

SPIRITUAL CONTINUITY OF ABAI'S AND BLAISE PASCAL'S IDEAS (ABAI'S WORDS OF EDIFICATION, B. PASCAL'S THOUGHTS)

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Abstract: The purpose of the article is to identify the similarity of Abai's and B. Pascal's views regarding the categorical apparatus, key ideas, and specifics of the presentation. In the course of the study of this question, the historical-philosophical approach was chosen because of the need to study the core works in the context of the world's history of thought. Hermeneutics was chosen to be the main method, which allows the free analysis and interpretation of texts, revealing their content from the perspective of non-classical forms of rationality. The eclectic method, together with general scientific analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization in a complex, allows drawing parallels easily between directly unrelated sources and concepts. In the article, the belonging of Abai and B. Pascal's philosophy to cordocentrism is determined, the categories of "heart", "reason", "will", "faith", "science" and their interconnection are revealed, the scope of genre affiliation of thinkers is expanded.

Keywords: Abai's studies. Cordocentrism. Morality. Iman. Philosophy of religion.

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Resumo: O objetivo do artigo é identificar a semelhança das visões de Abai e B. Pascal, em relação ao aparato categórico, ideias-chave e especificidades da apresentação. No curso do estudo dessa questão, a abordagem histórico-filosófica foi escolhida, devido à necessidade de estudar as obras centrais no contexto da história mundial do pensamento. A hermenêutica foi escolhida como método principal, que permite a livre análise e interpretação de textos, revelando seu conteúdo sob a ótica de formas não clássicas de racionalidade. O método eclético, juntamente com a análise científica geral, síntese, comparação e generalização em um complexo, possibilita traçar paralelos facilmente entre fontes e conceitos diretamente não relacionados. No artigo, é determinado o pertencimento da filosofia de Abai e B. Pascal ao cordocentrismo. São reveladas as categorias de "coração", "razão", "vontade", "fé", "ciência" e sua interconexão. O escopo da afiliação de gênero dos pensadores é expandida.

Keywords: Estudos de Abai. Cordocentrismo. Moralidade. Iman. Filosofia da religião.

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SPIRITUAL CONTINUITY OF ABAI'S AND BLAISE PASCAL'S IDEAS (ABAI'S WORDS OF EDIFICATION, B. PASCAL'S THOUGHTS)

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of socio-educational activities, poetic creativity and depth of Abai's philosophical thought (Kunanbaev, 1970, p. 121) for the Kazakh people cannot be overestimated, as his educational and spiritual heritage still finds and inspires descendants in a wide range of fields of humanitarian studies, from philosophy, religion and history of literature to philology, psychology and pedagogy (Shon, 2017, p. 37; Kenzhenbaev, 2020, p. 41; Kenzhegalieva, 2020, p. 64; Kosanova, 2020, 26). Having laid the foundations for a modern understanding of national identity and the construction of the cultural policy, literary language, educational system, and his own moral and religious philosophy, Abai pushed contemporaries to unite into a single nation. Despite all the difficulties on the historical path, they managed to achieve independence, settling in their own national State, for self-fulfillment as a distinct people. Blaise Pascal made significant contributions to mathematics and science, particularly in the areas of probability theory and geometry. Pascal's works, such as *Pensées (Thoughts)* (2019), reflect his philosophical and religious musings, exploring themes of faith, reason and the human condition. He is known for his concept of Pascal's Wager, which presents a rational argument for believing in God. Pascal's (2019) diverse interests and contributions have made him a prominent figure in the fields of mathematics, science, philosophy and theology.

Living in the era of "The beginning of the end" of the four great imperial states and the emergence of the new national intelligentsia, Abai took over a cultural and educational role, accepting the challenges of the time, encountering darkness and depravity everywhere (Kurmanayeva *et al.*, 2021). The Kazakh people's misunderstanding and reluctance to change their lives for the better and to follow the path of knowledge and faith, in a certain

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way, predetermined the combination of the social and existential nature of his later work (Kenzhenbaev, 2020, p. 42). By studying and inheriting the best examples of literature from the Near East and the West in order to finally find himself and embody, in his own poetic words, a national character, Abai opened up for the Kazakhs a rapidly growing world. So that after his death, thanks to his creativity and the strength of his historical memory, he opened up Kazakhs for the world.

