

GEORGE COȘBUC - A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO HIS WORK

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Abstract: Even though he did not take up a pedagogical career, Coșbuc is highly appreciated for having been an example of commitment in the vast educational realm and his contributions as a school handbook author, poet, prose writer, chronicler, translator of pedagogical and belletristic works, encyclopaedist by science and culture popularisation columns, kindergarten teacher and school teacher for a while, are worth considering.

The first examples of educators were his parents, who, in an unhappy moment of his childhood (during the 1872-1873 school year he catches cholera and interrupts school since the second grade), make a two-seat desk for him, where Georgică was 'playing school'.

Keywords: teacher, translator, Casa Școalelor, textbooks, nursery rymes

Educational influences

Jointly with Sebastian, the poet's father, a contribution to the shaping of the future intellectual is provided by Maria, the poet's mother, the daughter of vicar Luca Avacum from Telciu, born in 1828, who, being a mother orphan, is taken by her uncle, vicar Ioan Marian from Năsăud, who enrolls her at the so-called Girl School. At the age of fifteen, Maria becomes Mrs. vicar Coșbuc, by her marriage to vicar Sebastian Coșbuc, a Greek Catholic priest.

The future poet begins his education in 1871 in Hordou, in the first grade conducted by the young graduate of the Gherla Schoolmasters Preparatory School, Procopiu Rusu, a student of the prominent pedagogue Vasile Petri. According to the school account by the end of the 1871-1872 'scolastec' year of the Greek Catholic confessional school of Hordou : *'For five years and a half, George Coșbuc has been graduating from the 1st grade by virtue of average 1, obtained at all fifteen school subjects'* (the grading system being different from today's one).

George Coșbuc's pedagogical thinking is influenced by the conceptions about education of the Năsăud schoolmasters and teachers, totally devoted to the Western educational systems of the great European pedagogues, such as Vasile Nașcu, Vasile Petri and Vasile Grigore Borgovan. They were not the only ones who implemented the new wave of the Enlightenment sciences spread by such outstanding representatives of world pedagogy as J.J. Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbart and Diesterweg. Some of them had attended the Romanian pedagogy school from Transylvania – in Deva, Gherla or Năsăud, training such disciples as Procopiu Rusu, Ioan Miron, Ioan Ionașcu, Iacob Pop, Theodor Rotari, Maxim Pop, Cosma Anca and so forth.

As for the 4th grade, he attends it at the Năsăud 'Norma', the former 'Normal-Hauptschule', a school facility that in 1861 had obtained the approval of tutoring the courses in Romanian and was a nursery for the future Romanian grammar school of Năsăud, created

150 years ago, on October 4th, 1863. The teachers that honoured this school include the schoolmasters Theodor Rotar and Cosma Anca, graduates of the Pedagogical Institute from Prague, which was preparing future pedagogues in the spirit of Herbart's and Pestalozzi's innovating ideas. In the summer of 1876, on June 21st, George Coşbuc obtains a 'Testimoniu scolasticu', according to which he will enrol himself in the 1st grade of the Năsăud 'Romanian Frontier Guard Upper Grammar School'.

Between 1876 and 1884, George Coşbuc attends the courses of the Năsăud high school (grammar school) and in the 8th grade he is elected president of 'Virtus Romana Rediviva', the Năsăud pupils' reading society and during the December 9th, 1883 meeting, George Coşbuc makes a speech, from where we glean: *'Before beginning our literary activity I would like to say a few words, however not for the sake of tradition, but arisen from the need of being said. Young used to say: « He that remains only in the circle of his thoughts will remain simply poor for ever. », meaning that whoever does not bother doing extra learning will forever lack knowledge, just like a piece of wood. This sentence of the great German philosopher expresses a deep truth, even though it is very obvious. This truth must have guided the students of this grammar school who laid the foundation of our society. They started the work, but we have to continue it, if we still have the ability of understanding Young's sentence'*.

