

ADVENTURES OF COMPETENCE IN MODERN SOCIETY: THE JOHN RAVEN TRILOGY

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Abstract. The article is dedicated to the publication of J. Raven's book "The Incompetence of Modern Society: Conceptualization, Threats, Overcoming." Among a lot of books by an outstanding British psychologist devoted to the study of such a complex phenomenon as *competence*, the new book logically complements and links together two books wellknown to psychologists: 'Competence in Modern Society. Its Identification, Development and Release' and 'Competence in the Learning Society'. Thus it forming a trilogy that describes the difficult path of the concept of "competence" into modern science and public consciousness, determined by social being. Tracing the metamorphoses of the term "competence" and its perception by society through the works of J. Raven, the authors of the article present not only an overview of the content of the trilogy, but also compare the conclusions of the psychologist, known for his work throughout the world, with the views of Russian psychological and pedagogical science.

Keywords: competence, pedagogical testing, motivation, incompetence, autopoiesis, autopoiesis systems, collective competence, reductionist science, Thanatos, System Dynamics, networks of social forces, mapping of social forces.

The phenomenon called "competence" in modern language, associated with various types of human activity. It existed at all times along with the conscious activity of people and has been called very differently from the very beginning of its research. Apparently, the first judgments about competence, as mastery of a certain type of activity, appeared in ancient times, as discussed by researchers of praxeology. ("Praxeology (less commonly praxiology; from other Greek πράξις - activity, and λογία - science, teaching) is the study of human activity, the implementation of human values in real life. An area of sociological and economic research that considers various actions or sets of actions from the point of view of establishing their effectiveness." Praxeology has been developing since the end of the 19th century, in the works of A. Espinas, L. von Mises [1]. "Tractatus about good work" (Traktat o dobrgej robocie, 1953) by T. Kotarbiński [2] continues research into praxeology in the 20th century.

Praxeology is built on the basic philosophical concept of "praxis". For Aristotle, "praxis" is an act loaded with ethics, for Kant it is practical reason, elevating the ethical to the sphere of what is proper.

Thus, the object of research is, on the one hand, motivated activity, "ethically loaded," that is, performed in accordance with the values of the individual and society, and on the other hand, rational activity based on a sense of duty.

L. von Mises writes about the emergence of praxeology as a general theory of human activity: "This is the science of any type of human activity. Any human decision is a choice. When

implementing it, a person does not choose between material objects and services. Choice affects all human values. All ends and means, material and ideal, high and low, noble and vile, are lined up in one row and are subject to a decision, as a result of which one thing is chosen and another is rejected.” [1].

It is important to highlight one more concept introduced into scientific use by T. Veblen in his sociological works dating back to the end of the 19th century. Early 20th century In the book “The Theory of the Leisure Classes: *An Economic Study of Institutions*” (1899), first published in Russian in 1984, T. Veblen introduces the concept of “instinct of mastery”, which is associated with the modern phenomenon of competence: ”This aptitude or propensity may be called the instinct of workmanship. Wherever the circumstances or traditions of life lead to an habitual comparison of one person with another in point of efficiency, the instinct of workmanship works out in an emulative or invidious comparison of persons. The instinct of workmanship is present in all men, and asserts itself even under very adverse circumstances.” [3]. And finally, in 1914, stepping into the 20th century. T. Veblen concludes: The instinct of workmanship brought the life of mankind from the brute to the human plane, and in all the later growth of culture it has never ceased to pervade the works of man. But the extensive complication of circumstances and the altered outlook of succeeding generations, brought on by the growth of institutions and the accumulation of knowledge, have led to an extension of its scope and of its canons and logic to activities and conjunctures that have little traceable bearing on the means of subsistence”. (cited . according to [5, p. 37]).

Thus, we can conclude that the object of study of praxeology were general patterns and properties of motivated and ethically justified work in various spheres of human activity. It is these properties that will be inherent in the modern concept of “competence”.

The concept of competence was introduced into modern psychology in R. White’s article ‘Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence’ (1959). The author introduced the term “competence” to describe those personality characteristics that are associated with high motivation and efficiency in a particular area of activity, and defined competence as “effective interaction (of a person) with the environment” [6].

In the late 1960s, D. McClelland initiated a new direction in the study of competence. This direction arose due to the inability of educational testing to predict professional achievement.

The term itself gained currency in 1973, when D. McClelland wrote a seminal paper “Testing for Competence Rather Than for 'Intelligence'”, in which, following R. White, he emphasized that the assessment of competence more important than so-called intelligence. Since then, this term has been widely used by researchers of professional activity, such as T. Gilbert - ‘Human Competence. Engineering Worthy Performance’ [8], R. Boyatzis – ‘The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance’ [9].

The use of the term varied widely, leading to such serious discrepancies that W. Westera called it the biblical term ‘Competences in Education: *a confusion of tongues*’ [10].

Against this background, in 1984, J. Raven’s book ‘Competence in Modern Society. Its Identification, Development and Release’ was published [11].