Both Soviet and modern studies, conducted by Abai scholars, make it possible to speak with a certain confidence about influences on his worldview and creativity. Mainly classical Oriental literature, an ancient philosophy separated and preserved by the Arabs, and modern Russian literature (Yaroshovets, 2011; Aitkaliyeva; Gulyaeva, 2013; Nauanova, 2019). But Abai himself, embodying his philosophy as an example to his contemporaries, always tried to move on to a new and unknown to get more knowledge and spirituality (Mamyrbekova, 2020). Therefore, in order to build intercultural dialogue, and companionship in self-knowledge, it is necessary to go beyond the usual interpretations of Abai's creativity and seek similarities not only with neighboring peoples, but also to look deep into history, in finding possible inspiration, which originated on the common borders of cultural phenomena (Abdigapbarova, 2016; Begalinova; Dosmagambetov, 2018). This is why it is worth taking a closer look at ideas and spiritually close-minded representatives of Western philosophical thought, in particular B. Pascal (2019).

Spirituality, as the unity and integrity of knowledge, wisdom and virtues in Abai's and Pascal's works, was chosen to be an object of the research intentionally, as both thinkers have a reputation for being extremely religious and spiritually rich, bouncing between the power of the human mind and the need for value and moral compass in one's life. Unquestionably, each one was in a different socio-cultural context (Nysanbaev, 2007; Sevo, 2017), but a closer look reveals the similarity of key concepts and their interaction within each text, the logic of argumentation, and stylistic and genre techniques. But the most important thing is how the religious, existential and moral horizons of both works are transformed after placing them in a general symbolic context. The fact that detailed comparative eclectic analysis of *Words of Edification* by Abai (Kunanbaev, 1970) and *Thoughts* by Pascal (2019) has not been conducted yet. And "heart", as the central category of the individual philosophical system, is not marketed as a fundamental, thus taking the "heart philosophy" to an aspect without serious content at first sight (Sevo, 2017; Ormerod; Jacobs-Vandegeer, 2018). The term "cordocentrism", despite its heuristic potential, did not gain popularity in either Kazakh or Western traditions, limiting itself to be applied in Russian and Ukrainian mystical philosophers' less prominent works of the XVIII-XIX centuries (Shelkovaya, 2017; Issakova *et al.*, 2022).

Cordocentrism is the biblical notion that a person's true essence is centered in the heart. It is accompanied by the genesis of personal self-consciousness and attributes to the heart, the value

integrator of the integrity of being, feelings, reason, cognition (intuitive), will, contemplation, and memory that, to some extent, inhibits the differentiation and systemic subordination of these abilities. The heart is a subjective organ of value-sense relations. Such attitudes initially arise in the form of impressions, desires, passions and aspirations that provide motivational energy to both internal processes (imagination, fantasy, etc.) and the will in external actions (Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine, 2023).

The study was conducted using a general theoretical method, which consists of an analysis of the main texts written by Abai and Pascal (2019), synthesis of the basic categories in both philosophical systems, specification of the subject field, and philosophical principles in the context of the collected data and their subsequent generalization. It also draws analogies between the elements of the text and the content in full, a style of methodologies and categorical apparatuses of thinkers. Besides that general theoretical method, the study also uses less standard methodological complexes. Preference was given to the historical-philosophical approach (in particular, comparative and retrospective methods of analysis and comparison relating to socio-cultural contexts) owing to the need to combine the historical analysis versatility and emphasize the philosophical orientation of both texts. These ones together make the specificity of working with sources with maximum preservation of the original ontology of the text. There is also a place for a resort to the hermeneutic approach in text analysis to determine the essence and content of theological postulates and the reconstruction of semantic space of text literary elements. In addition to the eclectic approach as a combination of classical eclecticism with general theoretical methods to freely manipulate the resulting categories. And to obtain more precise comparisons and analogies.

The purpose of the article is to identify the similarity between Abai's and Pascal's views regarding the categorical apparatus, key ideas, and specifics of the presentation.