The years spent in Năsăud were productive. Here the young poet creates more than two hundred poems and the memories of his high school years will be valorised in such short stories as *'Heu Qualem Portentum'*, *'Preparations for the High School Graduation Degree'*, *'That Which One Most Forchets Soonest Comes To Pass'* etc.

The period of the Schools Division and of the Ministry of Training, Cults and Arts

The relationship with the great schoolman Spiru Haret, which exceeds the formal part, became solid on March 22nd, 1902, when minister Spiru Haret appointed the young Transylvanian head of the 'administrative and correspondence department' within the Schools Division Administration, by the Decree no. 3308 dated March 22nd, 1902 (acc. to 'Arhiva Someşană' ('Someş Archives'), the stock of 'Casa Şcoalelor' ('Schools Division') – file no. 3 of 1902). Henceforth Coşbuc would tie up his life to this institution till the last year of his existence.

The positions held here by Coşbuc vary in terms of responsibility, as they were influenced by the political life of those times and in close connection to the position of minister of Haret. After the government's change, at the end of 1904, the poet only holds the position of reviewer; then, since the spring of 1907, after Haret's reinstallation as a minister, he was the 'head of the extra-school activity control department' until 1909.

Coşbuc's long experience as a newspaper man (at the Sibiu 'Tribuna' ('Tribune'), 'Foaie interesantă' ('Interesting Sheet'), 'Lumea ilustrată' ('Illustrated World'), 'Vatra' ('Hearth')) will make Haret trust him; thus, two months after the publication of the 'Albina' ('Bee') magazine, he would include him amongst its editors alongside Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Petru Gârboviceanu, Gheorghe Adamescu, Petru Dulfu and others.

The more than 100 columns - social-cultural and educational in character – are the living proof of the poet's vast outlook and talent as a story teller, which he was cultivating most persistently in order to be understood as much as possible by 'the numerous ones'.

In such columns as ‘Kitchen Physic’, ‘The Devilish Spirits’, ‘Spells and Charms’, ‘Magic Formulae & Diseases’, ‘The Lady Doctor of the Village’ etc. he would try to ridicule the people’s fear and trust in *the old village women* who were practising ‘medicine’ according to the sign interpretations : *‘Isn’t it worth laughing, Romanians, to go to sign interpreters to tell you beforehand whether you will win in a trial or not ? Why not counting the poles of a stable and if they are even you will win and if they’re odd, you won’t ! ‘Cause sign interpreters have as much knowledge as the poles’.*

As a crowning of his prolific activity in the first period of his collaborations with the ‘Bee’, upon Haret’s advice Coşbuc will gather a large amount of his columns published in the periodical magazine in a leaflet that saw the light of day under the *‘From the Prejudicial Superstitions of Our People’* title. This leaflet is edited at the ‘Schools Division’ and is spread in all rural libraries.

Out of Spiru Haret’s initiative, the ‘Semănătorul’ (‘Sower’) magazine sees the light of day on December 2nd, 1901 under the ‘Weekly Literary Magazine’ subtitle, its managers being the poets Alexandru Vlahuță and George Coşbuc.

The two classic poets running the magazine would see in ‘sowerism’ the creation of a literature ‘for the people’ and the goals pursued by it would have to be directed onto a ‘democratic line’.

In the fall of 1902, minister Spiru Haret, out of his desire to boost the activity of the rural libraries, created by him by amending the *‘1896 Elementary and Normal-Elementary School Education Act’*, urges the writers George Coşbuc and Alexandru Vlahuță, employees of the Schools Division, to systematically travel all throughout the country’s counties in order to guide the schoolmasters in the cultural work editions.

Apart from this legislative initiative of creating rural libraries, Spiru Haret has the initiative of making village ‘cultural clubs’. The origin of these clubs can be read about in the *‘Report Addressed to His Majesty, the King, on the Activity of the Minister of Public Training and Cults’*, drawn up by minister Spiru Haret in 1903 : *‘In 1898, Mr. I. Antonescu, a school reviser of the Putna county, had the idea of organising schoolmaster meetings, with an aim to have conference amongst them both for their own training and to the village people’s benefit. As this idea was good, it was recommended by the ministry and then it was enforced in other counties, as well. This was the very origin of the cultural societies.’* (In 1902 there were 444 operating – the author’s note), (op. cit., p. 147).

