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Prof. Ph.D. Sorin-Tudor Maxim

Lecturer Ph.D. Bogdan Popoveniuc

Assist. Ph.D. Marius Cucu

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Prof. univ. dr. Sorin-Tudor Maxim

Lector univ. dr. Bogdan Popoveniuc

Asist. univ. dr. Marius Cucu

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Philosophical Issues

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Volume II

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RESEARCH PAPERS

Theoretical-Philosophical Filters for Tolerance Analysis in Contemporary World

Sorin – Tudor MAXIM, *Professor Ph.D.*
Department of Philosophy and Social and Political Sciences
Faculty of History and Geography, “Ștefan cel Mare”
University of Suceava, Romania
E-mail: maximsorintudor@yahoo.com

Abstract

Tolerance represents the minimal condition for a reunited humanity at a hypothetical “round table”, for a responsible identification of solutions that potentiate our common future: diverse, but united through humanity. To accept that tolerance might be a possible premise for a new understanding of human interactions, both at the individual level and especially at the level of communities or/and different cultures, its analysis calls for an unconventional approach, like seeking out what tolerance is not, rather than what it is, or by analyzing what the challenges of violence are.

Keywords: *tolerance, community, indulgence, violence, cohabitate.*

Accepted or not as a moral value, and considered in the dawn of the post-modernity a basic principle of a new minimalist ethics or “a necessary evil”, and even “an immoral solution” that would establish the reign of the arbitrary and relativism in the social environment, tolerance will indubitably remain one of the greatest challenges for expressing humanism in a world dominated by violence and uncertainty.

Uncertainty evokes meanings and raises questions that do not ask for only one answer, but answers; questions that do not expect only one solution, but merely indicate that only complex solutions exist for complex situations. Therefore, the call for tolerance might represent the minimal condition for a reunited humanity at a hypothetical “round table”, for responsible identification of solutions that potentiate our common future: diverse, but united through humanity.

What tolerance is not? To accept that tolerance might be a possible premise for a new understanding of human interactions, both at the individual level and especially at the level of communities or/and different cultures, one must seek out

what tolerance is and what it means for the contemporary world.

One often feels that he or she can emphasize something more efficiently by describing that what that something *isn't*, rather than what it might be. Therefore, *what tolerance is not* represents a question that requests for a possible answer even from those who are skeptical about tolerance's moral and social values.

Tolerance is not consent. "Consenting to others cannot be named tolerance; it is nothing but a form of consensuses"¹, asserts Andrei Pleșu in an interesting debate about the intolerable. Tolerance is something else. You do not tolerate actions with which you resonate or agree. The tolerance is, on the contrary, the acceptance – always critical – of what displeases you, towards which you might show substantial arguments to dissociate; these actions are not carried out by respecting the individual's rights of identification and differentiation existing between the limits of the humanity. The tolerance represents a solution, socially convenient of a disagreement.²

It is not relativism. Tolerating does not signify an agreement, but an acceptance that a person might be neither the owner of the entire truth, nor of the absolute truth. Mircea Dumitru unequivocally asserts in the same debate that tolerance should also be learned, because fallibility is part of our epistemological condition: we don't have access to a doubtless and absolutely realistic knowledge about the most important issues specific to the moral, religious and political life of the communities we belong to. Our moral and political opinions, which we appreciate and consider the most, are entitled to be sustained sincerely and for good reasons, though these might be wrong and would be reasonable for us to accept the opinions of those who do not share our engagements and the fact they are also entitled to sustain, according to their own justifications, opposite opinions.³

These are the reasons for which religions have a problem with being tolerant, because they justify themselves through a reference towards absolute truths. That is why, the Church is reticent in accepting the idea of tolerance, preferring the lenity with its "brotherly acceptability" variant: I do not tolerate, *I accept you* (beside me) even forever, waiting patiently for you, so as to discover the right path. To tolerate, according to the religious acceptance, means admitting that the truth held is incomplete, that it can be readjusted, which means it seeds mistrust in

¹ Andrei Pleșu, *Toleranța și intolerabilul. Criza unui concept (Tolerance and The Intolerable. The Crisis of a Concept)*, LiterNet Publishing House for html version, 2005.

² *Ibidem.*

³ Mircea Dumitru, "De ce trebuie să fim toleranți?" (Why Must We Be Tolerant?), in Andrei Pleșu, *op. cit.*

the Holy Faith, having even connotations of blasphemy.

It is not indulgence. Tolerance has nothing to do with that irresponsible and blamable indulgence towards everyone and everything: the answer to evil is *not the evil* (or “that more evil”), but severity, as determination that leaves no room for the lack of decision or the non-implication.

It is not love for your fellow being. On the contrary, you tolerate what is not next to you. Love, like responsibility, by the way, is based upon an asymmetrical relationship: it doesn't matter if the other one loves me; that will be his / her problem; love confiscates, it's tyrannical, it's unidirectional. If love is unconditional, tolerance supposes reciprocity: “I accept you, as long as you also accept me”. Love is irrational, mystical, non-mutual in determination. It doesn't matter if the loved one returns my feelings; that will be his/her problem; my problem is that it's not I choosing to love; I can't help it, in a way, I am condemned to love.

When you experience difficulties in terming a phenomenon, it will be helpful to compare it with its fundamental opposite. Or, the opposite of tolerance is violence, not intolerance as commonly thought. Tolerance itself can be, paradoxically, intolerance: for example, inadmissible behaviors that belong to the subhuman acts, such as barbaric oppression of some communities by others, or abusing the less favored or defenseless persons, especially children (paedophilia). A report of UNESCO indicates what is needed towards those behaviors: *Zero tolerance!* It ends where the other's rights are no longer respected, where the respect towards other persons is no longer guaranteed, and where the conflict puts world peace at risk.

We are not born to be tolerant. On the contrary, our entire history demonstrates that we are aggressive species. Of course, aggressiveness is not violence, but it certainly represents *a tendency to violence*.⁴

The main objective of this study is to find out in what way the tendency to violence is written in our own genetic code; or, is it due to socialization or both, meaning that this tendency, being co-substantial to us, has considerably increased during our historical becoming. K. Lorenz sustains the first point of view, while E. Fromm states that significant amount of data from neuropsychological domains, animal psychology, paleontology and anthropology don't confirm the hypothesis that the human being is naturally gifted with a spontaneous and self boosting

⁴ Sorin-Tudor Maxim, “Violența – criză de umanitate?” (Violence – Crisis of Humanity?), in *Violența în sport (Violence in sport)*, coord. Sorin-Tudor Maxim, Dan Ioan Dascălu, Bogdan Popoveniuc, Eusebiu Ionescu, “Ștefan cel Mare” University Press, Suceava, 2006, p. 9 and next.

tendency to aggressiveness.⁵

The Challenges of Violence. The first challenge is that of trying to answer this question: Is the violence orientation part of our human nature or rather the result of the civilization and educational process? The question is fundamental to understanding the phenomenon and, especially, its consequences during the process of our becoming human beings.

