

**Review of the Book
“Teoria esecului.
Esecul ca forma de
manifestare pozitiva
a diferentei.
Argumente pentru o
etica a intervalului”
[Failure theory.
Failure as a form of
positive
manifestation of
difference.
Arguments for an
ethics of the
interval], authored
by George
CONSTANTIN,
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Abstract: Failure theory is really important, as it is applicable in everyday life. Failure theory is approached from the perspective of George Constantin the volume entitled "Failure theory: Failure as a form of positive manifestation of difference. Arguments for an ethics of the interval", a volume that was published by Lumen Publishing House from Iasi, Romania, in 2018. Of course we avoid failure, because we are a society that seeks success and because we are a society that is afraid of difference. It is precisely these things that George Constantin calls upon us to talk about: about failure as a positive value or as a form of difference, about failure as an inherent positivity, because as long as all things move in the same direction, nothing will really change. When we talk about success, especially in the postmodern society, we speak first of all of uniformity, because despite the appetite for individual autonomy, the postmodern society, being a consumerist one, is, in principle a mass society. All the more difference is needed as a failure to these uniformities, precisely as a deconstruction of uniformity. Failure is a deconstruction of illusory success that occurs as a result of originality and stepping out of the interval.

Keywords: *failure theory; the ethics of the interval; social values; social differences; social change; failure; success.*

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When we fail to fulfill plans, ideas, dreams, then we look for a source of change outside of us, and change becomes important. In neurolinguistic programming, one of the central elements or one of the pillars on which personal transformation and development is based is that there is no failure, only feedback, that is, when it seems that we have failed, in fact life has given us a feedback or other similar vision about itself. When we try to theorize personal development we need, first of all, a theory of change precisely because not everything in life is as we would like and the engine of our inner and outer transformation is failure and then failure is what it motivates us or at least the fear of failure.

Of course, there are many, many differences between failing and being a failure. To be a failure means, from my point of view, failure as a project, not the project to fail, not the failure of our projects but the lack of any project, the lack of any vision. Both are probably on the same scale, as opposed to what we call personal development, but also to spiritual development, growth, progress and that is why I will now quote from the introductory word proposed by Constantin Aslam in this volume: "It must be said from the beginning that the theme of failure approached by Mr. Constantine, in the context of a postmodern ontology project that makes difference a principle of systematic philosophical construction, has a motivation stemming from current human life practices, based on relativism, value pluralism, communication and generalized cultural intercommunication. The position of the author is one of weak rationality, interpretive, informational and communicative, essentially hermeneutic, in the sense theorized by a series of thinkers who outlined the agenda of postmodern thinking, starting with Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Belehuz, Derrida, Habermas, Rorty and others. Rationality is for Mr. Constantin an informational property, it is our ability to imagine, design, build and transmit models, structures and architectures of interpretation, modeling and valuing existence in all its complexity and forms of manifestation. The originality of the approach is obvious, because Mr. Constantin did not think of a text about other texts, but systematically elaborated, step by step, through a series of phenomenological reductions, a broad philosophical scenario, which will now receive a public validation. Like Wittgenstein before, Mr. Constantine wants to educate our way of looking at success in life, urging us to learn and live on our own the absence of illusory divine assistance, by assuming the idea of failure as a constitutive reality of our human being."

Beyond the seemingly complicated phrases of philosophical value, we could say that failure is our point of stability, because it is our starting

point in realizing our rationality, in realizing our own value. And when we talk about failure in philosophy, we can't help but think about the positive side, we can't help but think about the fact that, for example, not validating a scientific hypothesis means certainty. But if we move from the realm of science to the realm of praxiology, not validating our own thoughts and preconceptions of our own mental map when confronted with reality, in neurolinguistic programming means, as I said, feedback. A series of motivational programs could be built precisely starting from the theory of failure, not necessarily from this volume, but from a theory that could be based on the philosophical ideas contained in this volume and that would tell us about the positive value of failure.