In the same ‘Report’, at page 115 (appendices) we find a letter of minister Spiru Haret, recorded on October 28th, 1902, where he requests the aid of Mr. Coşbuc and Mr. Vlahuță for supporting the village cultural societies by their presence : *‘Out of the initiative of the Schools Division (an institution incorporated on March 9th, 1896, which at first had the responsibility of building schools and organising cultural societies and conferences – the author’s note), as many as 20 people’s libraries were founded within the elementary schools... The schoolmasters thus have to be guided in this direction and I think that the right persons for this job are you (Mister Coşbuc – the author’s note) and Mister Vlahuță, both of you distinguished literates, who are aware of our peasant’s needs, who know how to write and speak the true language of what we pursue. You, in your capacity of clerks of the Schools Division, have the obligation of visiting at least four cultural centres in the country per*

month, in the days when the schoolmasters gather, and to show them how they should use the rural library.'

As a result of this request, Coşbuc will roam through the Romanian villages in the capacity of guide and lecturer at the cultural societies, tutoring on various topics - to our surprise, today's university lecturers. Without having a special teaching training, his tact was perfect. In the hundreds of conferences presented in front of the rural audiences, he succeeds in deputising the absence of school as institution for the large mass of peasants, by the way in which he rendered the scientific knowledge accessible, without disregarding his listeners at all, not for a second.

After less than three weeks from the aforesaid letter of Haret, Coşbuc takes his recommendation seriously ; the press of that time thus finds him in such a first incursion in the Neamţ county : 'Mr. George Coşbuc, who works with the Schools Division attached to Romania's Ministry of Cults, left for the Neamţ county, where he will lecture several conferences to the schoolmasters...' ('Familia' ('Family') – November 24th, 1902). 'In November, Mister George Coşbuc paid visits to several townships of our county. On this occasion and after our insinuations, he accepted to be included amongst the collaborators of the 'Propășirea' ('Prosperity') magazine, promising us his entire support.' - Piatra Neamţ, no. 1/1902. The same thing would be let know to readers by the Iași 'Evenimentul' ('Event') newspaper, too (no. 223 from 1902), which was a piece of news accompanied by a vast feature report on the poet's journey from Piatra Neamţ to Reditu.

Coşbuc's greatest concern was illiteracy, correlated to the social status of most village people : '*The villagers either cannot read, or they cannot find time or they will not. The mayors do nothing, they do not take it seriously, do not gather the people or they do gather them, but by force.*' (B.A.R.Mss. 'Variants, Attempts' – portfolio VII).

In 1909, Coşbuc takes measures for the publication of the second book of the 'Conferences', which includes 42 titles, amongst which : '*Why It Is Good to Have a Piece of Land Near Schools That Pupils Could Work*', '*Better Unborn Than Untaught*', '*Let Girls Attend School*', '*Why the Township Inspector Comes*', '*The School's Benefits*' and so on, lectured by schoolmasters from the following counties : Brăila, Dâmbovița, Dolj, Teleorman, Vlașca, Suceava, Argeș, Ilfov, Roman, Neamţ and Constanța.

Since March 1907, George Coşbuc is appointed '*head of the extra-school activity control department*', where a '*reviewer*' (Alexandru Vlahuță) and a '*cultural researches and people's libraries inspector*' (M. Sadoveanu) report to him.

In this capacity he had the mission of selecting the most precious manuscripts of unpublished books from among the ones printed at the Schools Division's publishing house and not only and to recommend them for purchasing or editing purposes. The goal had in mind by the Schools Division by the purchase of the best books was to spread them to the people's libraries attached to the elementary schools. The new mission is again taken very seriously by the poet (as usual). The reviewed books were being thoroughly analysed in terms of content, style, language, artistic form etc.