1 KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO ABAI AND PASCAL

1.1 ABAI: WORDS OF EDIFICATION

The heart is an important concept in Abai's philosophy – the heart that subjugates the human being and from which the best human qualities are derived, such as love for the stranger as a brother, knowledge of God and the world, and creativity for the common welfare. It is around the heart, as the source of humanity, that Abai's philosophy is wrapped in true faith. Unity with the people, reason and wisdom, to some extent, derive from it. Abai considers the heart without virtue to be the wolf heart, which beats in the chest of those who are called Jigits and are revered as Batyrs. The owner of such a heart is not a person from Abai's point of view (Kunanbaev, 1970). The perception of the world through the heart, that is, through the soul (feelings, emotions, mind's eyes, etc.) – cordocentrism –

apart from religiosity, morality and social orientation – is characteristic not only for Abai but also for other thinkers, who lived and created in the territory of the Russian Empire from the XVII to XIX centuries, and is part of the Western philosophy of the Enlightenment, which opposes purely rational and materialistic worldview. By interpreting the concept of “iman” – belief, which is the cornerstone of knowledge and creation, Abai divides it into two types: “yakini iman” (true) and “taklidi iman” (traditional), where the respective bases are knowledge, rational beginning and arguments. And, on the other hand, Mullah's books and words are taken on faith. As Abai rightly points out, knowledge and reflection about the need for faith are far more powerful because they come from the heart rather than exhortations that can be comprehended only with one's mind. As morality itself is not guided by solely rational principles, and temptation is nothing but a weakness of mind. Accordingly, the iman is a derivative of virtue: “Who is careless, does not respect himself in strictness, has no compassion, that cannot be considered a believer...” (Kunanbaev, 1970).

Cordocentrism, defined in the fourteenth Word, and in the seventeenth Word too, is transformed into a metaphysical triangle, where the heart is the beginning, the vessel of the immortal divine soul and the source of virtue. The mind denotes the boundless of the known world and will is pure desire as part of humanity. An important observation here is the subordination of mind and will to the heart, where it is the good intention from within – the divine origin – that extends to the world around and to the human will, directing the knowledge and action of the individual, and sharing the good with others (Popko, 2022). The mind without a heart is capable of breeding evil, and the will without orientation for good is not such and turns into idleness (Kunanbaev, 1970). The heart is also featured in the thirty-first Word, namely its openness to new knowledge and advice. Hierarchy of reasons of perception (in order of delivery): spirituality and intransigence, open heart, remembrance through repetition and avoidance of harmful properties of mind. The harmful qualities themselves are also hierarchically opposed, carelessness counters spiritual intransigence and leads to doubts, indifference counters the heart, as the attraction to knowledge and wisdom comes from it, the passion for fun absorbs laziness and idleness and opposes the will that drives a human being (Chung *et al.*, 2021). The fourth property – “dark reflections and destructive passions” – embodies the abandonment of faith and is directly opposite to it, as they deny the gift of life, the divine creature of the world and the virtues inherent in Allah (Kunanbaev, 1970).

The acquisition of knowledge in the thirty-second Word, Abai presents in six conditions: true knowledge for the benefit, that is, without love for science it is unattainable; science is guided by noble goals, not by a desire to argue; loyalty to the achieved truth, even in fear of death; the art of polemics and firmness in upholding beliefs as instruments of knowledge multiplication; conscience is a countermeasure to “idleness of mind”; strong character – “vessel storing intelligence and knowledge” (Kunanbaev, 1970). Here the

categorical apparatus can be traced in the fourteenth, seventeenth, and thirty-first words: an open heart to knowledge, a heartfelt love for the people for whom one is studying, will and heart as a source of commitment to achieve through reason truth, a character as a pure will resisting temptation. Abai interprets science as “one of the faces of the Almighty”, including the attraction to it as a sign of humanity. However, only in the context of virtue, one can obtain the love of truth and knowledge, and through conscious desire and will achieve “conscious, reasonable faith”. A sincere faith distinguishes the sage from the scientist, where the first recognized the Allah’s will, while the latter cares about the life on the Earth, sees in phenomena and facts of regularity, but does not look into the spirit of things (Kunanbaev, 1970).

Abai’s ideas promote moral development, cultural understanding and education as a means of enlightenment and progress. They encourage individuals to cultivate virtues, appreciate diverse cultures and recognize the transformative power of education.