J. Raven is known throughout the world as the continuer of the development, research and implementation of psychological tests “Raven's Progressive Matrices” in many countries of Europe, America and Asia. The Raven's Progressive Matrices test, as a tool for psychological research, was created by J. Raven's father, one of the leading British psychologists of the 20th century, J.C. Raven, Dissemination and standardization of this test almost throughout the world

is the invaluable contribution of J. Raven, Jr. in the development of modern psychology. Translations of his works into Russian related mainly to the problems of psychological testing («Педагогическое тестирование: проблемы, заблуждения, перспективы» - “Pedagogical testing: problems, misconceptions, prospects” - М.: Cogito-Center, 1999) and the study of such a psychological phenomenon as human competence.

The breadth and depth of J. Raven's research is detailed on his websites Professor John Raven - <http://www.johnraven.co.uk/> and Eye on society - <http://www.eyesociety.co.uk/>).

If the first website covers all areas of J. Raven's research, presented in the books and scientific publications at the intersection of psychology, sociology, politics and economics, then the second website was created to disseminate and discuss research on the psychological aspects of society.

Research on competence as a phenomenon related to society as a whole remained accessible to the Russian-speaking reader only in the form of separate publications in scientific journals. Research projects of J. Raven in the first decades of the XXI century focus on the interacting social forces that control both individual and collective behavior. This field of research, namely sociocybernetics in a broad sense, is understood as the analysis of networks of social forces influencing the behavior of individuals and social groups. This approach recognizes that many hidden forces influence individuals, organizations and society as a whole. Some of these forces are rooted in biology and are rarely recognized; others are derived from human activity and the development of civilization.

This view shows not only an attitude towards a person as an individual faced with problems of development and education at all stages of life, but also an integrated approach to a broad understanding of education as the unification of professional and social competences in such a phenomenon as *a competent society* as a whole - a society based on the concept of a talented person, who is responsible and free, but at the same time capable of going beyond individual interests and participating in activities oriented to the long-term prospects of society.

Many works of J. Raven are devoted to the phenomenon of competence. Of these, three books can be distinguished, forming an “adventure trilogy”:

1. ‘Competence in Modern Society. Its Identification, Development and Release’ (1984),
2. ‘Competence in the Learning Society’ (2001),
3. “Incompetence of modern society: conceptualization, threats, overcoming” («Некомпетентность современного общества: концептуализация, угрозы, преодоление») (2023).

These three books have much common and continue the story that was started, as befits a “classic, ancient, excellently long, long, long novel,” but at the same time they present many new, sometimes controversial ideas that illuminate the functioning of society as a whole and on the steps what needs to be done to improve this functioning.

‘Competence in Modern Society. Its Identification, Development and Release’ (translation into Russian:

«Компетентность в современном обществе: выявление, развитие и реализация» -

“Competence in modern society: identification, development and realization”)



Fig. 1 – Book ‘Competence in Modern Society. Its Identification, Development and Release’ and its translation into Russian

«Компетентность в современном обществе: выявление, развитие и реализация» -
 “Competence in modern society: identification, development and realization”

This book focuses on the components of competence, understanding and procedures that are necessary to effectively manage the world we lead. In particular, we are talking about ways to develop, evaluate and use important motivational dispositions in the home, in educational institutions and in the workplace. J. Raven argues that if the members of our society are to function effectively, as individuals or as members of the organisations of which our society is composed, they need new understandings of the role of management and the role of the employee. They need new understandings of the role of government, bureaucracy, and the citizen. They need qualities sadly neglected by educators in the past — managerial ability, initiative, innovativeness, discretion, and the ability to work effectively with others [11].

The book describes a set of principles of psychological measurement suitable for assessing those qualities that are best called *components of competence*. These principles stand in stark contrast to the most widely accepted canons of psychological measurement. For example, it is argued that it is important to determine an individual's values before any attempt to measure his abilities.

The competency model according to J. Raven focuses on the integration of many independent factors, in contrast to the approach common in modern psychology, based on factor scales reflecting the value of certain “variables”, which constitutes the “dominant psychometric concept”.

J. Raven attaches great importance not only to the currently manifested components of competence, but also to the latent, hidden ones, which can manifest themselves (and often actually manifest themselves) in new situations of life. J. Raven in his model of competence assigns a decisive, system-forming role to the value-motivational qualities of the person. Considering the inextricably interrelated motivation and abilities J. Raven considers motivation to be more important.

The data presented in the book leads the author to the conclusion that the human resources that our society needs most are best stimulated through processes that have been studied by few psychologists and implemented by few educators other than parents. In actual development environments people practice and develop important components of competence in pursuit of their own interests and goals. Such developing environments are most often found in homes and

workplaces, but not in schools. However, the actions of teachers observed in a number of classes where such qualities were cultivated are described.

Knowledge, abilities and skills, as a performing component of any type of activity, are successfully formed only when the individual is interested in achieving goals, and this is what ensures such components of competence as responsibility, initiative, and readiness for creativity.