The status of handbook author

Like Eminescu, Coşbuc was preoccupied by the editions of the language used in handbooks. He notices that the didactic literature '*... does not take into account those who*

make efforts for establishing the literary language. Not even the press... No one, except those who tackle with it. Instead of being taken by the hand and guided by the poetic literature, it (the didactic literature – the author's note) goes by itself. How many of our literary writers know what a didactic literature we have and how it is written ? If we have schools, we must have school books ; who should write them up ? Especially the elementary school books. Do the authors of these books keep pace with the language of the poetic literature ?

We do not care much about that, do we ? We don't bother. This is the school's job. In that case, our effort of establishing a sole unseparated literary language is in vain. ('Epoch' – Bucharest, no. 34 of December 29th, 1896).

The interest in school handbooks was aroused to him by a group of teachers headed by PhD Barbu Constantinescu, who had undergone thorough studies with Ziller (a partisan of Herbart) ; he was a teacher at the Bucharest 'Matei Basarab' High School and a professor at the Faculty of Theology ; he was also the founder of the first Froebel School in Romania and the principal of Society's Normal School for Teaching the Romanian People.

Upon Slavici's recommendation to his friend, B. Constantinescu, George Coşbuc is co-opted in the group that draws up three school handbooks, ever since his first year of his presence in Bucharest (1890).

Between 1890 and 1913, Coşbuc, in collaboration or alone, signs the following handbooks :

1. 'Ancient History in Biographies' – by PhD Barbu Constantinescu, upon the initiative and with the help of the associated teachers and professors PhD Barbu Constantinescu, D.A. Laurian, Th.D. Speranția, George Coşbuc, G.P. Constantinescu and Calistrat Orleanu - Bucharest, 1890.

2. 'Romanian Book for Reading Purposes' – by PhD Barbu Constantinescu, upon the initiative and with the help of the associated teachers and professors PhD B. Constantinescu, D.A. Laurian, Th.D. Speranția, George Coşbuc, G.P. Constantinescu and Calistrat Orleanu – 1st edition, the Ploieşti 'Progresul' ('Progress') publishing house, Part II (1890) and Part III (1891).

3. 'The New Romanian ABC Book' – by PhD Barbu Constantinescu, upon the initiative and with the help of the associated teachers and professors PhD B. Constantinescu, D.A. Laurian, Th.D. Speranția, George Coşbuc, G.P. Constantinescu and Calistrat Orleanu – the Ploieşti 'Progress' publishing house, 1891 (in two editions : one of them simple and the other one with images).

4. 'Reading Book for All Romanians', 'Romanian Acts and Words' – drawn up by George Coşbuc – 'I.V. Socecu' graphical facility – Bucharest, 1889.

5. 'Reading Book for Secondary and Vocational Schools' – by Alexandru Vlahuță and George Coşbuc – the publishing house of the Socecu bookshop – Bucharest, Part I, 1902.

6. 'Reading Book for the 2nd Rural Division' – drawn up by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, G.N. Costescu and G. Stoinescu : 1st edition – the 'Simitea' publishing house, 1st edition - Craiova 1908, 2nd edition – Ploieşti, 1910.

7. 'Reading Book for the 3rd Rural Division' – year II – by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, G.N. Costescu and G. Stoinescu – the 'Samitca' publishing house, 1st edition – Craiova, 1908, 2nd edition - Ploieşti, 1910.

8. 'Reading Book for the Urban Elementary 4th Grade' – by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, G.N. Costescu and G. Stoinescu – the 'Progresul' publishing house, 1st edition – Ploieşti, 1908 (2nd edition : 1909, 3rd edition : 1910).

9. 'Reading Book for the Urban Elementary 3rd Grade' – by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, G.N. Costescu and G. Stoinescu – the 'Samitca' publishing house – 1st edition, Craiova, 1909.