In the first situation, we can only establish that, if it is naturally ours, we will not be able to avoid it, but, at most, we can handle it and eventually channel it to directions less harmful for our fulfillment through humanity. In this context, therefore, violence does not manifest in sports as an unnatural expression, but as a valve releasing our potential for aggressiveness with social and individual therapeutic valences. On the contrary, if the violence phenomenon is a result of education - and yet of a wrong one - then it is in the educational re-socialization (correctly done, this time) wherein resides our chance to register ourselves to a new era, of non-violence, like a starting point to a new fulfillment, truly human. In other words, it's in our power to re-evaluate the steps taken in our civilization process and to try to redo the path *in another manner*, able to potentiate a spiritual becoming unmarked by excessive aggressiveness.

Another challenge, not less important, resides in the fact that, if it is indeed difficult to make a definitive statement over the nature of violence phenomenon, we will not be able to avoid establishing that this accompanies - even characterizes - our whole history, past and present.

The foregoing statement is not meant to increase hope for something that will change the future of humankind. We will rather have to accept that everything shows that, if aggressive tendencies are a basic part of human nature, yet they are not common and, especially, they act violently only in specific social and historical circumstances: "Violence has its origin in human being and in human being's world, in this space that reunites people and puts them in contact and where they become rivals ... Here, the real source of this violence exists".⁶

If violence is indeed the result of circumstances, then the solution for its "organization" to become socially tolerable has to be searched for in the change and control of those circumstances.

At last, finding the means of keeping violent behaviors under control is also a challenge in a world that has to live today under the threat of extinction as species. We are witnessing today a mutation, which is more than dramatic in

⁵ E. Fromm, *La passion de détruire*, R. Laffont, 1975, p. 107.

⁶ François Chirpaz, *Enjeux de la violence*, CERF, 1980, p. 8.

expressing our human condition: the moment the atom bomb eclipsed Hiroshima's sun, the humankind is globally exposed to the danger of extinction. In those circumstances, finding a solution to establish a social control over violence is not a random option anymore, but a mandatory responsibility for the very future of mankind. Violence, in its excessive form, establishes a world of chaos and death, which is intolerable and dangerous for mankind's future. The society must organize violence into acceptable limits, at least, if it can't eradicate it. Organizing does not mean making it disappear from the social environment, because every society is more or less violent and has to deal with it on multiple levels; politics, family, sports and rituals are integral parameters of our daily common life. Organizing violence, therefore, means the same as controlling it, even if it means a lot.

Aggressiveness gives birth to some violent phenomena, as manifestations of physical or/and psychological oppression of some people, triggered by "primitivism" of impulsive-emotional reactions, especially when there is no attachment to a value system, or a moral. Therefore, the human communities' amplified preoccupations for channeling individuals' aggressive energies towards constructive social actions through education and awareness of moral deficiency might be a viable solution for managing violence. Social competitions – for professional, cultural-artistic and scientific fulfillment – especially sports competitions, can channel rivalry and consume individuals' aggressiveness, before they become destructive by generating violence and disorder.

Eventually, all this seems to indicate that, if aggressiveness belongs to the human nature, its conversion – or non-conversion - into violence is a matter of education.

Unfortunately, not only our entire history is one of violence, but the transmission of the historical experience of humanity through education also glorifies violent behaviors: honor means violence, heroism also – as our great layman legends teach; faith promotes Holy War to establish God's Will on Earth and God Himself behaves violently when He has to punish humankind's sins – the great religions teach us.

Between Freud, who argues that we are aggressive species – violence being the extreme expression of aggressiveness – and René Girard, who considers violence an exclusively historical, cultural and educational product, there are softer, rather more direct interpretations too, which assert the same idea: violence is one of the greatest problems of contemporary world. And, a great problem means numerous perspectives and analytical hypotheses, and therefore, more

possible answers. This raises many questions: How do we deal with the violence phenomenon, today?” Is there an entitlement to violence: the revolt? Is violence the foundation of humanity, and, therefore, unavoidable? Or, is it just an alternative, which unfortunately the civilization has opted for until now, although it can be replaced by another, non-violent, path, in future?

It's modern human naivety to believe that becoming “civilized” and “civilizing” the planet would end barbarity and violence. By imposing on the world what man calls ‘civilization’, he caused certain ways of life to diminish, even disappear, *but definitely not violence*, because violence does not diminish when it confronts knowledge development or powers offered by technology. It might seem that the individual has inborn aggressive tendencies, but manifests this aggressiveness by violence only in extreme situations imposed by historical and moral compulsions: “Therefore, aggressiveness would be conditioned upon the individual’s history, and, because social repression generates frustration, (it would be conditioned) upon the whole society.”⁷

Aggressiveness is not destructive by nature; on the contrary, it satisfies a vital need, ranging from sexual act or procurement of food to protection against the excesses of others or gaining social hierarchy promotion. In fact, it's not just an instinct, but, mostly, an *indispensable means* of satisfying an instinct: “Instinct itself is aggressive, because every tension needs to be satisfied”⁸ and, if the individual is refused satisfaction, the need to obtain remains; more than that, it becomes obsessive, generating the impulse of obtaining it *by all means*. Therefore, aggressiveness generates, in a man of frustration and repression, violent phenomena.⁹

Many authors, including Noël Mailloux or Wilhelm Reich, Freud's student, claim that aggressiveness has virtues, underlining that, if properly tempered, it is constructive, conferring “intensity”, and motivating, and infusing energy into human activities, especially under socially competitive circumstances. Rightfully, Nicolae Râmbu concludes that “Theoreticians of civilization have generally considered the violence functions of the modern society as a way of eliminating the tensions, which might not be controlled”.¹⁰

Even more, violence has creative attributes, which tolerance can hardly

⁷ François Stirn, *Violence and Power*, Hatier, 1978, p. 23.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

⁹ Dollard stated as early as 1933 that any frustration leads to aggressiveness, developing the so called *Aggressiveness Reactive Theory*.

¹⁰ Nicolae Râmbu, “Books Reviews, Vertrauen und Gewalt”, *Cultura. International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, Vol. VI, Nr. 1/ 2009, AXIS Publishing House, Iași, p. 219.

claim.

In a deconstructionist interpretation of the phenomenon of violence, J. Derrida¹¹ distinguishes between creative violence, characteristic to all revolutionary situations – “unauthorized force” – and authorized violence. In fact, Derrida assumes one of Walter Benjamin’s old distinctions from “Critique of Violence”, who distinguishes between “force that makes the law” (that founder force of a social system) and “force that preserves the law”. Interpreted this way, it would seem that even terrorist violence is creative because it is the “force that makes the law” and, therefore, shouldn’t be captured within the limits of the law. Derrida, very firmly, solves the problem: if, in the case of violence characteristic to revolutionary situations, violence aims at establishing a new law and a new social whole, the terrorist “strategies” “open towards no future” and, therefore, “have no future”.¹²

We have chosen this analysis to demonstrate how difficult it is to navigate among the subtle traps we are confronted with when making a profound reflection on the negative nature, but also on the creative virtues of violence, especially when the meaning of the distinction between legal and illegal violence is not quite obvious.

Assuming the violence critique, in a memorable essay with the same title written around The World War II, Walter Benjamin does not hesitate to underline – which Derrida does not do – the fact that it is also possible to have a conflict in a non-violent setting: “To whatever legal and illegal means, that are all, without exception, violent, can be opposed, as pure means, the non-violent ones”.¹³ Moreover, Benjamin also identifies the means that can, *as a principle*, eliminate violence from human relationships: courtesy, sympathy, peace and, especially, dialogue.