Finally, the survey data presented in the book, while limited, is deeply troubling. They suggest that the cause of the "British disease" indeed has deep roots. Not only do many members of the population hold dysfunctional beliefs about management and participation, the results reveal a profound lack of interest in doing the things which effective managers need to do, lack of interest in innovation and efficiency, and little concern to support innovators. If these results are confirmed in more broadly based surveys, they point to a future which is bleak indeed [11].

Russian translation of J. Raven's book 'Competence in Modern Society. Its Identification, Development and Release' [11], was released by the publishing house "Cogito-Center" in 2002 under the title "Competence in modern society: identification, development and realization" [12]. Note that the translation of the word "release" in the title as "realization" led to the loss of a deeper meaning – "release". If we turn to the explanatory dictionary "Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English" [13], then the meaning of the word is indicated as "set sb/sth free" - to make someone/something free for the verb, "set sb/sth free" - to make someone/something free for a verb, "setting sb/sth free" - freeing someone/something for a noun (*our translation*).

Foreword by British psychologist Prof. A. Cherns is not presented in the translation of the book into Russian, so it would not be superfluous to provide here the translation of this short but meaningful text, which succinctly characterizes the book, in order to bring it to the Russian-speaking reader, albeit with some delay.

FOREWORD by A. Cherns, Professor of Sociology at Loughborough University.

We hear much these days on the perennial topic: does education prepare our children adequately for adult life? From one side comes the complaint that it is not vocational enough, practical enough to prepare good workers for industry; from the other side the cry is for better preparation for leisure.

In his '*Education, Values and Society*', John Raven posed the crucial question: does it develop in children the competences that parents want and that teachers believe that schools should foster? The answer given in a series of studies in Ireland and in Britain was: No, it doesn't. If our complex technological society needs people who feel able to influence decisions and initiate changes they want, then our schools are manifestly failing to produce them. The malaise goes further. Few believe they themselves *should* initiate ideas or influence our governors and administrators.

Now, in this book, Raven has accumulated a great deal more evidence to substantiate the views of the parents, teachers, pupils, employees, and employers who were interviewed in the course of his social surveys that the most important qualities to be fostered by those responsible for educational and staff guidance, placement and development include initiative, the ability to understand and influence the workings of society, the ability to learn without instruction, and confidence in dealing with others.

Merging two previous strands in his work, he argues that *political* competence, the capacity to engage with, rather than just grumble about, the processes which grind out policy, is critical to being effective as a bus driver, teacher, computer operator, manager or other member of society. Further, he contributes a practical instrument developing the values-plus-competences model of

motivated abilities outlined in his previous work. As it develops we can hope to see valid, shorthand descriptive statements about people's interests, values, and areas of competence replace "profiles" of scale scores on "variables".

In this book Raven introduces disturbing data on the beliefs, perceptions and expectations that have come to be characteristic of our society and which help to explain what we have learned to regard as the "British disease". To overcome that we need to think again about the operation of modern society. Raven suggests that we need new concepts of participation, democracy, equality, money and wealth.

There is much in this book which is thought-provoking. For many it should prove provoking of action too. Though few will give unqualified assent to all Raven's views and arguments, few also will read without feeling deeply disturbed not only by the facts that it discloses but also because, if only part of what Raven claims is correct, the current debate about education, work and society is *the wrong debate about the wrong issues based on wrong premises.*" [11].

J. Raven's book was written in 1984, and at that time there was no "electronic version" in the form of a text file. In 2023, J. Raven and the author of this article jointly corrected this shortcoming. J. Raven scanned the printed book in Edinburgh and posted this version on ResearchGate (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337925795_Competence_in_Modern_Society).

Unfortunately, this file only provided page images and no text that was dictionary searchable and copyable. After that, we digitized it into the readable pdf-file. The electronic version of the book is currently being made available on the Eyeonsociety (<http://www.eyeonsociety.co.uk>) and ResearchGate (<https://www.researchgate.net>) websites.

'Competence in the Learning Society'

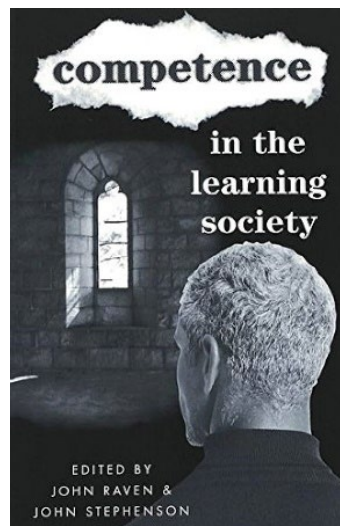


Fig. 2 Book "Competence in the Learning Society"

The book explores the types of competencies that are needed to our society for survive the impending ecological and social collapse. "Competence in a Learning Society" makes the case for a new understanding of competence, which is not only about doing a job well, but also about ensuring that the work done has a positive effect that goes beyond the scope of the work performed and influences the system in which it is performed. This book also describes the educational and social systems needed to develop and release high-level competencies.