10. 'Reading Book for the Urban Elementary 2nd Grade' – by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, G.N. Costescu and G. Stoinescu – 3rd edition, Bucharest – the 'Carol Göbl' publishing house, 1910.

11. 'Reading Book for the Urban Elementary 2nd Grade' – by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, D.D. Pătrăşcanu, Spiridon Popescu, V. Strioescu and Ilie Lupu – 4th edition, Bucharest, 1913 (5th edition : the 'Flacăra' ('Flame') publishing house, 1916).

12. 'Reading Book for the Urban Elementary 3rd Grade' – by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, D.D. Pătrăşcanu, Spiridon Popescu, V. Strioescu and Ilie Lupu – 2nd edition, Bucharest, 1913.

13. 'Reading Book for the Urban Elementary 3rd Grade' – by George Coşbuc, G.A. Dima, D.D. Pătrăşcanu, Spiridon Popescu, V. Strioescu and Ilie Lupu – 1st edition, Bucharest, the 'Flame' publishing house, 1913.

We deem that this is for the first time when the didactic author George Coşbuc is acknowledged his due rights by the publication of the entire list of the school handbooks whose author or collaborator he was.

There were also some other attempts of drawing up complete lists by : G. Scridon and G. Domşa – '*Bibliography*' (*George Coşbuc*) - Bucharest, the Academy's publishing house, 1966 (p. 138-141) ; Rafila Triteanu, in '*Studies about Coşbuc*', p. 304-305 ; Isidor Cremer, in the '*Pedagogy Magazine*' - no. 10, 1966, p. 75-87 ; I. Negoiescu, in the '*Literary History and Theory Magazine*' - no. 11, 1966, p. 267-280 ; and by Anton Buta, in '*George Coşbuc – a School Handbook Author*', in '*Ethnic-Cultural Studies and Researches*', book XI, Bistriţa, 2006, p. 21-96.

Coşbuc's first important contribution can be found in Barbu Constantinescu's 1890 'Reading Book', about whose principles we find out from the foreword signed by the author, however ideas of Coşbuc can be picked up from its lines.

First of all, the authors of this handbook attack the grafting of the pedagogical ideas that have nothing to do with the Romanian educational system, accusing their taking over without adaptation to the Romanian specificity, which also holds true in case of the 1895 School Education Act – in some parts (for example, the zero grade from the French system, inserted in our law without adaptation, jointly with the preparatory group).

Upon drawing up the handbook, Coşbuc contributes with approximately 45 short poems, all of them unsigned, but which reveal him by the content and technique.

It is still in this pioneering period in the educational field that the young Transylvanian poet will be contacted by B. Constantinescu (an admirer of Coşbuc's poetry and talent) for the appearance of the 39th edition of the 'ABC Book', which would be published under the 'New Romanian ABC Book' name (1819).

These handbooks (the two of them, to which the 'Ancient History in Biographies' should be added) are not followed by other editions, because the head of the editors' group

(B. Constantinescu) passes away in November 1891. Nonetheless, many of the poems unsigned by Coşbuc would be taken over (still unsigned) in some other books – didactic in character – or in anthologies for children.

In 1899, Coşbuc will edit a reading book ‘for all Romanians’, entitled ‘Romanian Acts and Words’, which includes historical short stories, poems from various authors and a few original republications.

His activity within the Schools Division in the company of Al. Vlahuță will give birth to the preparation of a handbook : ‘*Reading Book for Secondary and Vocational Schools*’ (1902). Most of the handbook comprises poems from Alecsandri, Eminescu, Coşbuc, Şt.O. Iosif, folk poems (‘Miorița’, ‘Meşterul Manole’ (‘Master Manole’)), prose from Al. Odobescu, N. Bălcescu, D. Bolintineanu, Al. Vlahuță, B.Şt. Delavrancea, these pieces for reading purposes being accompanied by brief biographical descriptions of the authors at the footnotes.