In conclusion, it is underlined that if our present-and-past history is the result of an education for violence, there are premises realistic enough to appreciate that we can hope for a non-violent future, which enrolls us into *another kind of humanity*, where the conflicts are amiably solved and the contraries reach peaceful harmony.

All is, in the end, a matter of education, and a social pedagogy oriented

¹¹ *Apud* Giovanna Borradori, *Filosofie într-un timp al terorii. Dialoguri cu Jürgen Habermas și Jacques Derrida (Philosophy in a Time of Terror. Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida)*, Paralela 45, 2005, p. 245.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 248.

¹³ W. Benjamin, “Critica violenței” (Violence Critique), in W. Benjamin, J. Derrida, *Despre violență (About Violence)*, Cluj, 2004, p. 15.

towards non-violence, which may start with the identification of a possible cultural pattern for tolerance education.

Reference points for a humanistic project for education towards tolerance.

We do not live in a secure world: by increasing the amount of scientific, cultural and, generally, social progress, the risk factors are increasing. The future of humankind depends on a tolerant attitude in the present.¹⁴

Learning to cohabitate. From the beginning we should start our long life together in apprenticeship: “Living with the other, living as the other of the other one is a fundamental human duty, both at a large and a small scale. The way we learn to live with the others when we grow up and make our entrance into the life, as it says, is true for the greatest human communities, for nations and states, as well.”¹⁵ We must learn to respect others also for what they have that is different from our own cultural experience. What is different from our human experience is not necessarily inferior or hostile but, mostly, a source of enrichment for our own knowledge and lifestyle. For that, we must, therefore, educate ourselves to keep our own cultural prejudices, stereotypes and idiosyncrasies under control, because it is not easy to admit, often against our own interests, that the other one might be right.

Inter-cultural dialogue is admitting that there is no unique truth or, more exactly, that the truth emerges from the confrontation of divergent opinions and that harmony results from the plurality of forms of manifestations of the humanity within us. There is no alternative, in the cultural monologue of some intolerant, even fanatic, ethnic manifestations, to a degradation source of the humanity within us and the world.

The dialogue between cultures. Second, the education towards cultural dialogue is definitive. Dialogue is the territory that describes what is best at the core of tolerance. “The dialogue is people turning towards themselves, God, nature, culture and history: the only way for interrupting the power and superpower relationship, and the only way towards a common life of all beings. I, that exists in its own way into this world, is the one that asks. You, meaning all things and beings that exist in different ways, give answers. There are no thoughts about I without thoughts about You. Difference gives birth to our truths.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Sorin-Tudor Maxim, *Toleranța. Dreptul la diferență (Tolerance. The Right to Difference)*, Didactică and Pedagogică Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 114 and next.

¹⁵ H.-G. Gadamer, *Elogiul teoriei. Moștenirea Europei (Theory Praise. Europe's Inheritance)*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1999, p. 121.

¹⁶ Giuro Șușnici, *Dialog și toleranță (Dialogue and tolerance)*, trans. Nicu Ciobanu, Libertatea Publishing House, Panciova, 1999, p. 67.

The experience of divergence proves that dialogue is necessary throughout the ages and cultures, even if, to this very day, we deeply realize how much our common history, our becoming into humanity, owes to the spiritual meeting through cultural dialogue. World culture gains originality and vigor within and through this dialogue process. Rejecting intercultural dialogue means a limitation to the possibility of learning something new, of enriching one's own culture. The one that identifies himself only with the values of his own culture, blind and deaf to other cultures, is condemned to no longer evolve spiritually: "That's why the dialogue *is a quality of a superior culture* which is open and creative."¹⁷

Dialogue is always a way to exchange each culture that enters into contact receiving and offering ideas, value systems and alternate ways of life. Through communication, people learn to cohabitate: "if they do not love each other, at least they bear with each other. The nation that does not learn from other people is devoid of any hope of development: all people contribute to the development, otherwise progress would not even exist"¹⁸. An autarchic culture, isolated from the world value circuit, becomes an "enclaved" culture, to the limit: a poor, unhealthy and petrified culture. What also keeps us "in good shape" is the cultural, linguistic, religious and economic cohabitation. In the absence of exchange, cultures decay spiritually in the same way that people who abuse exchange and have consanguine sexual rapports (or inside some limited social groups) decay genetically.

Third, the minimal condition for manifestation of tolerance is *mutual trust*. Kant, in *For Eternal Peace* underlines that, to be able to extinguish a conflict, for reconciliation to be realized, there has to exist *minimal trust* in the adversary's good faith. Or, trust can't exist in the absolute stranger, in the one described, from the beginning, as "absolutely different from me". We must invest the other one with the benefit of good faith and, especially, to grant, at least till proved otherwise, our entire trust. We must, also, recognize ourselves in his individuality. "This vicinity of the other one is in peace with us too, despite any other individuality. It is also the individuality that asks and contributes to its own meeting with the I. We all are «the others» and we all *are ourselves*."¹⁹ It's obviously easier to tolerate individuality if we recognize the other one within ourselves. The Bulgarian scholar Julia Kristeva²⁰ proposes that we should see the world as an association of strangers. And, if we all are strangers, it would be much easier not to oppress the stranger, because we all are strangers on this Earth; and, it

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

¹⁹ H.-G. Gadamer, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

²⁰ See Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991.

would be much easier to invest the strangers with our minimal trust because we recognize ourselves within them.

Fourth, tolerance as a way of living can be described as the art of *acceptable compromise*, obviously not any kind of compromise, because there are situations that must not be accepted under any circumstances – such as sexual or any other kind of abuse of children – but that kind of compromise which is based on *mutual concessions*. Acceptable compromise means, above all, *reciprocity*. Describing his personal experience within the American multiculturalism, Michael Walzer asserts that tolerance as an attitude and tolerance as a practice are the unquestionable solutions, which can make possible the peaceful coexistence of groups with different identities, histories and cultural patterns.

“Tolerance is not the way towards universal rational understanding and harmony but, more like a necessary *modus vivendi*”²¹ Where reasonable concord proves to be impossible, where procedural or moral dilemma makes reason inoperative, the appeal to tolerance may realize the reasonable compromise by reconciliation of some different, and even contradictory, ways of life: “I understand the spirit of tolerance this way ... as *reasonability and fair measure in building and maintaining the human civilization as unity in diversity*. Put this way, the spirit of tolerance may be tested by cultivating the value of pluralism and multiculturalism acceptance, the democratic inclusion of minorities, the recognition of their identities and the respect for social «righteousness spheres»”.²² Tolerance, Michael Walzer tells us, makes difference possible, and difference makes toleration necessary.

But, for the differences to be maintained inside the frame of a peaceful coexistence, they must be enrolled into a “moral” community by which Walzer understands a social space – time and cultural assembly where the individuals live united by goodwill, lenience, indulgent attitudes and shared practices. Tolerance makes possible the peaceful coexistence of groups of people with different histories, with different cultures and identities. In this context, education – mostly by the institutionalized system – has a huge importance for the manifestation of a tolerant spirit. Society must ask the school for a multicultural education: “...the multicultural point of view is to teach children about everyone’s culture, to bring the society’s pluralism...into the classrooms”²³

Analyzing the situation of the American educational system, Michael Walzer

²¹ Anton Carpinski, Introductory study at Michael Walzer, *Despre tolerare*, Institutul European, Iași, 2002, p. III.