In addition to severely criticizing of the international movement “Competence education and testing”, which promotes narrow approaches to education based on the “delivery” and testing of pre-packaged knowledge within the framework of simplified and practically ineffective models of competence, the book “Competence in a learning society” shows that it is vital to improve the structure of ideas about the nature, development, release and assessment of competence.

This is the first book to bring together thinking about “competence” in a way that is relevant to higher education and illustrates the latest research and practice. The book not only presents a critique of current practices, but also argues for system-wide changes that are complex and sometimes counterintuitive, requiring in-depth study.

It is enough to study the list of the authors of a collective monograph to understand the highest level of competence of the authors themselves in the field under study. Indeed, in this work by J. Raven and J. Stevenson as editors, the founders of the “competence movement” took part: David C. McClelland, Richard E. Boyatzis, Donald Shön and other researchers who made a significant contribution to the development and promotion of such a complex concept as *competence*.

J. Raven, who wrote with J. Stevenson, the compiler and editor of this collective monograph, wrote the chapters “Learning Societies, Learning Organisations, and Learning: Their Implications for Competence, Its Development, and Its Assessment”, “Commentary: The Pernicious Effects of Incompetence on Society, Education, and Assessment”, “Issues Raised by the Studies of Competence”, “The McBer Competency Framework”, “The McClelland/McBer Competency Models”, “The Conceptualisation of Competence”, “Facilitating the Development of Competence”, “Some Barriers to the Introduction of Competency-Oriented Education”, “The Assessment of Competence”.

The co-authors of this book, as indicated above, were D. Shön with his chapter “The Crisis of Professional Knowledge and the Pursuit of an Epistemology of Practice”, D. McClelland with his chapter “Where Do We Stand on Assessing Competencies?” Even from the chapter titles, it becomes clear that the book has become one of the fundamental works of the “competence movement.” The full list of chapters in “Competence in the Learning Society” briefly reflects both the structure of the book and its content, and therefore deserves to be presented in full.

Contents of the book “Competence in Learning Society”

PART I: SOCIETAL LEARNING AND COMPETENCE

CHAPTER 1. Learning Societies, Learning Organisations, and Learning: Their Implications for Competence, Its Development, and Its Assessment *John Raven*

CHAPTER 2. Beyond Competence through Parallel Organisation Activity: Applying the Principles of Rosabeth Moss Kanter's Concept of Parallel Organisations to Learning Organisations and the Learning Society *Lynne Cunningham*

CHAPTER 3. Commentary *John Raven*

PART II: INCOMPETENCE

CHAPTER 4. The Incapable Professional *Tony Becher*

CHAPTER 5. Incompetence: An Unspoken Consensus *Irene Illott*

CHAPTER 6. Commentary: The Pernicious Effects of Incompetence on Society, Education, and Assessment *John Raven*

PART III: STUDIES OF COMPETENCE

CHAPTER 7. Leadership Competencies: A Study of Leaders at Every Level in an Organization
Darlene Russ-Eft and Karen Brennan

CHAPTER 8. On the Leading Edge: Competencies of Outstanding Community College Presidents
Carolyn Desjardins and Sheila Huff

CHAPTER 9. The McBer Competency Framework *John Raven*

CHAPTER 10. Competence in Context: Identifying Core Skills for the Future *George Klemp*

CHAPTER 11. Professional Capability--Requirements and Accreditation in the Legal Profession
Diana Tribe

CHAPTER 12. Issues Raised by the Studies of Competence *John Raven*

PART IV: CONCEPTUALISING COMPETENCE

CHAPTER 13. The Crisis of Professional Knowledge and the Pursuit of an Epistemology of Practice
Donald Schön

CHAPTER 14. Beyond Competences: Lessons from Management Learning *Ian Cunningham*

CHAPTER 15. The McClelland/McBer Competency Models *John Raven*

CHAPTER 16. Leadership Competencies: Putting It All Together *George Klemp*

CHAPTER 17. The Conceptualisation of Competence *John Raven*

PART V: FACILITATING THE GROWTH OF COMPETENCE

CHAPTER 18. Facilitating the Development of Competence *John Raven*

CHAPTER 19. Stimulating Self-Directed Learning through a Managerial Assessment and Development Course
Richard Boyatzis

CHAPTER 20. Essentials of Action Learning *Reg Revans* (ed. *David Botham*)

CHAPTER 21. Inputs and Outcomes: The Experience of Independent Study at NELP *John Stephenson*

PART VI: BARRIERS TO FACILITATING THE GROWTH OF COMPETENCE

CHAPTER 22. Competence and Incompetence in an Institutional Context *Dave O'Reilly*

CHAPTER 23. Some Barriers to the Introduction of Competency-Oriented Education *John Raven*

PART VII: THE ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE

CHAPTER 24. The Problems Posed for the Assessment of Competence by the Espoused Goals of Higher Education
W Bryan Dockrell