In 1901, Spiru Haret decides part of the elementary grades ‘didactic books’ to undergo a competition, the goal had in mind being twofold : on the one hand the elaboration of better handbooks, which may lead to the curriculum universalisation, and on the other hand the price reduction of the school books by the elimination of the author competition.

The school handbook selection commission, composed by 10 elementary school teachers, its president being D. Aug. Laurian, included Coşbuc (in sub-commission II). This commission will deploy its activity in the spring of 1902 and will thoroughly check up fourteen handbooks suggested for homologation purposes. The presence of Coşbuc in this commission was not by chance : appreciated by Haret for his literary activity and especially for the didactic experience of a steadfast school handbook author and co-author, the poet had the minister’s endorsement for selecting the literary texts from the handbooks suggested to the commission.

The handbook modification project initiated by Haret in 1901 would only be put into practice since 1908, when a competition for the elaboration of reading books and ABC books is announced, three being decided for each handbook.

27 ABC book manuscripts, 8 manuscripts for 2nd grade reading books and 6 manuscripts for the 3rd grade and the 4th grade each entered the competition. It is perhaps still upon the recommendation of minister Haret that Coşbuc is appointed in this competition as the head of a group composed of G.A. Dima (a natural sciences teacher), G.N. Costescu and G. Stoinescu (elementary school masters of Bucharest). In this composition, the group headed by Coşbuc presents to the commission the reading books for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades.

The correction and prize awarding commission, composed of G. Bogdan-Diucă (president), G.P. Salvin (schoolmaster), Sava Atanasiu and C. Giurescu (teacher), C.C. Vîlceanu (elementary school teacher) and Şt.O. Iosif (literate), awarded four prizes for the ABC book, two for the reading books for the 2nd and 3rd grade each and three prizes for the 4th grade.

The group coordinated by Coşbuc obtains the 1st prize for all the reading books set out to the commission, the parts related to the natural sciences, the country’s history and physics-chemistry being highly appreciated.

Upon elaborating these handbooks (1908), Coşbuc was in his creation climax, he had published all his four poem collections, a large part of his translations, he was already a

corresponding member of the Romanian Academy (which is a title appearing on the handbooks), being surrounded by exceptional didactic collaborators. All these make the handbook event a successful moment in the history of the Romanian school education.

Another stage of the school handbook drafting in which Coşbuc takes part (and the last one, in fact) is 1913–1916.

The new group, headed again by Coşbuc by elections, was composed of specialised teachers and experienced schoolmasters. Appeared at the ‘Flacăra’ (‘Flame’) Graphic Art Institute, the four handbooks were edited by the following group : George Coşbuc (literate), G.A. Dima (sciences teacher), D.D. Pătrăşcanu (history teacher and literate), Spiridon Popescu (teacher and literate), V. Stroiescu and Ilie Lupu (school-masters).

This moment from the school life is put down in the press of that time : ‘This year, the didactic literature gets enriched by a series of books for the elementary grades, meant to mark out a new stage in the evolution of this literature. In order to boost the didactic literature again, the outstanding poet Coşbuc, the exact and charming prose writer Pătrăşcanu and the vigorous Spiridon Popescu, jointly with some of the most appreciated authors of didactic books so far, drew up a series of didactic works for the elementary grades, thus putting into practice a great though of national education with the modest instruments of the elementary school education.’ (‘Flacăra’ (‘Flame’) – year II, no. 48 dated September 14th, 1913, Bucharest).

The concept of these handbooks is in line with those from 1908-1910, by taking over many reading texts and by how the content was set out. The echoes in the world of school were highly positive. The content of these handbooks will be adopted by entire generations of pupils and teachers, even after the poet’s death.

The only paradox, which could be speculated by those who came into contact with these ideas and concepts about the poet’s education, might arise out of the absence of institutionalised studies that he did not attend ; we therefore deem it extraordinary that George Coşbuc, by consistent autodidact endeavours, gets to grasp the essence of the educational act not only in school, but even in the field of ethno-psychology. His participation, alongside Ovid Densusianu and Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, in the initiation of the scientific action meant to bring contributions to the knowledge of the Romanian people’s psychology, by signing a ‘*Romanian People’s Psychology Questionnaire*’ with them (hosted by the ‘New Romania’ magazine) is a solid argument.