Returning to what was outlined in the volume by George Constantin, first of all I would like to point out the subtitle: "Failure as a form of positive manifestation of difference". When we talk about success, because the postmodern society, especially, is a society focused on success, we are talking first of all about uniformity, a mass society, a society based on the idea of a herd. And maybe we should consider the difference and say, for example, that writing for an audience can be a successful action, but writing only for a certain group of readers can be a slower success, it can be a major difference and it may even be a failure, but still this act remains our project and it reflects our way of life. This difference, this ethics of the interval, of areas of uncertainty, of areas of apparent lack, this form of being authentic, this plea for authenticity even as a failure can be a project, even assuming failure and not programmatic failure can be a way to project your life, and the role of the philosopher is to make you understand failure as an inherent positivity of your own being, of your own way of being in reality, because to be in reality does not mean to be one and the same with the map.

We live in a society that is afraid of failure, because it is afraid of intimacy, because it is afraid of authenticity, although the central idea of postmodernity is precisely to emphasize the original, the authentic. This search for the authentic, the search for the different and for difference, is precisely postmodernity as it was before the massification of communication, it is postmodernity in which humanity has not yet known artificial alterity, computerized, dominated by artificial intelligence and online search engines. The encounter with artificial otherness puts us in charge of this non-acceptance of difference, because it is not productive, and George Constantin talks about this direction: about the productivity of difference, about the arguments for an ethics of the interval, for difference, especially in the chapter "The inexhaustible nature of difference: redefinitions and conceptual delimitations." Of course, there is a historical

perspective on difference here, a separation between positive difference and negative difference, an analytical perspective on the concept of difference and, related to this difference, on the issue of meaning and the creation of meaning. Another chapter that leads the analysis in the same direction is "Difference as a premise and chance for failure, but also redefining difference", in which difference is analyzed as a series of partial concepts.

Of course, then the author goes on to present the hypostases of failure: failure as error, non-success or sin. Failure can be a difference, it can make a positive or a negative difference. We talk about failure as a failure of an ideal, as a failure of goals or as a personal failure. Starting from public reason and rationality as premises of communication, as well as from the ethics of the interval, George Constantin brings us a series of arguments for reaffirming rational thinking and an ethics of discourse in the Habermasian manner. About meta-rationality and rationalization, about rationality and communication, about communicativeness and communicability, about order and authority and asymmetric strategies in the elaboration of communicative action, about silence and mystery, about rediscovering difference and about the moral legitimacy of failure.

I went through some aspects of the volume here and, for example, I would like to stop at the idea of sin. Sin could be a mistake in adapting to a series of norms. Sin is a transgression of religious norms. When we sin, practically we violate a norm established by the church and transmitted to humanity in supernatural, in Christianity, or natural ways, such as in Buddhism. But the Savior Jesus Christ did not talk much about sins. He spoke of affirmative commandments and not of sins. On the contrary, sin is that which can be forgiven, that can be saved, and Jesus Christ himself speaks of the fact that He did not come to save the righteous, but the sinners. There is no truly righteous being, perhaps only the saints, but in George Constantine's book, which is a postmodern book, holiness seems to have no place. However, in terms of ordinary life, sinners are the ones who can straighten out, sinners are the ones who have the chance to meet spiritually with the divinity, because they have the chance to meet themselves. Sin is a foundation of any religion, because if we had no sins, no religion would have any purpose, we would be perfect, and then we would not need saviors, neither real nor self-proclaimed, and we would not need either of the institutions dedicated to salvation, because we could be perfectly rational and perfect rationality would help us make no mistakes. Or precise rationality is based on error, says George Constantin, because modern and postmodern rationality values error, failure. Why is failure positive? Why is error positive? Because if everything is successful and we

move from success to success, in a myth of infinite progress, no change, no development are accessible to us. Sin is what makes us vulnerable to transcendence, vulnerable to the other, whether we are talking about an immediate other another, whether we are talking about a distant one, whether we are talking about an artificial one, as we said before, or we are talking about a divine one.

Another form of difference that George Constantin brings to our attention is failure. I insisted on failure as the lack of a project, failure as a project of personal inefficiency. Moreover, failure is a lack of coherence between the personal project and the strategies followed, and therefore the adequacy of the strategies to the project needs the prospect of failure. Failure is not necessarily an immediate part of the project, but the perspective of failure calibrates the way we set our strategies and tailor them to our goals. In the absence of the threat of failure or the threat of sin, in the absence of difference, we will not be able to achieve any goal, be it physical, personal, scientific or otherwise, precisely because failure or the prospect of failure brings the possibility of difference, brings the possibility of the other. The failure to be everything, the failure not to be confused with totality, absolute monism or other such philosophies in which in the end there is an essential identity between individual and totality, precisely in these approaches resides an idea that could be brought In addition to this volume, it is precisely in these monistic philosophies that we speak of maya, of illusory as a failure of totality, as a constructive failure of totality, which allows precisely the self-explanation of totality.