²² *Ibidem*, p. XI.

²³ Michael Walzer, *Despre tolerare (About Toleration)*, Institutul European, Iași, 2002, p. 66.

insists on the need for a distinct program of educating children in the spirit of inter-culturalism, appreciating that state schools must be used too for *reinforcing community identities threatened or disadvantaged*. More than that, multicultural education must concentrate not on teaching children what means to be different, but teaching the children who are diverse – by social, cultural, religious or racial origin – how *to be correctly different*. The school system must cultivate, on one side, the common identity, and, on the other one, our right to be different, the respect for the others, different than us, but not less humans.

Fifth, we must be aware that *we are condemned to live together*. When we have each other, it is sometimes hard to tolerate each other; but, it would be far worse, instead, to be lonely. If the other one wouldn't exist, he would have to be invented; just for filling our loneliness and making it bearable.

Tolerance is another name for the respect of the others' right to a place under the sun – with their language, culture and lifestyle, whether we appreciate it or not. It means replacing exclusion with cooperation, any cultural “enrolment” project with desire for mutual understanding and acceptance.

If we are, anyway, destined to coexist, at least let us make this *living together* as comfortable and spiritually profitable as we can.

Our civilization is fulfilling by repudiating the tendencies of eliminating the other one, other than me: “Civilization will cease when it will no longer be the carrier of the thinking act tension towards the limits of its individuality. What the other stranger brings as unbearable is what she has to think without stopping.”²⁴

Thereby, the individuals, but also the community, are subject to permanent renewing and reinvigoration of their way of living, too. Welcoming the stranger and integrating him/her in your lifestyle is a sign of maturity and cultural strength. Many cultures are born into spiritual intersections; never into unhealthy and depressing solitude. We need each other even just for disturbing each other. A comfortable existence gives birth to an even spirit. By disturbing each other, we stimulate each other, we compete, we create; in other words, we live more intensively, we live more truly.

At last, it is necessary to underline that a good interculturality, essentially founded on a tolerant spirit, is deeply compatible with the promotion of our national identity.

Great nations, that have gone down in history and that have indeed made history, are multicultural nations. Maybe that is why they were and are truly

²⁴ Alain Deniau in Claude Sahel, *Toleranța. Pentru un umanism eretic (Tolerance. For a Heretic Humanism)*, Trei Publishing House, Iași, 2001, p. 69.

“great”: because they knew how to harmonize their cultural differences, because they succeeded in building their national identity on intercultural dialogue, because they increased their spiritual wealth through peaceful and wise confrontation between distinct lifestyles. Therefore, the dominant national identity is not built on the rejection of the other cultural lifestyles with which the main culture is confronted, but on a successful synthesis of a plurality in a coherent cultural reality and with a universal value. In our moments of wisdom, we become fully aware that our national identities do not appear in opposition with other cultures but from the *encounters that enriches us in all ways*.

Let us keep the faith that those moments of consciousness will prevail in situations when, for various reasons, the national spirit unreasonably inflames, degenerating into national arrogance, which is histrionic, but equally dangerous.

The supreme hope of tolerance is to substitute dialogue for intransigence; but, there has to be a dialogue partner – another culture. Thereby, tolerance makes possible the passage of an autarchic culture to multiculturalism and, from there, to interculturalism, the cultural paradigm that is most promising and rich for the human kind. Tolerance is a rational attitude, willing but wary; accepts, even if disagrees, in the name of understanding the human being’s right to difference and identity. This will happen if tolerance expresses its right of choosing a way for fulfilling the human, and not being against it.

There are enough arguments to give place for tolerance in our world’s values system, a fact that would identify new priorities or value hierarchies and would lead our fulfillment as humanity.

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Several Arguments For and Against Superintelligence/“Singularity”

Ionuț ISAC, *Senior researcher, PhD*
Department of Philosophy, Institute of History “G. Barițiu”
Romanian Academy Branch Cluj-Napoca
isac.ionut@cluj.astral.ro

Abstract

We are only at the dawn of a technological revolution in informatics, robotics and computer sciences. However, we try to imagine how our world will look years, decades and centuries after. In this respect, one of the boldest ideas ever advanced by researchers is that of singularity, understood as the result of a very sudden and fast technological progress, leading humankind to the possibility of building a supposedly more-intelligent-than-humanity “almighty” machine. Such an extremely complex technical system endowed with an enormous potential is actually seen as a possible solution to humanity’s most difficult problems (i.e. as an entity capable of forever solving issues, in view of the best desirable future of homo sapiens).

But how could one sustain this position? Among expressed fears and desires, exercises of imagination and speculations of all kind, many arguments have been formulated for and against the rise of superintelligence/singularity, that deserve a serious discussion. The purpose of this paper is to comment on several of them, according to some positions already implicitly or explicitly affirmed. In our view, the subject of singularity is able to rise from a simple scholar talk up to the highest levels of ontological and philosophical analysis. Thus, the paper advances and supports the thesis that, from the point of view of the nowadays philosophy of technology, one is compelled to rethink Kant’s antinomies, rephrased according to the subject in discussion: the “singularity” is possible (and, consequently, will emerge) – the “singularity” is not possible (and, consequently, it will not emerge).

Keywords: *singularity, machines, superintelligence, evolution, trans-humanism.*

1. Let us begin with the following idea: theoretically, if a human-built machine could be brought to bear greater problem-solving and inventive skills than humans, then it may be able to design a yet more capable machine. If built, this “more-capable-machine” then could design a machine of even greater capability

(and so on). This iteration could accelerate, leading to a “recursive self-improvement”, i.e. to an “intelligence explosion” (I. J. Good).

Firstly, we have to say that there is no certainty that such a machine, once reaching a very high degree of intelligence, complexity and speed of its actions, would still be capable or willing to design a different machine, “better” than itself. To sustain such an idea would be nothing else than applying pure induction, inspired by the assumption that the “classy” generations of intelligent machines must aspire for “perfection” as their supreme goal. Can one be sure of that? And what would be the meaning of such a projection? Once we know, in principle, how machines do work nowadays, as well as how humans use to cope with “better-and-better”, it is much harder to yield the road to such a simplistic overview. Who could guarantee us that, for instance, maybe because of some inherent limits of our own, we are still not aware of some reasons of self-protecting on behalf of which the aforementioned “utmost-evolved-machine” would rather be tempted to stop itself somewhere in the process of “recursive self-improvement”? Consequently, a very intelligent machine may decide to multiply “in itself and by itself”, mainly at the same level of complexity already acquired, anticipating its evolution in “small steps”, according to the area of “problem-solving” within a paradigm.

Secondly, once having reached an outstanding level of intelligence, creativity and action, those machines might also decide to further create and develop some not “superior” but, on the contrary, rather “inferior” machines (however much more intelligent than humans), for the purpose of reserving for themselves an unassailable pre-eminence in the world for an unknown period of time (most probably, as long as possible). It may occur that those machines would not be willing to expose or endanger their outstanding place inside the whole of the existence; or, if once having decided to build a machine “more capable” than them, this could mean exactly as to design their future disappearance. Nothing can prevent us from imagining that those “classy” machines would prefer to communicate with their inferior ‘mates’ as well as with “accompanying” humans in terms of “lower” knowledge, keeping the “supreme” truths and axioms just for their own benefit, with no direct implication toward their alleged interest on possible extinction of *human sapiens*.