The status of translator of pedagogical works

Around 1903, a ‘Pedagogical Library’ sees the light within the Schools Division. Upon Spiru Haret’s request, C. Meisner, a former general inspector for elementary education and a teacher at the Iaşi ‘Vasile Lupu’ School, draws up a scheme of the works in the field of universal pedagogy.

The same ‘Report’ submitted by Haret specifies at p. 176 : ‘... *a more important measure that I took, but which will require several years to be fully accomplished, is to create and publish the pedagogical library for elementary teachers. It will comprise a collection of the best pedagogical writings of foreign and Romanian authors, all of them published in Romanian and put up for sale at the lowest price possible. The scheme of the first series from*

this collection was made by Mr. C. Meisner and each of the writings from this list will be entrusted to a competent person for being translated :

- *'Didactica Magna' – by I.A. Comenius ;*
- *'Leonard and Gertrude' – by I.H. Pestalozzi ;*
- *'How Gertrude Teaches Her Children' – by I.H. Pestalozzi ;*
- *'The Girl's Education' – by Fénelon ;*
- *'Émile' – by J.J. Rousseau ;*
- *'Introduction to Herbart's Pedagogy' – by Chr. Ufer ;*
- *'Pedagogical Psychology for Normal Schools' – by E. Martig.*

The 'Leonard and Gertrude' writing, by I.H. Pestalozzi, is given to Mr. I. Rădulescu-Pogoneanu and it will be published soon.'

Meisner was specifically suggesting the foreign texts that would be translated. Thus, for J. Locke he suggested the utilisation of the "John Locke's *Gedanken über Erziehung. Mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen von Dr. E. von Sallwürck, 2 Aflage, 1 Band*" German edition.

George Coşbuc is requested by Spiru Haret for these translations, as he was known to be a very good speaker of and literate in German.

The first pedagogical work translated by Coşbuc sees the light in 1908 under the Romanian title of *„Introducere în pedagogia lui Herbart”* (*'Introduction to Herbart's Pedagogy'*), by Chr. Ufer, a real school principal of Altenberg – the translation of the 8th edition, the Romanian version being reprinted in 1914, 1919 and 1924. Even though this Romanian version does not indicate the translator's name on the cover, it was undoubtedly translated by Coşbuc, conclusive arguments in this regard being found in the 'Yearly Book. The Schools Division's Activity in 1907-1908' - Bucharest, 1909, p. 377. The translation of the '« Introduction to Herbart's Pedagogy » by George Coşbuc' writing was paid from the Schools Division's fund. The B.A.R. has the manuscript of the work no. 2933 written by Coşbuc. The 'Translation by George Coşbuc' note at Ufer's work is specified on certain works printed after World War One by the Schools Division, in the 'Pedagogical Library', for instance at page 44, on the back cover, while also indicating the publications appeared in this collection so far. We owe this discovery to I. Cremer, which he valorises in the 'Pedagogy Magazine' no. 10/1966.

This paper gets the school people familiar with Herbart's pedagogical works. Coşbuc inserts some text shortenings, providing to the readers the awareness of the 'Anchor' ideas of Herbart's work. Furthermore, Coşbuc shuffles in the lines and comes up with original ideas about the text or even with polemics. Coşbuc was refractory to Herbart's and his disciples' ideas. This conclusion can be drawn after the thorough analysis of the aforementioned manuscript, where the translator, in its well-known sarcastic style, contradicts some of the author's ideas, as Eminescu had done it before, in a letter sent from Berlin on May 5th, 1874 : 'In Vienna I lived under the baneful influence of Herbart's philosophy.' (Mircea Ştefan, p. 133).

What is more, G. Coşbuc gets closer to philosopher and pedagogue John Locke, to whom he pays more attention in terms of space and time.