1.2 B. PASCAL: *THOUGHTS*

Thoughts by Pascal (2019) is also a meditation, but, unlike the contemporaries’ works, his reflections were aimed at comprehending faith and not the laws of reason. Due to the short life path and poor health condition, in the end, the thinker has not been able to finish what he started, and the current structure of the work has been built by researchers of his papers posthumously. *Thoughts* by Pascal (2019) has a similar structure to *Words of Edification* (Kunanbaev, 1970). In both works, the key utterances are supported by a certain set of arguments and additional reflections and are organized thematically. It is worth emphasizing an important difference between Abai and Pascal, resulting both from the distance between different traditions and differences in time. Abai scholars from the very beginning emphasized the social orientation of his works, while Pascal ignored the issues of French people’s national identity and unity. Although both thinkers, in their countries, are initiators and classics of the native literary language (Pascal wrote “Letters to the provincial” (2019) in modern French to him, which formed the fundament of the modern standard). It is worth considering that this is 150 years before Napoleon I’s time and the myriad national revolutions in Europe. The main form of identity was religious, and the world was divided primarily into Christian and Oriental, and within Christianity into separate denominations, teachings and heresies, by which the affiliation to the true faith was defined (Chung, 1995).

In Pascal’s first *Word* (2019), he also wrote in the early sections about the meditation on worldly vanity and the illusion of fame, idleness aimed at entertainment in order to distract from the thoughts of really important things. He also advocates the consistency of religion and science, the importance of both for the realization of human existence, but notes the powerlessness of science in matters of morality and the priority of the latter. Pascal (2019) similarly, sees depravity in the root of greed for the good, what prevents from achieving

them for the benefit of the human being. Faith, as the main tool of knowledge, is very important when drawing parallels between Pascal and Abai: “[...] a man without God is deprived of all knowledge and is inevitably unhappy, as it is a misfortune to desire and not be able to act. Because he wants to be happy and confident of some truth. But he can neither achieve knowledge nor refrain from the wish to know. He can't even doubt” (Pascal, 2019). Curiosity without faith, as a source of knowledge, is considered vanity by both philosophers. B. Pascal, like Abai, disapproves of knowledge for the sake of argument, but, while Abai allows enlightenment by a cognitive subject to multiply his people's good, Pascal (2019) compares curiosity to sea trips, which people take, not to get new experiences, but just to talk.

One of the most important Pascal's discoveries (2019) is the role of the heart relative to the mind. He states that “[...] the mind must rely on the knowledge obtained by heart and instinct, and base all reasoning on them”. The mind itself is weak and, although capable of understanding quantities, numbers and concepts, it is unable to see into the essence of things. From Pascal's point of view (2019), the mind proves the knowledge obtained – felt – by the heart. It is worth mentioning separately that it is through heartfelt feelings that faith is bestowed, which is not comprehended by the mind alone. In the context of the more rational anthropocentric paradigm of Europe of that time, Pascal (2019) notes the paradoxical nature of human existence, where, without faith, there is no true knowledge, including innate concepts (the point belongs to *Pyrrhonists*). On the other hand, one cannot doubt innate notions (dogmatic argument). That is, rational faith negates feelings, whereas sensual knowledge negates the cognitive power of the mind. And, passing beyond all conventional, in particular knowledge of its true nature and the nature of the world, it lies in humility (Doszhan, 2023).

Philosophy, as well as any other wisdom, is given to a person to find a way. However, Pascal (2019) does not find complete satisfaction in it, hence the “[...] true way – to want what God wants”. Philosophy, like knowledge, also cannot acquire integrity without faith; nor is it wisdom, if, behind it, lies a desire for self-assertion from a lack of understanding of one's nature and self-loathing. The instinct by which Pascal (2019) refers to the heart, as the sensual irrational nature of human knowledge, indicates true happiness from the outside, while the modern and previous philosophical tradition meant the search within itself. The greater good is just as unknowable without faith, that is, by human's resources, whether it be reason or will. Like the knowledge passed through the heart of Abai, “[...] the true good must be such that it can be possessed all at once, without deprivation and envy, and that no one can lose it against one's own will” (Pascal, 2019).