CHAPTER 25. Competence-Based Assessment *Alison Wolf*

CHAPTER 26. Assessing the Self-Managing Learner: A Contradiction in Terms? *Stan Lester*

CHAPTER 27. Where Do We Stand on Assessing Competencies? *David McClelland*

CHAPTER 28. The Assessment of Competence *John Raven*

ENDPIECE Capability, Competence and the Learning Society: Lessons From State Failure

It is important to understand what a “learning society” is for J. Raven and his like-minded people. In our discussion with J. Raven of his book, he succinctly summarized the phenomenon as follows: “A learning is a society that innovates and learns without centralized directive leadership, not what is usually meant when the term is used to describe a society in which people are increasingly “taking advanced training courses.” Thus, a learning society is a social system that can and does innovate and learn in the same way that a person (also is a system) innovates and learns” (12.2023).

Here's J. Raven's final commentary on Chapter 17 of 'The Conceptualization of Competence': “We need an atomic theory of competence. By this I mean an agreed-upon framework of descriptors to use to make statements about individual patterns of motivation and competence, about groups and their emergent competencies, about environments, about how individuals and their environments interact and transform each other, and about the short- and long-term, personal and social, consequences of alternatives. Contrasting theses need to be developed. An army of creative, inventive, thoughtful researchers who are able to get beyond the constraints of both traditional psychometric and educational thoughtways on the one hand and of academic life in general on the other are required. Yet even to rework the database in which the book is rooted is problematic, because few of the studies have been published. In the end, then, it emerges that one of the central issues to be clarified and addressed is how to conduct urgently needed policy research that will help us to reform our society in more appropriate ways than those being wished upon us by the Department of Education and Employment.

This issue, hardly glimpsed by the Spencers, turns out to be the central issue to which university staff and students dedicated to the true aims of such institutions would turn their attention. Here, without doubt, lies a role for Higher Education for Capability.” [11, p.270]

The electronic book is available on the ‘Eye On Society’ website (<http://www.eyesociety.co.uk>), where each chapter is presented as a separate pdf-file.

“Incompetence of modern society: conceptualization, threats, overcoming”

(“Некомпетентность современного общества: концептуализация, угрозы, преодоление”)

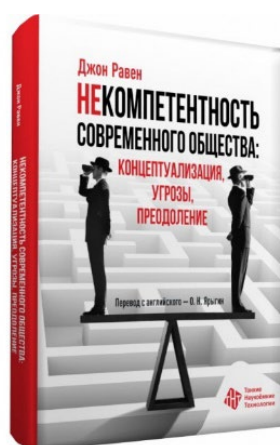


Fig. 3 – Book “Incompetence of modern society: conceptualization, threats, overcoming”

(“Некомпетентность современного общества: концептуализация, угрозы, преодоление”)

This book firstly presents in a systematized form many of J. Raven's critical views on the current state of science, education and society as a single system with its unpredictable emergent

properties. The monograph is addressed to sociologists and sociopsychologists, researchers of autopoietic social systems, and can serve as a theoretical basis and practical guide to the formation of a systematic understanding of the competence of human society as a whole.

Based on many years of work and a synthesis of an immense variety of literary sources, the author tries to open the eyes of modern researchers to the state of society as an autopoietic system and to the continuous and uncontrollable desire of this society for self-destruction in a global sense. J. Raven seeks to attract the attention of the scientific community to liberation from reductionism and the search for scientific approaches to the study of the highly complex dynamic system that is our society. Such approaches can help humanity “survive as a species and preserve planet Earth as we know it”.

The monograph consists of 7 chapters, combined into two parts: Part I. “FROM AN INCOMPETENT SOCIETY TO A LEARNING SOCIETY” and Part II. “PROBLEMS OF MODERN SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD”.

In the first part entitled “From an incompetent society to a learning society” the author examines the state of modern society, identifies systemic processes that cause its incompetence and suggests ways to overcome the destructive manifestation of Thanatos (the desire for self-destruction), starting from the correction of the education system and ending with the transition to socio-cybernetic principles management of society. At the same time, the author also highlights “incompetent attempts to correct incompetence” (Chapter 1). Having posed the problem of the interaction of life values, the formation of competence and the ineffectiveness of education, J. Raven one of the first devote many works to the study of the problem of incompetence. J. Raven's overall conclusion is that the conceptualization and assessment of competence and incompetence requires a paradigm shift in the way by that psychologists think about individual differences and the role of these differences in social processes. This can be seen from the first clarification of the meaning of the term:

“I use the word competencies to refer to emotional predispositions to engage in fairly specific, but complex, activities having *cognitive, affective, and conative components* in effective ways in a variety of situations. As such they involve much more than cognitive knowledge and mental or sensory-motor skills. Note that even the requisite “knowledge” is largely *tacit, consisting of knowledge located in people’s hearts and hands rather than their heads*. (emphasis added) [15, p.33]. At the same time, the famous maxim of Charles Spearman: “The question is not ‘How well can someone think?’ but ‘What does he tend to think about?’” transformed by J. Raven into the following: “The question is, “What have people learned?” NOT “How well have they learned?” [15, p. 42].