Using the German version of John Locke's pedagogical ideas, Coşbuc however compares the German translation to Pierre de Coste's French version, as we find out from the foreword of Mioara Cimpoieş' foreword from 1971, p.14.

Coşbuc's translation was a very special event, as the need of such works was being strongly felt in the young pedagogical community of the beginning of the century, the positive reviews from the press of that time confirming that. 'The General Magazine of School Education', created by Spiru Haret in 1905, in its July 1st, 1910 issue, publishes a review of Chr. Ufer's paper and another one of J. Locke, both of them translated by Coşbuc. C. Diaconescu, the author, stated in a competent viewpoint : *'One of the healthiest ideas that the Schools Division institution put into practice is the publication of most important pedagogical and didactic works.*

Even though the number of the papers is limited (7-8), the choice was very inspired. The newest books of this kind include those printed and translated with the aforesaid titles. They were used on the occasion of the last schoolmasters promotion examination ...' As for Locke's translation, the author says : *'Here is a book that will be easily read by any educator that will have it in his hand, as it is written in a very easy style and does not include abstract science, but only a series of very logic pieces of advice put down with tact and much common sense.'* (p.150).

In 1908, G. Coşbuc is asked by minister Haret to translate the *'Pedagogical Psychology'* handbook (Coşbuc being the first one to use this term in our didactic literature, as T. Bogdan states in the *'Psychology Magazine'* – no. 1 / 1961, p. 64) for normal schools. The handbook author was the Principal of the Schoolmaster Seminar from Bern and till the appearance of this handbook he had already had a pedagogy one and a pedagogy history one printed. This book here circulated not only in the schools of Switzerland, but also in some other countries of Central Europe where German was being used in schools.

We face again a paradoxical situation. The Romanian version of the paper does not indicate the translator's name on the cover, yet it is Coşbuc. The historical character and the nature of such a work compel us to bring arguments for such a statement. Thus, the *'Schools Division's Year Book for 1908-1909'* (Bucharest, p. 34) explicitly states that that year (1908 - the author's note) Coşbuc received the task of translating Emanuel Maring's book. The B.A.R. has a copy, donated by G. Bogdan-Duică upon Elena Coşbuc's advice, where the donator specifies that it is the very copy translated by Coşbuc. Part of the manuscript of the first part is in Portfolio VII, Mss. 8. Another argument is the appearance, after World War One, of publications printed by the Schools Division, behind which Emanuel Martig's book is specified as having been *'translated by Coşbuc'*.

Coşbuc's translation is rather *'an exceptional adaptation and an outstanding processing ... The didactic and literary qualities with which Coşbuc's inspired quill pen endowed this handbook made it persist in school even after the philosophical content had been long exceeded ... circulating in our normal schools for three decades.'* (T. Bogdan, p. 56).

Part of his pedagogical conceptions ensue from the processing of this book of Martig : a supporter of intuitive school education and against memorisation and politics in school, Coşbuc is the partisan of the idea that the environment plays a decisive role in human development.

Conclusions

We deem that the approach of such a topic cannot appear to be late or inadequate, because the quarter of century completed by the poet to the benefit of the Romanian school and culture should not be neglected.

Traditional and innovative, kind and acid, Coşbuc contributed - as he knew best - to the development of the instruction and education specific to the beginning of the 20th century.

The quarter of century dedicated to folk school and culture, when he elaborated handbooks, literary anthologies, when he wrote poems for children, hundreds of columns of popularised science (166 of them only in the 'Bee'), studies about the folklore language, when he had original and innovating initiatives as a clerk of the Schools Division (the creation of strolling libraries, the unique curriculum for the culturalisation conferences, the construction of new school facilities), when he translated fundamental works for the pedagogical community of his time, when he reviewed dozens of books in his capacity of reviewer at the same school institution, when he was author and co-author of 14 school handbooks, the creator of the literature for children in Romania - as George Călinescu stated - gives an account of a huge work devoted to education, which could very well constitute a real pedagogical work of this poet.

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