Pascal (2019) sees the power of religion as “obedience and the power of reason”. In this issue, he also agrees with Abai, who insisted on the importance of worship for faith. Belief in God's power and the ability to submit to God's power are an important part of faith, but the thinker warns against both radical doubt and reckless omnipresence of evidence and servile subjugation in

matters where it is worthwhile to show autonomy and flexibility of mind. All three approaches are extremes, which, in Abai, correspond to mind, will and heart, in one way or another, for true faith must be subordinated to virtue, which for B. Pascal, consists in subjugation. In Abai, it comes from the heart – it is the sensual element in each system that balances the paradox of being, transforming knowledge into truth: the instrumental mind destroys mystery and religious experience, while a complete lack of rational thinking creates ridiculous contradictions. Subjugation is based on an understanding of the limits of reason, a critical reflex, and the decision to accept faith as the only right decision. Both thinkers also try to formulate proof of God’s existence, but each of them does it in his way. Pascal (2019) relies on Jesus Christ, Scripture, Prophecies and Miracles, attested in them. For him, faith lies in the correctness of the canon of the Church, whereas for Iman Abai the combined power of the mind and the heart is sufficient, shaped by the millennia in different peoples’ conception of God as the embodiment of love and justice: “There are feelings of love and justice in which the wise one is the scholar. We are not able to invent science, we can only see, perceive the created world and comprehend its harmony with reason” (Kunanbaev, 1970).

Pascal’s ideas have practical implications in the realms of faith and spirituality, rationality and reasoning, and reflection on mortality. They guide individuals in their search for personal meaning, encourage humility and self-awareness in intellectual pursuits, and prompt contemplation of the transient nature of life.

1.3 MEANINGS OF CORDOCENTRISM IN ABAI AND PASCAL

Cordocentrism, derived from the Latin word “*cor*”, meaning heart, is a concept that emphasizes the central and essential role of the heart in human existence. It draws upon biblical and theological influences, particularly the idea that the heart serves as the locus of the true self.

In Abai and Pascal’s context, cordocentrism takes on specific nuances. For Abai, a prominent Kazakh philosopher, poet and thinker, cordocentrism reflects his emphasis on the spiritual and moral dimensions of human life. He believed that the heart is the seat of conscience, moral values and the source of genuine human compassion. Abai’s works, such as his collection of “Words of Edification”, explore themes of inner transformation, the cultivation of virtues, and the pursuit of a meaningful and ethical life (Daribaeva *et al.*, 2021). In Pascal’s case (2019), a French philosopher, mathematician and theologian, cordocentrism is intertwined with his Christian worldview. Pascal emphasized the heart as the gateway to a deep and personal relationship with God. He saw the heart as the place where faith, reason and divine grace intersect. In his famous work *Pensées (Thoughts)*, Pascal delves into the complexities of human nature, exploring the tension between reason and the profound yearnings of the heart.

The significance of cordocentrism for philosophy lies in its exploration of the holistic nature of human existence. It challenges reductionist views that prioritize the mind or intellect as the sole locus of human identity and consciousness. By centering on the heart, cordocentrism invites a more nuanced understanding of human experience, considering the interplay between emotions, reason, intuition, morality and spiritual dimensions (Skotna, 2019). Philosophically, cordocentrism raises questions about the nature of personal identity, the integration of different aspects of being, the moral grounding of human action, the pursuit of knowledge and truth, and the existential quest for meaning (Amangazykyzy *et al.*, 2021). It invites a holistic approach that acknowledges the complexities and interconnectedness of various facets of human life, offering a lens, through which, it is possible to examine these fundamental philosophical inquiries.

Cordocentrism challenges the mind-centered view of human consciousness and identity, emphasizing the significance of the heart. It has implications in philosophy of mind, ethics, epistemology, existentialism and philosophy of religion, deepening our understanding of human nature and prompting meaningful discussions.

2 DISCUSSION

Special attention should be paid to famous Esimov's comments (1995, p. 174) concerning individual Words mentioned in the context of the work. For example, the twelfth Word traces the reformation of Islam to knowledge, since a person's good deed, who does not wish to learn, including admitting his mistakes, is turned into evil. The affirmation of righteousness in knowledge serves, not only the individual's intellectual development, but also the moral. Thus, the will to know is a life stance that is alien to blind faith (that is, traditional, *taklidi iman*). A similar position can be found in Pascal (2019), where subjugation is a willful act, but it is through reflection that one begins to believe not as a custom, but as a necessity. The fanaticism and rigidity of the spirit of the traditional faith, described in the Thirteenth Word, while worthy of respect, do not have a firm knowledge of the necessity of faith and thus protect against temptation. The marriage of knowledge makes it impossible to question what one hears or to defend one's faith (Esimov, 1995, p. 138). Shaky faith, on the other hand, cannot be a solid foundation for constructive knowledge about the world and people.