A few words about the author: George Constantin is a bachelor graduate of the Faculty of Philosophy in Bucharest and has a PhD in sociology and philosophy, and is currently an associate professor at the University of Theater and Cinematography "Ion Luca Caragiale" in Bucharest. He is a founding member of the Romanian Sociological Society for anthropology, sociology of culture and political sociology, he is a member of the Rotman Institute of Philosophy at Wester University and of the Romanian Philosophical Society, has received several doctoral and postdoctoral grants and published several books and over 50 articles in specialized journals in the country and abroad. In the literary field, we notice the author's philosophical essays or speeches about false innocence or interrupted dialogues, as well as the volume of poems "Repeated poems", published in 2018 by Semne Publishing House in Bucharest.

Also because we want to get closer to this thinker and this book, I will present some thoughts that Professor Vasile Morar from the University of Bucharest proposed in the preface to this book under the title: "Failure,

between fall and ethical value": "The author of this book, originally a doctoral thesis, is a well-defined personality in the horizon of scientific skills that he has accumulated for over two and a half decades. A graduate of the Faculty of Philosophy, he turned out to be constantly interested of an issue at the intersection of philosophy with sociology, ethics with political and economic sciences, to stop only at these areas of concern in the longer series covered by him all this time, through studies and articles published in specialized journals. When he enrolled in the doctorate studies, at the admission colloquium he presented a clear project about a topic not very common in the interests of PhD students in recent years, the topic of difference as a starting point for the development of failure and as a basis for an ethics of the interval. Today's PhD in philosophy has a clear, limited and outlined object of his research. He argues from the beginning that this concept of difference has proved, in the context of postmodern thinking, a stimulating and promising concept, perhaps more than others. Immediately, however, the author states that difference is not only an ontic reality in the sense proposed, for example, by Larouse, but that it can also be considered a method of analyzing the failure of rationality, on the one hand, and on the other, as a matter of interpretation and axiological positioning. More precisely, the author starts from this simple and fundamental idea: namely that the difference necessarily requires, in order to be circumscribed and defined by the three well-known registers: the ontological, the gnoseological and the axiological. (...) Transparency, authenticity and exemplarity are primary indicators of elementary morality. All these attributes require effort, courage, honesty, patience, similarity, and not indifference. Noisy and exhibitionist sincerity and, especially, transactional spirit, which excludes courage and favors cowardice. We will probably lament this failure for a long time to come. What can be done to get out of what we all hatefully declare: the ease of reporting to the moments of life, so, among other things, making fun of almost anyone and everything. For the time being, let us condemn a deep cause of this self-blocking: the public consciousness is reduced, not infrequently, at the level of public psychology, and individual failures receive a confirmation in the public space, precisely because this indistinction is maintained and maintained. In the book of the young but mature philosopher, George Constantin, you will find not only interrogations on all these serious topics, but also a glimpse of the paths to follow. "

From this book I will also dwell on the argument for reaffirming rational thinking and an ethics of discourse, in order to familiarize you with the style and writing of George Constantine and his way of philosophizing: "For the beginning, we will try to analyze, redefine and delimit

communication from the perspective of the notions of communicativeness and communicability. We will also try to get closer to the most appropriate understanding of knowledge as a form of communication. In this sense, we also note that a more correct conceptualization of these notions from the perspective of difference would be particularly useful, first for communication theory, to analyze and interpret modern theories and contemporary ideologies, and secondly for elaboration and development of a new theory of intercultural communication, based on the concept of third culture, as well as a possible theory of social knowledge, a theory that, from this perspective, we believe could be reconfigured more appropriately to the specifics of this type of knowledge." I will now let you rediscover failure from a transformative perspective, together with George Constantin.

Acknowledgement

An initial version of this book review was presented in Romanian as a video-review on YouTube, entitled „Bun gasit la intalnire cu esecul” [Welcome to a meeting with failure], it was posted on August 24th, 2020, on the official YouTube channel of Lumen Publishing House and can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6H-UATtBFGA&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR07sd_AkuVE64TNLK4ho9Cu8liUYFaDtX3dHzOwgKv4UvO6icO6oU0OsSg

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