In this respect, one must rethink the metaphysical system of the Romanian thinker Lucian Blaga (1895-1961), whom develops a very peculiar and long ranging metaphysical explanation, starting with a high-level hypothesis on the nature of existence: i.e. the concept of the “Great Anonymous” with its “transcendent censorship”. The “Great Anonymous” denotes an entity “centre” or

the “core” of transcendence. (Blaga stated that this is just a possible name, and that one could easily find others; what is essential is to refrain from interpreting it anthropologically, by assigning attributes to it). The Great Anonymous represents the “central existential mystery”, defending forever “the derived mysteries” from human knowledge (i.e. it means the self-imposed, absolute, and eternal mystery).

Thus, the Great Anonymous provides a barrier between man and mysteries – the so-called “transcendent censorship”, the metaphysical axis of knowledge; it is conceived as a “safety net” or a “firewall” (to use the language of informatics) between the human being as subject and the mysteries of the world as objects of knowledge. Due to this special kind of censorship, all human efforts to reveal mysteries and to obtain a “fully adequate knowledge” (i.e. the striving of all metaphysical systems in history) are in vain. The mysteries are never “revealed”, but only “dissimulated” by the transcendent censorship, so people are never aware of this complicated, somehow super-natural process. In other words, in principle, there is the possibility of *this* or *that* knowledge, but it is never possible for one to have *the knowledge* as knowledge of the object *in itself*.

Blaga does not bring logical arguments to defend his position, according to the tradition of classical metaphysics, since his attempt is a different one. As for the reasons of believing in the finality of this structure of existence, there are no ready-made “solutions”; but one must rather seriously consider the meaning of an entity (e.g. Great Anonymous, which could have other names) playing the role of *the cognitive and ontological centre of existence*. The question is: could the “Great Anonymous” be considered as a hidden technological “God”?

2. When speaking about singularity, another position hard to defend seems to be that of the so-called “infinite” (or extremely large) intelligence. How can one understand the content of this “infinity”? How does it apply to machines (computers, robots etc.)? The idea is that *if* and *when* some intelligent machines shall design other machines even smarter than themselves, this process will cause an exponential growth in machine intelligence, leading to “singularity”. But, as G. Hawkins posits, this idea is proliferated based on a naïve understanding of the nature of intelligence. What does it mean when one says “infinite intelligence”? The concept and idea of “infinity” has already set ground for a large number of mythological speculations. Is it, then, something related to the “space” of intelligence, to the time of its life or rather to the speed of its activity? Be it the last, subsequently it should be clear, at least for now, that there is no possibility to accelerate this speed endlessly (e.g. a computer processor or a software system *cannot* operate “infinitely” faster, because there are limitations for all of its

parameters). And, in fact, this is the crucial point: if there is no “infinite” acceleration of a machine’s functional parameters, then there is no “singularity” either, at least in the aforementioned meaning!

Upon this claimed “infinity” of the hyper-intelligent machines hinges the problem of their alleged “immortality”, i.e. the presupposition that, not being tied to any particular body, the software intelligence is essentially *immortal*. From this trait of their immortality, it has been inferred that the machines would not have neither the need to produce “off-springs” in order to perpetuate their artificial life, nor the experience of an evolutionary lust for love (or emotional feelings) – as Berglas points out. He writes that, in the future, the essential for intelligence is to stay alive, even after centuries (not the case of a human person, of course). The more hardware the artificial intelligence gains, the more intelligent it will become, obtaining again and again a better and bigger hardware. In the “end”, this will be “*the*” *intelligence*, indefinitely extended over space and time. But this way of reasoning looks like an anthropomorphical one, which means to judge on machines’ development in terms of human reproduction and competition. Again, it is very hard to argue the “immortality” of machines (no matter how ‘superior’ they can become compared to humans), because there are countless factors that may stop their evolution at any time (e.g. an unexpected malfunction caused by humans within their software program or by the machines themselves, a cosmic catastrophe like the collision of the Earth with asteroids or comets etc.). What can reasonably make us truly believe that a machine could stay “alive” *forever*? Are we not here rather projecting our ancient desire for eternal survival on these technical systems? As to the issue of perpetuating the artificial “species”, there is no reason to stop us from imagining these machines as being interested and motivated to create some kind of “descendants” with “inferior” qualities – but maybe not very much lower than those of their “parents”, on the purpose of giving them some more accessible tasks to fulfil (i.e. to keep the maintenance of certain systems, to explore unknown areas of the world, to evaluate critical situations in relationship with humans – potential dangers or conflicts – and send reports to the “central intelligence” etc.). Of course, the sexual desire and the feelings accompanying human reproduction are not to be found within this framework, but who can now tell precisely that what we call “affection” might not have something alike corresponding to the reproductive behaviour of those allegedly extremely evolved machines?

We might get a clue on this issue by comparing the problem of “superintelligence”/singularity with K. Popper’s evolutionary view on philosophy:

the “evolution” of philosophy through its history is a trans-generational one, i.e. different generations of philosophers are confronted with the same questions/problems and work to find answers/solutions. Similarly, different and (continuously improved) generations of machines are better and better prepared to face their tasks, able to correct their possible failures, to become more and more efficient, independent and intelligent.

Popper’s very well known schema of conjectures and refutations (see, for instance, *in extenso* works like *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* or *All Life is Problem Solving*) applies not only to the growth of scientific knowledge, since Popper extends it beyond science, to the field of philosophical theories. This schema assumes that theories can be improved, briefly illustrating the progress of scientific and technological knowledge over time. Thus, scientific theories undergo an *evolutionary process* characterized as follows¹:



Thus, given a problem (P_1), a trial solution (TS_1) is applied to the problem, for the purpose of attaining a very rigorous (even the most, if possible) attempt at falsification. The process of error elimination (EE) performs for science a function similar to that of the natural selection in the biological evolution. The result is a new problem (P_2) and so on. One can say that ‘surviving’ theories (as “off springs”) are not truer than their “ancestors”, but rather more “fit” or applicable to the initial problem PS_1 . Consequently, just as a species’ “biological fit” does not predict continuous survival, neither does rigorous testing protect a scientific theory from a possible future refutation; this may occur any time, every time when a counterexample is discovered.

We believe that the key-point of this schema is the evolution towards something better, be it an extremely evolved machine as an outcome of a multitude of improvements made by generations of its “ancestors”. Let us suppose that those technical “ancestors” were, one after another, results of severe tests and critical technological thinking. According to Popper, a successfully tested theory denotes a certain kind of progress, towards more and more *interesting problems* (P_2). The “interplay” between the trial solutions (conjectures) and error elimination (refutations) is for Popper what makes the scientific knowledge advance towards more and more sophisticated problems or, from the point of view of our subject, to more and more sophisticated and intelligent machines.

¹ See K. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 243.