Esimov (1995, p. 236) notes the antagonism of the West and the East in approaching the definition of the cognitive substance of an individual: when European thinkers are characterized by rationalism and sensationalism, and the rational beginning is separated and contrasted with the sensitive, this is not typical of the Eastern tradition. Therefore, Abai's metaphysics closely intertwines knowledge, virtue and aspiration in the form of unity of mind, heart and will. Although Abai (Kunanbaev, 1970, p. 201) does not directly define science in his *Word*, his portrayal of science as "one of the faces of God

Almighty”, along with his teachings on virtue and faithfulness, imply that he sees science as a righteous path for a man who is steadfast in his faith and in good intentions towards the Kazakhs. Separately concerning the triunity of mind, heart and will, Esimov (1995, p. 57) notes that “[...] there is no need to find the meaning of these concepts in the philosophy of the West, because it is one of the methods of gnoseological search for truth in Islam”. And the interpretation of concepts, as ideas, belongs to Plato, not the substances. Since the above-mentioned *Thoughts*, Pascal (2019) demonstrates the opposite: one can speak of a successful dialogue of cultures since the Middle Ages, by which European philosophical thought moved away from the characteristic rational discourse and adopted from the East new ways of interpreting familiar categories.

The importance of the role of faith in the heart, as a condition of Esimov’s true knowledge (1995, p. 140), is explained in a detailed interpretation of the rules of learning in the thirty-first Word. Intransigence in knowledge, as in the path of the righteous, presupposes a determination, a clearly stated and understood goal, and a virtuous background, therefore “[...] a person deprived of these qualities is not able to feel a true desire for truth” (Esimov, 1995, p. 94). The constituents of ignorance as opposed to knowledge, namely recklessness, and indifference, are linked together by Esimov (1995, p. 154), because carelessness begets indifference that ascribes to man, locking him in a close world of evil interests, where idle entertainment replaces the work of a living mind. A similar moment can be found in Pascal (2019, p. 293). While concern for the outside world compels it to explore for the sake of change, fear and ignorance make it necessary to hide behind the fuss and seek entertainment in order to escape from internal vices and misery. As Allah bestows life on joy, and as Allah bestows the power of faith on transcendence, the European thinker also emphasizes the importance of joy in life as a counterweight to concomitant evil (Prychepii, 2022). The attitude toward festive fun is quite consistent with the principle of the golden median at Aristotle. The same applies to grief. But if the ancient Greeks had it as a rational strategy, Abai has it as a tool to reconcile with the nature of that part of himself that is influenced by reason, heart, or will, leaving the space for faith and knowledge limitless.

Esimov’s comments (1995, p. 145) reveal the similarity of the thirty-second Word (Kunanbaev, 1970, p. 265) with Pascal’s work (2019). Excessive bias in an argument ruin what the argument itself was initially started for, which leaves science out. In Pascal’s works (2019), boredom generated by the idleness of mind and soul generates scientific arguments among secular people for the sake of proving their superiority, and the obtained answer is compared to a fortress or any otherworldly achievement. The researchers A. S. Aitkaliyeva and E. I. Gulyaeva (2013, 8-9) note the similarity of the *Words of Edification* with “bilik” of Chingiz tradition, “conversations”, “maxims” and “aphorisms” in the European tradition, but still define the genre of *Words of Edification* as confession, in which wrote M. Aurelius, P. Abelard, B. Pascal, and J. J. Rousseau, which is valuable, but still incorrect. If we look more

closely at the structure of the work and compare it with other works of a similar pattern, we see that the absence of autobiographical elements, as well as the syllogistic nature of the reflections, points to the genre belonging more to reflection than to confession (Hadot, 1995, p. 221). Confession, as a genre, is primarily autobiography, while Abai (Kunanbaev, 1970, p. 135), in *Words of Edification*, focused more on the inner world and a human's place in life in general, without stressing his own life events or examples from others. The point of view on the genre of "Words of Edification" as a meditation, i.e., fixed philosophical reflection, allows more confidently comparing Abai with the above-mentioned authors, as well as with other Western philosophers. On the other hand, the didactic component of the "Words of Edification" allows us to discern similarities with the Old Russian sermons, Eastern Christian didaskalias, and Western Christian catechisms: each of these literary genres carries both spiritual meaning and derivative practical instructions.