The author extends the concept of “competence” to society as a whole, introduces the concepts Thanatos and autopoiesis of social systems. It is no coincidence that the title of the second chapter is the question “How should we understand and display the network of social forces behind the autopoietic processes leading our species to extinction, taking the entire Planet with it?” Raising the problem of displaying social forces leading in their interaction to the degradation of society the author shows that socio-cybernetic processes underlie history and evolution itself. As necessary steps to overcome the thanatosian state of society, J. Raven proposes a radical revision of ideas about “competence, education, professional development, psychology” based on sociocybernetics (Chapter 3).

The use of maps of socio-cybernetic forces proposed by the author will, in his opinion, allow us to overcome at least some of the problems of hierarchical management in modern society.

Considering various projects in the field of education as examples J. Raven shows how an implicit network of social forces not only reduces the quality of education, but also leads society as a whole to degradation. "... these processes do not operate independently but form a self-reinforcing, self-extending, *system*. One cannot change any one part of that system without changing others. Otherwise its effects will either be negated by the reactions of the rest of the system or have counterintuitive, and usually counterproductive, effects elsewhere in the system" [15, p. 38]

Explaining the use of the concept of "autopoietic systems" (autopoiesis - ancient Greek αὐτός - itself, ποίησις - creation) J. Raven writes: "The word "autopoietic" implies a system which is, in some sense, self-organising, self-reproducing, and self-extending. ... What we have seen here is that the "self-organising" processes of the educational system involve a whole series of mutually reinforcing and recursive feedback loops both within the educational system itself and in its interactions with the wider society." [15, p.250].

Note that J. Raven's conclusions about the "game of social forces" are consonant with the words from Thomas More's "Utopia" about the game of the "Utopians" similar to chess, "in which vices, united together, are intertwined with virtues. At the same time, the game shows in detail the disagreement between vices and the agreement of virtues, as well as what vices oppose themselves to virtues, with what forces they openly attack them, what tricks they resort to gradually, what defense of virtues they crush the power of vices, with the help of what arts they elude their efforts and, finally, by what means must the victory of one side or another be ensured." (*the authors express their gratitude to A.V. Verlinsky [17] for his help in translating a fragment of the book "Utopia" from Latin, translation is our*).

The second part, entitled "PROBLEMS OF THE CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD," is devoted to identifying and bridging gaps in the philosophy of science and research. As the subtitle of Chapter 4 modestly states, these are just "some observations from 60 years of educational research."

The author sees an obstacle to the survival of human society in the state of the scientific community and the modern world order (Part II. Problems of the modern scientific community and the world). The author shows that the main vice of modern society is the constant reproduction of hierarchy in all spheres of human activity and thought. This is precisely what, unfortunately, contributes to modern reductionist science, which dominates almost all areas of knowledge.

J. Raven once again draws the attention of researchers to the so-called "Campbell's law": "*The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor*. One sees the effects *a fortiori* in the operation of the NHS and the educational system." [15, p. 265].

Overcoming the crisis is impossible without changing the paradigm of many branches of modern science, starting with psychology, economics and sociology (Chapter 4. Problems of bridging gaps in the philosophy of science and research).

Having examined the crisis of educational systems, as well as crises in the economy, ecology and science, the author emphasizes the need for a new systemic view of the development of human society. This approach represents the study of society as an autopoietic system.

An important and often repeated conclusion of J. Raven is that current forms of “democracy” and bureaucracy simply do not work for the benefit of society - and in most cases lead to results opposite to their intended purpose. J. Raven directly states: “Systems thinking shows that, in accordance with J. Forrester's law, common sense interventions in poorly understood systems tend to lead to counterintuitive and counterproductive results.”

However, the obstacle to the new approach is reductionist science, which, as the author writes, “is having a devastating impact on the planet.” Reductionism in science “represents perhaps the greatest threat our planet has ever faced... more dangerous than the largest meteorite impact. The idea of what “science” involves needs to be radically revised.” [15, p. 438].

One of the most dangerous manifestations of such an organization of science, according to J. Raven, is “*the generation of misleading research through the funding and publication process*”. [15, p. 414]. The consequences of the “publish or perish” principle and the so-called “grant system” are characterized by the following conclusion: “these contracts often give the funding agency the right to actually alter the figures (numbers) to be reported as outcomes of the research (and have in practice been known to do just this). ... *with researchers justifying their behaviour by saying that it is not only their own but also their collaborators careers which would be jeopardised if they protested*. Many contracts also require the researchers to get government approval for anything they wish to publish. The process thus results in research which may be said to have been “designed” to get results which support government perceptions and policies rather than the kinds of open-ended research which might offer a basis for alternative policies. Although the results of such research are presented as contributing to evidence-based policy, they are thus best characterised as contributing to policy-based evidence”. [15, p. 414-415].