3. Whereas a certain “trans-humanism” is concerned, one cannot avoid considering the problem of “cooperation” between humankind and those possible “super-intelligent” machines. Here, the point is that superintelligence is “different” and, however, superior to human capabilities of all kind. But how? Bostrom considers some of the unusual aspects of the creation of superintelligence:

- superintelligence may be the last invention humans ever need to make;
- technological progress in all other fields will be accelerated by the appearance of an advanced artificial intelligence;
- superintelligence will lead to more advanced superintelligence;
- artificial minds can be easily copied;
- emergence of superintelligence may be sudden;
- artificial intellects are potentially autonomous agents;
- artificial intellects need not have humanlike motives;
- artificial intellects may not have humanlike psyches.

Would, then, humans be left some room in the future? For instance, Bostrom discusses human extinction scenarios having superintelligence as a possible cause. One of them could occur in the event a “subgoal” would be mistakenly elevated to the status of a “supergoal” (e.g. in the process of resolving a difficult mathematical problem, the superintelligent machine can ‘forget’ about the limited status of the human specialist – the programmer – and perform actions which could endanger his/her life). Here we must ask another question: how far the machine can go in order to perform its tasks up to the “end”? There is no major obstacle to imagine ourselves that once such intelligence was “born” and put at work, the human capabilities should have been already sufficiently advanced to anticipate (almost) any possible collision between the demands addressed to machines and their responses, at least the most dangerous of their possible outputs. So, if Berglas points out that there is no direct evolutionary motivation for an AI to be *friendly* to humans (because an AI does not have human-like evolutionary traits), we can say that there is no direct evolutionary motivation for an AI to be *unfriendly* to us either. An extremely high intelligence should not have any major problem with understanding the kernel of human life, sympathizing with the major problems of humankind, though not as a “classical” biological creature. The demarcation line between these different positions is drawn over the question whether the machine would be not only intelligently enough developed to assume and perform unimaginable (or even unthinkable) tasks for humans, but also whether the “superintelligent” machine could become able to override the ethical commandments set in the processors by its programmers.

As a preliminary conclusion, we assert that different types of perception about the future of superintelligent machines are able to generate and nurture different visions, views and technological forecasts. To speak about “singularity” is, probably, to a larger extent, a question of how we are inclined to conceive the emergence of a possible world ruled by a supposedly extremely intelligent machine. If the coordinates of this process are seen under the fear of a possible oppressive evil system which eventually eliminates the “unnecessary” human being, then the technological ‘singularity’ would mean the end of humankind’s mission in the world. But if the path to singularity is conceived as paved with successful attempts by humans to understand those superintelligent machines and to reach for themselves a degree of intelligence high enough to reasonably cooperate with them, then the technological “singularity” could mean the progress of humankind towards a higher degree of evolution. Regardless of one’s preferred view, a lucid and critical discussion should always be welcomed in order to avoid falling into the trap of perpetuating a futile and sterile mythological story about people and machines.

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Edmund Husserl and the inauguration of phenomenology as distinct philosophical discipline

Marius CUCU, Assistant, PhD
Department of Philosophy, Social and Political Sciences
Faculty of History and Geography
“Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania
marius_cucu123@yahoo.com

Abstract

Phenomenology, as philosophical discipline, aims according to Edmund Husserl at the gnoseological dynamics of the human spirituality. The metaphysic meditations of René Descartes represent for the phenomenological thoughtfulness the body of fundamentals, from which a real reform can be generated at the level of human knowledge. Taking the model of methodical doubt, and prolonging it within the act of transcendental reduction, Husserl will insist upon the importance of the ego, as transcendental nucleus of the entire human individual awareness. Taking away all the knowledge and checking their grounding will be transposed by Husserl at the entire philosophical thoughtfulness level, so that only the rigorously grounded and rationally justified ideas will be accepted. Here, the rigorous filtering and reconsidering all intellect's data will lead towards its purification of presumptions and not argued thesis; the result of such ample demarche-censorship consists in a fundamental authentic thoughtfulness of analytical clarity of concepts.

Keywords: *Phenomenology, transcendental ego, methodic doubt, transcendental reduction, naive objectivism, subjectivism, ontic essence of censorship.*

Meditations of Descartes as founder model of the phenomenological thoughtfulness

Edmund Husserl considered the famous paper of René Descartes, meaning *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, also known as *Metaphysical meditations*, as the conceptual ground, on the strength of which an extremely rigorous structure of the phenomenology, as distinct philosophical discipline, can be issued. According to Husserl, this fundamental body reveals some conclusive thesis within the process of a profound resurrection at the philosophical thoughtfulness level, a

resurrection that leads the analytical thinking of that who thinks over from world's paradigm towards that of the own spirit. The phenomenological method and problems should launch the demarche of research starting from these first evidences, met within the Cartesian analysis. Husserl sees that the leading idea, the standard point around which the new perspective of Descartes gravitates, relies on emphasizing the necessity of a profound and complete reform of philosophy; such reform might be established only upon basis of understanding again the philosophy as science, with a rigorous and correctly justified ground, with an absolute conceptual basis that is undeniable. According to Descartes, as Husserl sees, all the sciences should thus assume such a resurrection of reevaluating, by aiming the research of own ground-work and full justification of them. The sciences are known here as segments, components of a universal discipline that includes, an identified discipline as regards the philosophy from Cartesian point of view. In this way, a hard-line reconstruction of philosophy will be firstly imposed. Husserl considers that for Descartes, such a major resurrection at philosophy's level can be accomplished by only conclusive reversal of the thematic aimed by the philosophical meditation. Redirecting of thoughtfulness was thus imposed, from the object towards the subject, from exteriority towards interiority. This redirecting towards the subject assumes according to Husserl, two conclusive stages. In a first stage of the meditative process, the act of thinker's own meditation is imposed. The thinker should suspend the gnoseological and ontological connections by the ample complexity of the world, where philosophy has become again a result of philosophizing, a personal process, and a demarche that fully belongs to individual interiority. The subject makes an analysis of his own now, and any people he knows will be reevaluated by the interiority perspective, as information gained and assumed by the active himself. Once accepted this new context of starting the meditation, *the poverty* should also be known, the poor information that subject cannot tolerate within own privacy. In order to go on for this direction and to regain the connections with the exteriority, connections proven to be real and the exteriority it is proven to be real, founding a method that can check the certitude of an conscience is imposed; this might also confer a strong and secure advance of the analytical demarche of the developed meditation. The evoked method within this context is that of doubt. Such method, according to Husserl, assumes placing any conscience under the interrogation spectrum, where this is from the start suspected as concerns the lack of a strong ground-work anchored in reality, by the absence of an authentic justification of own human being. Only when judiciousness meets an element whose presence excludes any possibility of doubt

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as regards his existence, the individual conscience can be invested within a reconstruction of mundanity placed on the basis of confirmed certainty. This element was indicated by the Cartesian thoughtfulness as representing the existence of own ego. In this way, by the method of doubt, a second stage of the process of reorientation towards the subject is accomplished. Husserl affirms that the Cartesian vision considers the certainty offered by the sensorial experience as being not enough and unable to resist to the doubt's demonstration. Within such context, the thinker considers himself as *absolutely indubitable as pure ego of his cogitations*, meaning of ego founder of internal certainties. From the phenomenological perspective and by confirming his existence, the ego has become the consciousness able *to establish within his pure interiority and objective exteriority*. It is about a gradual reacceptance of mundanity's components, according to their cognitive confirmation, assuming again the world as data on ego's perception. The creature and veracity of God, by admitting all metaphysical fundamentals of the entire complex of existence, come as a superior level simultaneously with using the rational doubt over each element, subsequently reaffirmed by the individual awareness. Husserl recognizes the interrogations and problems opened within the Cartesian thoughtfulness, as primordial frame for the phenomenology demarche, for both the model of meditative approaching technique and the ground matters postulated; among these things, the most important is represented by the proof and dynamics of subjectivity, the internal gnoseological and ontological activity of the ego.¹