The moment of paradigm shift is also noted by V. I. Yaroshovets (2011, p. 150-152), pointing to the genealogy of medieval problems of incommensurability of body and spirit. After Socrates' transition to dialectical philosophy, Plato's fragmentation of individual philosophical positions, Epictetus' spirituality, Epicurus' freedom through the measured carefree inconspicuousness, Augustine's linear historicity of struggle for the City of God, and other outstanding thinkers of the West, the given problem was not solved by classical scholasticism. Then, the Eastern European tradition, in this matter, was much more successful (Seo *et al.*, 2021; Kim, 2017). Regarding this, the author counts Eckhart and Beme's mysticism, Luther's Reformation and Pascal's cordocentrism. Kalmyrzaev (1979, p. 79), in his interpretation of the aesthetics of Abai's art, continues the Soviet approach of abaiology, within which one could not consider any theology, and religious experience, seriously. He claims that the sublime is not in the divine, but in the mind as the main source of human triumph, citing the Seventeenth Word, and mentioning the Thirty-Eighth Word as proof of it. However, Abai himself (Kunanbaev, 1970, p. 205), describing the metaphorical dispute between the will, the mind and the heart, still gives preference to the latter: "If you do not find agreement, I will give preference to the Heart. Cherish the humanity in you. The Almighty judges us by this feature" (Begalinova; Dosmagambetov, 2018, p. 6-8). The motives of interpretation of Soviet Abaiology are quite clear against the background of the socio-political environment of that time, which affected all spheres of human activity, from which the dispute as to whether Abai's philosophical views were materialistic or rational-idealistic (Begalinova; Dosmagambetov, 2018, p. 6-8) remained debatable in the Soviet abaeological tradition. But the thinker himself saw knowledge, science and education, not only as tools to expand his own horizons, but also to understand social and ethical aspects of life, as well as to strengthen his own moral pivots, supported by the best examples from the nearest cultures (Jeong *et al.*, 2022).

Continuing his reflections in the Thirty-Eighth Word, Abai (Kunanbaev, 1970, p. 56) states that “[...] aspiration and comprehension are generated by love”. The reason, humanity and knowledge “[...] wake up interest to science in a human”, developing the idea of unification of will and mind under the protection of heart. Abai points out to impossibility of true knowledge without love to God, as without His mercy and kindness “[...] inquisitiveness and aspiration to sciences give a man knowledge only commensurable to his intellect”. The intellect itself, in turn, is too unstable towards vices. Thus, cognition of Allah by heart, as a way of obtaining true knowledge, precedes any other cognition or social action and, harmonizing human nature with the nature of the divine, reconciles man with Abai’s surrounding world (Begalinova; Dosmagambetov, 2018, p. 5). Researchers, in particular, Beisembiev (1956, p. 11), Kenzhenbaev (2020, p. 41) and Kosanova (2020, p. 27) noted the influence of Russian culture and education on Abai’s creativity and worldview. But, in addition to Russian writers, poets and political figures, one cannot completely deny separately Eastern theology, ancient philosophy and Western European philosophers, including Spinoza, Spencer and Mill (Beisembiev, 1956, p. 64). Here, additional clarification is required also by regular references to “Russian education”, because, at that time, Kazakhs could not get any other, but even taking into account the historical and social conditions and the politics of Russia. Abai focuses on Western culture as integrity, a dialogue with which, in a rapidly changing world, is not only the only way to survive but also a mutual enrichment of cultures (Kenzhenbaev, 2020, p. 43). Similar to how Eastern thinkers previously preserved and returned ancient Greek philosophy to Europe, forming the basis of science and wisdom in both civilizations, Abai believed that in his time, open constructive dialogue with the West could save Kazakh culture from destruction.

