will as their engine" because, he believes, in the soul of the creator, the artistic work "grows like an organic being, continuously, naturally, through a necessity of almost free and spontaneous events interiors, like life itself, by no means by a violent harness, whipped by the will, to a movement of a single and determined direction".

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p.110

We must not imagine the will of the creator (creator man, not God) as a force that haunts him and compels him to do things against his will. On the contrary, "the will implies keeping a goal and a unique and certain way to reach it in mind, regardless of its compatibility with the actual circumstances, regardless of whether or not these circumstances converge towards it"³⁷.

Man is free to choose which kind of creation he devotes himself to, without the will intervening in any way. In most cases, he notes, it happens that "in random directions and with no voluntary effort" these creations are small. Therefore, he will naturally assume that things are different if, in order for them to gain value and amplitude, it is necessary that among the determining circumstances there is also the personal taste for a certain type of activity, a taste that maintains the concerns on a continuous upward line.

So, in short, there is no trace of will here, but of "an increased inclination into itself, along with successive achievements and an indulgence in this kind of activity" (The example given by Russu is Science since, he considers, "it has no purpose, its engine is the pleasure of discovery and knowing, its practical utility often comes as a surprise." The same can be said of Philosophy, which we know arose and subsisted as "knowledge for the sake of of knowledge", out of pure intellectual passion).

We find interesting theses in Eugen Russu's vision of creation, such as those that claim that the presence of will is ridiculous in the creator's decision (because he will never trumpet: "I want" to be an artist, "I want" to write a poem, etc.), or that the idea of effort has almost no place in the creative process. Therefore, he writes, "in the mind of the scholar, ideas link to one another, grow and turn themselves into a new and original organic whole, by the nature of things. The effort, no matter how superhuman, would not lead to result"³⁸. Not needing even a minimum of voluntary effort to distinguish what is happening around him, this is how it is explained, says Russu, that "some discoveries were made in a dream or in a semi-awake state near sleep".

The conclusion he drew from the above facts is justified and valid in mente and in re: "The will, seen as a long patience, as a sacrifice of present pleasures for the discounting of a special result, represents an important soul attribute. But her "omnipotence" is a dangerous myth; as well as her transformation into blind obstinacy"³⁹.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p.111

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p.112

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.113

The main idea of the mathematician with an aptitude for the psychomoral field about the concept of man is that pleasure is what motivates man's action, without being its goal. The direct consequence of this thesis is that pleasure is not the decisive factor in the achievement of happiness. A condition of happiness is, in Eugen Russu's opinion, "the link between intention and the real fact", but even this alone cannot give it. Because, in reality, "happiness means that the rhythm of life has three stages: impetus, pleasure, state of indifference, so that from this last stage it bows again". However, this is exactly the rhythm that Nature intended for her purposes.

Some have speculated on the connection I mentioned above and proposed, as a condition of happiness, the proximity of the longing of achievement, by lowering the level of longing to the immediately accessible reality. But Russu bluntly states: "forcibly lowering your ambition is a trick which cannot give organic satisfaction" because it contradicts "the nature of things". This way one cannot actually achieve real happiness.

We also encounter this lowering of the aspirations level other than determined by a "philosophical" conception (as above), namely "by not being fit and not being trained in the gear of the deed, by what is called the usual, laziness.⁴⁰" To this is added blasé, boredom - expressions hiding a lack of determination to act or masking an existing eagerness, unadjusted. In short, they indicate the real absence of any intent.

As a whole, modern civilized life, Russu shows, is faced with circumstances - such as those above - in which the individual is very easily satisfied, "tasting too much pleasure without having done anything", without being somehow active. The consequences would be that he "remains deed uneducated", i.e. he does not realize that "it is not enough to sanely think about the intention and seek to represent your way in advance with the difficulties and the affective connected with it". Or, he warns, "these are necessary as a preparation. The effect should not be giving up, blaspheming, but one should pursue educating the forces of achievement as well as the conditions in which the maximum yield can be obtained, life being all the healthier the heavier it is lived"⁴¹.

In such an ideational horizon, Eugen Russu speaks of the necessity of deed education, starting precisely from the idea that, unlike heredity, pleasure and affective life - , the power of judgment, will and physical strength - are essential elements for deed achievement that can be educated.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p.114

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p.115

Therefore, he notes, "we will outline some of the conditions of this deed education": work, non-abandonment, half-achievements, pleasurable activities. (see in detail pp.116-126).

The individual's own perfection is the goal of all of the above entwined, by putting them into work ("tendency dug deep in the human being"), but not as "consciously willed perfection, in itself, when its necessity has not been felt in purposeful, precise and important deeds". This is because while distinguishing the real from the abstract (of notions), Eugen Russu says that "Pure perfection is a notion born through abstraction; the fundamental notion is the improvement related to a concrete purpose. Therefore, without condemning the actions made only with a view to improvement, those that also have a concrete target are preferable, in such a way as to make the necessity of this improvement evident"⁴².

"This self-improvement is compatible with the tendency towards altruism, since it can be put at the service of social utility. It is also compatible with selfish tendencies and can, in some cases, be put to their service. Therefore, it must enter unconditionally into the composition of the real ideal.

To summarize, it must be harmoniously organized around the idea of self-improvement, gained at the expense of emphasizing primitive pleasures and put at the service of the tendencies that can give the most highlighted and happy life, the altruistic tendencies"⁴³.

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⁴² *Ibidem*, p.126

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p.73

House, 2015), *Ethical utterances in Romanian philosophy. Studies in the history of Romanian moral reflection*, vol I (2008; reissue 2010, Editura Grinta-Cluj-Napoca), vol. II (Ars Docendi, 2017), vol. III (Ars Docendi, 2019), *Ethical utterances in Romanian culture* (Ars Docendi Publishing House, 2017), *The ethical-moral dimension of the philosophical system of Vasile Băncilă* (Istros Publishing House of the Brăilei "Carol I" Museum, 2021), *Diffused Providentialism. The philosophical system with metaphysical foundations and ethical-cultural purposes of Vasile Băncilă* (same publisher, Brăila, 2022).

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