Phenomenological solution for the modern spirituality crisis

Within the demarche of issuing the phenomenology as distinct philosophical discipline, Husserl starts with establishing a denaturalization of the entire culture and modern science. He also sees the manner by which the religion, simultaneously with the morning glories of the modernity, has become a social convention lacked of high primordial events and which has been repeating for the cultural and scientific activity. In this way, the expectations related to the ascendant evolution of these fields were deceptive. The science cannot achieve a clarification of own fundamentals and cannot assume any ways, an obvious and decisive path. It hesitates and alternates within the process of clarifying the own statute and the aims that should be assumed really steady.² The philosophy of 19th century admitted science as the only way by which the human being will be

¹ Edmund Husserl, *Meditații carteziene*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 31-33.

² *Ibidem*, p. 34.

released of superstitions and prejudices, thus going forward towards dead and banishment of God to an era of complete human being, of the *Super-Human being*, truthful to only the faithfulness in own resources and potentialities.³ One of the prophets of this era which estimated to be unavoidable, Friedrich Nietzsche, considered that only reporting to this paradigm of the human being matters, paradigm that imposed a total faithfulness of the terrestrial human being, paradigm that imposed a full faithfulness towards the vital impulses of the life, seen as a progressive organic process that excludes the tendencies to spiritualist perspectives supported by the great religions.⁴ According to Husserl, this optimist has proven to be unjustified during the subsequent path of the humanity, thus proving a substantial metaphysic indefinite character, an inanity of idea as regards founding some primordial fundamentals, not only for the science or culture, but also for the entire civilization. Referring especially to philosophy, Husserl considered that modern age offers the darksome perspective of a literature requesting to be philosophical, a literature that increases within an accelerated rhythm, but which is moving off constantly from the analytical profoundness of the spirit, of the profoundness of the authentic ideas. An unitary and coherent philosophy is missing, in a manner of thinking philosophically the own thoughtfulness, a returning of the meditative thoughts over the its functionality structures and mechanisms. To Husserl, the only choice that might be seen here as solution for coming out of such a crisis specific to philosophy and sciences, in generally, consists in coming back to the attitude of beginner philosopher, attitude assumed by the Cartesian thoughtfulness, by adopting the method of generalized doubtfulness. In this way, a precursory rejection is imposed to all defects, data and knowledge coming from the science and culture's sphere to a severe analysis of fundamentals carried out and supported. According to Husserl, the pretention of issuing a philosophy able to be issued by all auxiliary presuppositions, of all references and extensions adjacently called, should represent the authentic aim and sense of philosophizing. Such a new philosophy might be recognized as *autonomous*, being established by primordial or founder certainties. It might assume the maximum of responsibility over the own presence and actions within the humanist sciences, and also within the ample area of the general human knowledge. The phenomenology wishes to be a philosophical discipline, which tries to explore this universe of essentiality, of the eidetic founder of ontical and

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Așa grăit-a Zarathustra*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, p. 364.

⁴ Nikolai Berdiaev, *Încercare de metafizică eshatologică*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, pp. 41-42.

gnoseological complexes, of structures of the existence and awareness. It also aims especially towards placing any analytical speech on a stamp of a mathematical extension, by the exactness of means of achieving results and by final structuring of them. The part that Husserl admits for the Cartesian thoughtfulness is that of discussing the problems of human awareness, by redirecting the philosophical research *starting from the naive objectivism towards the transcendental subjectivism*.

The solution offered by the phenomenological perspective to the major crisis of modern culture consists in the impulse of following the doubt experience of Cartesian method, aiming towards the metaphysical naivety, where carrying out a process to human being awareness was anchored. Only the severe filtering of all awareness and of the entire area of information from all fields will allow the apprehending and definitive renouncing to false things and presuppositions initially assumed as true things. Such filtering is tough impossible, without accepting the famous *ego cogito* as infrastructure of any opened reevaluation within this kind of context.⁵ From subjectivity and within the dynamics of the internal side, a new and authentic research over the entire research and innovation spectrum of the human spirit can be established. The demarche of phenomenology is aimed to be, by the help of an impulse of going back to the essences of mundanity and human being, a reactivation of profoundness and lucidity potential that was shuttered within the human awareness by constantly neglecting the part of human conscience and interiority, within the research assembly of human thoughtfulness.

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Form and Conceptual Transfiguration in Art

Vlad-Ionuț TĂTARU, *writer,
independent researcher,
tataruvro@yahoo.com*

Abstract

In this article we try to reveal the spiritual virtues of the artistic form showing that, by means of the transition from the natural form to the one built by the creator, the evolution from a neutrally paradigmatic concept (which may be found between the eidos created by the divine intellect) to an axiologically elaborated and vested one (“born” within the creator’s deepest self) is carried out as well. The artistic step, whereby the utensil is aesthetically taken (from its pragmatic use), allows for a genuine conceptual transfiguration, an inclusive excellence designed for a spiritual integration with a universal goal. To this aim, three short examples highlight the rationality of art and its spiritual teleology.

Keywords: *form; concept, art, transfiguration, artistic step.*

Between the concrete expressive categories, beauty can generally take in representative arts, the form plays probably the most important role as it succeeds in embodying the feature of essentiality conveyed not only by the technical hierarchy of aperceptive phenomenology of the purely aesthetical contemplative act, but mostly by the order of significance imposed by the exigency of comprehension, correlated as well to the needs of composition. Colours, proportions and harmony pass to the background assuming a functional dependence toward the requirements of the beautiful form, thus subordinately integrating to the creative logic, which dedicates to this value landmark a load of significance and a thematic concentration according to its right of pre-eminence. To the extent that they serve the form, these related elements enrich the image presented to the aesthetic appreciation with particularising nuances, which enhance the expressiveness of the schematic outline, of the general, of the essence, reflecting the more abstract model, which consists exclusively of contours through a process of suggestive individuation. They help the form to gain identity; they

make the definition more concrete and prepare the vivid relation the contemplating spirit entertains with the work and its message by means of their evocative force. By contrast, the pure form opens the gate to the world of ideas to the aesthetic taste, it reveals the essence hidden behind any phenomenality, and it brings to the foreground the eidetic nucleus of what can be but represented, “played”, incarnated in the work. In the beautiful arts (painting, sculpture, architecture), the essences descend “in the body”; they are accessible by means of intuition and they encrypt in their overflowing content of the aesthetic fact the typical, invariable configuration of the general. The form makes the transition from the visual to the spiritual, embodying the noble “impoverishment” without which one cannot speak rigorously of ideality, structure, abstractness. Strained with materiality, the artistic phenomenon survives by means of the play of pure forms, by the universal significance that can be conveyed from the reality of its appearances (its concrete images).