In the context of the connection between Western culture and Russian one, in particular, the researcher Nauanova (2019, p. 185-186) compares Abai’s and L. Tolstoy’s works for their existential character, which finds expression in doubts and dual conclusions. Both thinkers are characterized by linking faith and everyday life, affirmation of faith in one’s being through connection to a fellow human, search for the road from a human being to God and the question of the role of the human in his life. Although the authors differently understand the God-creator as a separate entity, both similarly approach the concept of “true faith” and dependence of the moral content of human life on it. Researcher Nysanbaev (2007, p. 125-126) while describing Abai’s social ontology, which was built against the background of the collapse of traditional Kazakh society in the aftermath of colonization by the Russian Empire, stresses God’s role in justification and validation of human existence. The author points out the conflict of this project with pre-Abai ontology at the stage of choosing the subject, since Abai focused on the individual and the personality, the bearer of the soul, while the old social ontology focused more attention on the family and the community, where the value of the individual was determined, not by the wealth of soul, but by involvement

in the socio-economic relations of the collective. Given Abai's attitude to the crowd, as a subject of violence, and the property of the human mass to suppress the high moral qualities of the individual, it is clear his choice, in favor of education and religiosity, is a withdrawal of knowledge from the collective space to the individual, which frees the subject from the negative values of its environment and gives a space for spiritual kinship with others on humanistic grounds: "The son of his father is an enemy to others. The son of man is your brother" (Kunanbaev, 1970, p. 150-151).

The role and nature of Abai's spirituality are discussed by the researcher Mamyrbekova (2020, p. 51-52). She considers the acquisition of spirituality as the cornerstone of human life, which, in turn, consists of social and moral feelings like duty, mercy, love, etc. These are the ones that justify the man's purpose in the world and humanity as such. Spirituality derives from deeds that project onto social reality and change social life for the better, enshrining material welfare in a moral society. The perfection of the soul, mind and world begins with a moral act, whose need for which comes from within. The researcher also notes the role of the "work of heart" in self-perfection, which accommodates the spirit and, from which, grows the connection with the world preceding the moral act. In the Orthodox tradition, as the researcher Shelkovaya (2017, p. 144-146) points out, the philosophy of the heart is represented by Yurkevich, Skovoroda, Vysheislavtsev, Ilyin, Frank and Chizhevsky. Pascal's Western successor was Scheler, while cordocentrism itself continues the ancient Egyptian and ancient Indian traditions-cults of the heart. It is the Eastern European interpretation that deserves special attention, such as the concept of "man of the heart", as a bearer of God's spark, the immersion of the mind into the heart to understand God, etc. Orthodox "philosophy of heart" also, as well as Abai, is inherent in distinguishing spiritual and corporeal beginnings, i.e., an immortal soul and a mortal body. From the position of the presence of divine spark inside the heart, the true Self is unknowable, just as God Himself. However, in contrast to Abai's divine cognition and faith through Pascal's understanding, Skovoroda proposes gratitude for everything as a way of subduing the mind to the heart.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

"Heartiness" is a common cornerstone for Abai's and B. Pascal's philosophical systems, and "cordocentrism" is a generalizing term-typology for philosophical systems where sensuality and morality, through the metaphor of the heart, are at the top of being, thinking and making morally evaluable judgments. Due to both Abai and Pascal, the heart is the receptacle of the virtues, which directs the mind to knowledge and the will to action. Unified in a person who is guided by humility or iman, that is, who embodies not only faith, but also religiosity, such a person is capable of high moral actions about others on any scale of social ontology, as well as the true knowledge of his nature, the material world, the soul of his fellow

and the foreign culture. Both thinkers, within their worldviews, insist on the necessity of a divine beginning for full “heartiness”. The category of “submissiveness” in Pascal converges with Abai’s “iman”. Both philosophers see the perfect form of faith in worship. Each one within their religion respectively.

While related philosophical and literary genres, such as sermonizing and meditation, are not unique in the history of Western philosophy, cordocentrism, as an embodiment of moral and religious philosophy unity on the border between rational and sensual cognitive strategies, is part of the Kazakh mentality, which is open to cultural dialogue, following Abai’s precepts. Different historical, cultural and socio-political landscapes do not cancel the fact of conceptual-theoretical compatibility of Abai’s and Pascal’s philosophical views. Due to the lack of more accurate biographical data, it is difficult to establish the cause of kinship. However, given the existence of other “philosophies of the heart” in the then Russian Empire, besides the popular claim about the influence of classical and modern to Abai Russian literature (which developed into the Russian religious-existential philosophical tradition), we can assume a direct or indirect contact with cordocentrism or related ideas.

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