J. Raven comes to a radical conclusion: “The way in which these two processes combine to exert a stranglehold on research is further amplified by the increasing government-mandated pressure to “publish or perish”. This offers yet another example of the brutal imposition of social Darwinism in the guise of (neo) liberalism”[15, p. 415] In response to the threat of reductionist science, which “encourages “scientists” to study the relationship between a single experimental input and a single outcome”. [15, p. 438],

J. Raven literally calls on modern psychologists to “turn psychology inside out.”

Critically examining the attempts of scientists and politicians to overcome existing crises using traditional approaches, using the example of the report to The Club of Rome “COME ON!”, J. Raven shows the inconsistency of the conclusions they propose and directly points to “some criminal (not yet criminalized) abuses of “science”, logic and power” (chapter 7).

The author's afterword expresses the hope that the scientific community will find within itself the intellectual and spiritual strength to resist reductionist science, and the “committees of the ignorant” that represent the modern bureaucracy, and to stop the ever-increasing incompetence of society, that is, to overcome the “advancement of Thanatos” leading “to the extinction of humanity as a species, and the entire planet with it.”

The author's credo is illustrated by a graphical representation of Newton's discovery of the de-animation of physical forces. Using a vector representation of forces, the diagram allows you to explain the reason for the movement of a sailing ship against the wind! This is also the call of J. Raven addressed to modern researchers and the entire society that sets tasks for scientists: **MOVE AGAINST THE DOMINANT WIND!** Against the bureaucratic-hierarchical organization of science, which hides and distorts the truth!

As shown above, reading the book evokes associations with another book dedicated to the proper organization of society. And this is not even A. Smith's book "The Wealth of Nations", following which J. Raven wrote the book 'The New Wealth Of Nations', or M. Bookchin's book "The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy", to which J. Raven repeatedly appeals. Let us give one more fragment: "If it is impossible to uproot false opinions, if, in your sincere conviction, you are not able to cure the vices that have become firmly entrenched in people's everyday life, then because of this you should not leave public affairs, just as you should not abandon a ship in a storm, since you cannot withstand the winds. But it is impossible to force new and unusual reasonings on people who hold opposing beliefs, since these reasonings will have no weight for them; you must strive in a roundabout way to accomplish everything successfully to the best of your ability, and to make what you cannot turn into good at least as less bad as possible. After all, everything can't be good if all people are not good, and I don't expect that it will happen just a few years in the future." (our translation from Latin). And it really didn't happen, and not only after a few years, but also after several centuries. Indeed, these are lines from T. More's book "Utopia," published in 1516 [18].

J. Raven devoted many years to studying the causes of such a phenomenon as the self-destruction of homo sapiens, expressed in actions directed against human ecology, not only leading to life in an unhealthy environment and in a stressful psychological environment, but also threatening the extinction of humans as a species. The necessary changes in psychology, proposed by J. Raven, should be aimed at identifying the social forces leading to this situation, mapping them and identifying ways to overcome their negative effects, that is, to overcome the incompetence of modern society.

The subtitle of T. More's book in Latin looks like this: "Libellus vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festivus, de optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia" - "A truly golden little book, not less beneficial than enjoyable, about how things should be in a state and about the new island Utopia". Following the same logic, the subtitle of J. Raven's book "The Incompetence of Modern Society" could be as follows: "On the incompetence of society, on committees of the ignorant, on the mapping of invisible social forces and their harnessing for the survival of humanity as a species along with the planet."

A presentation of the book in Russian was posted by the author on the ResearchGate website:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/370410952_Dz_Raven_NEKOMPETENTNOST_SOVREMENNOGO_OBSHESTVA_konceptualizacia_ugrozy_preodolenie_Perevod_s_angl_Arygin_O_N_httpwwwtntpressru_Incompetence_of_Modern_Society_Russian

(Raven J. INCOMPETENCE OF MODERN SOCIETY: conceptualization, threats, overcoming. Translation from English: Yarygin O.N. <http://www.tntpress.ru/> (Incompetence of Modern Society, Russian) [16].

About the high quality of the publication books by the publishing house "Thin Science-Intensive Technologies", say the enthusiastic reviews of J. Raven's colleagues and publishers, who received the printed edition and compare it with books published in the UK and the USA. These reviews were conveyed by J. Raven along with his gratitude to the publishing house "Thin Science-Intensive Technologies". "(Stary Oskol), on whose website the book is available to researchers. (<http://tntpress.ru/nekompotentnost-sovremennogo-obschestva-konceptualizaciya-ugrozy-preodolenie>).

Instead of a conclusion

The deep roots of the ideas presented in the books reviewed can be found in the earlier works of J. Raven 'Education, Values and Society' [21] and 'Managing_Education for Effective_Schooling: The Most Important Problem Is to Come to Terms with Values' [22]. But as J. Raven himself noted in a discussion with the authors of this paper:

“The competence stuff is there, but the book is too much focused on education to form the first part of the trilogy. What should have formed the last chapter did not get written in time but was published separately as *The Most Important Problem in Education is to come to terms with values* ...which in turn led to *Managing Education* [for Effective_Schooling].” (12/4/2023).

So, in the reviewed books, which make up a trilogy about the adventures of the concept of “competence” and the phenomenon of competence itself in a modern learning or evading learning society, J. Raven tries to open the eyes of modern researchers to the development of society as an autopoietic system and to the continuous and unstoppable desire of this society to self-destruction in a global sense. He encourages researchers to focus more on external social forces, and especially on the dynamic networks of such forces that shape people's behavior.

By neglecting the study of society on the principles and approaches proposed by J. Raven and many of his like-minded researchers modern society is demonstrating its incompetence more and more sharply.

The history of the adventures of competence could be supplemented by a continuation named “Adventures of Competence in Russia”, for example, the works of the authors of this paper “From “competence” to “компетентность (competentnost)”: the evolution of the basic terms of the competency-based approach” [23], and 'Modeling of Competence as a Tool of Goal Setting for Education in Modern Society' [24], but this is a topic for another study related to the natural entry and administrative implementation of foreign language terms into the Russian language. Let us cite only the paradoxical conclusion of the author of the treatise “The Doctrine of Judgment, Concept and Inference” by H. von Sigwart, made more than a century ago, but as if made regarding the term under discussion: “Science strives to achieve the most possible result with the help of concepts, and not designations to achieve greater simplicity and *shortening in the presentation of our knowledge* and therefore it poses the question: “How should concepts be formed in order to make possible the simplest expression of the most valuable and most comprehensive general judgments?” [19, p.280]. The words from the preface by I. A. Davydov, the translator of the first volume of H. von Sigwart’s “Logic” into Russian, sound surprisingly topical: “The truly sad state of philosophical terminology in the Russian language is too well known to be any particular need to dwell on it. Even quite competent representatives of Russian philosophical thought, not to mention *a host of incompetent ones*, often convey the same terms in different ways. This is just another touch of our general lack of culture. Such a serious matter as the development of philosophical terminology in Russian cannot be left to the will of a spontaneously developing process. And it would be high time for our *competent philosophical spheres* - in the foreground of the Academy of Sciences - to put the end to this impossible terminological confusion: the duty of a scientist and philosopher obliges us to do this” (*our italic*) [19, p. 21]. The above lines were written in 1908 and refer to the terminology of logic as a scientific discipline, but can be attributed to the situation with the basic terms of the competency-based approach in modern education. Let us note that the words are addressed rather to “*competent philosophical spheres*” than to “*a host of incompetent ones*”.

Conclusion of Doctor of Psychological Sciences, M.A. Kholodny, summarizing the first part of the trilogy, is as follows: "...competence is not reduced only to the accumulation of experience in some highly specialized subject area (otherwise, where is the line between competence, according to J. Raven, and "professional cretinism," according to Marx, when a person is fatally and irreversibly confined to one specific type of activity?). Therefore, competence in the broad sense of the word (namely, this is the kind of competence Raven speaks about) presupposes the general intellectual development of a person and, in particular, the formation of the basic components of a person's mental experience: at the level of cognitive experience - mechanisms for effective processing of information (including conceptual structures), at the level of metacognitive experience - mechanisms of involuntary and voluntary regulation of the work of one's own intellect, at the level of intentional experience - mechanisms of individual selectivity of intellectual activity, allowing one to finely balance the characteristics of own mind with the objective requirements of the surrounding reality"[20].

Thus, modern psychology accepts and confirms the understanding of competence as a "system of motivated abilities" based on cognitive, metacognitive and intentional experience. Moreover, competence turns out to be a social phenomenon, associated with individual qualities and socially determined values and goals of activity. Therefore, in education, the formation of competence should occur simultaneously with the intellectual education of students, which involves the enrichment of the mental experience of each individual in the direction of the growth of his "intellectual productivity and the growth of the individual uniqueness of his mentality".

At the same time, as a red thread through the entire J. Raven's "trilogy" runs the idea of the social responsibility of psychologists for understanding the destructive role that psychology can play in society. Indeed, "everything that has been written about the existence of a social demand for a scientific and psychological "substantiation" of the legality of the stratification of people based on their socio-economic and professional status, the prerequisites for the appearance of seemingly educated, but actually incompetent people in influential positions, etc. ., - all this is written about Britain and its problems. But when you read the book, it seems that it is about Russia and our problems." [20]. Written more than twenty years ago, the quoted words of Professor M.A. Kholodnaya, a leading researcher at the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, really point out the *painful wounds* of modern Russian and world society. It's hard not to notice the subtle sarcasm in the last paragraph of her preface to J. Raven's book on pedagogical testing: "... if we project J. Raven's ideas onto the problem of the competence of a practical psychologist, then we must admit that for everyone who specializes in measuring certain human qualities, the opportunity to grow his professional competence is, fortunately, *limitless*." [20]. Here the words of Mark Twain immediately come to mind: "The knowledge that the ancients did not possess was truly *limitless*." ('The information the ancients didn't have was very voluminous' *The Innocents Abroad*).

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