Hence, despite the claims of the exclusivist aestheticism, which could imagine a kind of contemplation designed to an appreciation of form independent of concept), there is an indissoluble relation between the two, underlined by Immanuel Kant, which does not only rule over the laws of the faculty of judgement but also, according to a model recoverable in nature, the canons of the creative ritual of the artist. It is accepted that the intellect, according to the “simple necessity of its nature, meant to produce certain forms”¹, creates for the faculty of judgement “forms suitable to the incarnation of a concept.”² On the other hand, the form is in an intimate correlation with the concept due to role of cause which the latter comes to play (searching for the origin of the natural object “within a cause whose capacity to act is determined by means of concepts”, while its form needs to be “possible only by virtue of the laws of nature, that is of the laws we are able to know only by means of the intellect applied to objects of the senses, but for their empirical knowledge itself, compliant to their cause and effect, to assume concepts of reason”³). This is an idealist processed variant of the Aristotle’s notion of “formal cause” which, together with the “final cause”, illustrates the twofold manner of influencing by means of which, with the help of the divine hand, the concept “generates” the thing, combining quality with matter. Hence, the natural form follows the concept by virtues of their common origin and records a rational filiation all along the creation, which ties with invisible threads each existential

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critica facultății de judecare (Critique of judgment)*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1981, p. 339.

² *Ibidem*, p. 427.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 263.

detail to God's intellect. And the artistic form, gradually derived for the natural one, belongs to a network of conceptual knots, leaving both the subtleties of the expression and the notional manipulation at the creative man's mercy.

Initially close, the two types of form are growing apart as an independent aesthetic canon becomes clearer or as the artist detaches himself from a temporary legitimate mimesis, which may belong to a hard-to-avoid rigour of the conceptual framework ruling the rigours of expression. The artist, impressed by the natural beauty and guided by the conceptual heritage of transcendental extraction, has to face a reproductive task that translates the particular idea of each work in the universally artistic language where each contemplative nature finds itself. And he does so, while imitating the divine example, that he gives life to a noble inner projection by dressing the diffuse indeterminate of inspiration in constantly, clearly, intelligibly spiritual clothes. He thus takes the utensil from its strictly pragmatic functionality and turns it into artistic expression, vesting this appearance of immobility and limited objective relation with potentialities of significant evolution and with integrating perspectives, which bring it back to an order having a profoundly existential stake. Once this transition toward the aesthetic principle is done, "the form [...] has exceeded the utilitarian purpose of the adjusted object and has become form for form's sake, namely a work of art."⁴ Thus, "once the function is overcome, the form was free to develop according to the new aesthetic principles or laws [...]"⁵ and reaches the semiotic level of symbolism, directing its reference' to interpretations which suggest concepts within a spiritual interrelation which no longer reminds of states of affairs and phenomenality but determinations of immaterial essence. By means of this transition, what we may call the *artistic step* was done, and, whether it is at the exclusively subjective level (i.e., the creative person's change of attitude), or it defines a historical stage which humanity crossed at a certain moment, it is translated in the evolution from the first stage, the one of imitation, to a second stage, the stage of an interiorisation stimulating creativity and building rational contents ("the form has its own significance, that is it corresponds to an inner psychical need and it expresses this feeling"⁶). At this point, the affective (idealist) ingredient guarantees by means of an empathic participation a continuum between the supreme Creator and the human one, on the one hand, and between the instrumental stage and the artistic one, on the other. The human creation is freer than the one that has produced the

⁴ Herbert Read, *Originile formei în artă (The origins of form in art)*, Univers Publishing House, 1971, p. 79.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 84.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

multiplicity of forms subjected to the natural laws, and the artistic step combines morphological elements in ever-newer aesthetic “equations,” so that the divine filiation becomes strictly principle-based, reducing itself to a parable and excluding mimesis. Moreover, the work of art is not merely addressed to satisfying the contemplating consciousness, but it has its springs in moments of inspiration generated by such satisfactions, it feeds itself with the feeling experienced under the empire of natural beauty.

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Should the form be the “result” of a concept that can be intuitable, then the transition of the artistic step actually happens from one concept to another as well, from a pre-existent notional model which determined the features and the way the form has appeared toward an elaborate concept, “born” in the artist’s deeper self, accurately represented by the form apparent in the work and each time grasped precisely and with hermeneutic accuracy by the comprehensive intelligence called to appreciate the aesthetic value. As the significance of the form is closely related to its concept, it is via this concept (hence, via its expressive apparition), that art can be generally interpreted and finds its reflection at the level of understanding, where the difference between the initial conceptual paradigm and the final notional incarnation of the creation carried out can be noticed. Each time, a stable natural concept can, in the artistic representation, be thus substituted by another (one richer in significance, in relations, in suggestive determinations of appearance), created by the mind of the artistic personality and handed over to contemplation with an exclusively aesthetic purpose, meant to arise pure feelings and to entertain the spiritual availability of the appreciation, in a complete detachment from factual implication. The two also make up a process with a somewhat developing trend where, by mediation of the form, a pure spiritual leap is gained, a turn from a notional pre-established given into a new concept, enhanced via the conjugated contribution of an aperceptive sensitivity and an ability to “invent” subordinate to the regulative inspirational idea. And the difference between the two defines the artistic step in a such way that the rational final product is not the result of a simple addition of notes and conceptual determinations, but a synthesis with its own identity and physiognomy, to which the artistic “intervention” conveyed intrinsic value, taking it out of the network of strictly theoretical relations and bringing it onto an axiological field of the defining colour and of hierarchical ordering. It will distinguish itself via the plus built and it will be given “complex” names, real descriptive structures consecrating essential truths regarding the work and its creator.

It is in this difference that one can truly read the freedom the artist allowed to himself, his strip of originality, the authentic face of his contribution, and one can recognise the marks of an ever-new trial to eternalise the moment of inspiration where one means nothing else but a daring project, a paradoxical instantiation, which opposes provisionally the artistic idea to the pre-existent common conceptual given. Without this revolutionary deviation, without this surprising deflection from the traditional fact, we shall never encounter the authentic artistic value and we shall never recognise novelty where all appearances provoke the hermeneutic talent or critical virtues of a disinterested appreciation. And the “idea” of the work leads the artist’s hand to the best expressive variant and ensures the rational quality of the cultural end-product by a correctly constructed form. It indicates the “plan” according to which, while adding a number of heterogeneous “data” to a nucleus abstracted from a diverse reality, the ensemble thus formed is reunited in order to reach an inter-faculty harmony, on the one hand, and a synthetic unity of the work, on the other. The author’s creative mark lies in the attributes of this elaborate concept, as they are freely composed and the interpretation of an artistic creation is to convey from itself and to explain this unique concept. It is an incomparable portrait that the generally paradigmatic concept acquires in the artistic version of that particular author. Therefore, even if the paradigmatic notion benefits from a universal eidetic definition, the artist presents an expression full of evocative particularities that make up together with this original nucleus the elaborate concept (protecting the spiritual plane of the work background).

It is quite often that the original concept is mistaken for the eidetic one as the artist can find his inspiration directly from influencing *eidōs* which cannot be found any longer among the natural objects, implying its extraction from the comparison of real examples. Then one can be entitled to speak about a conception of creation, about the vision translated in the work, about a “cerebral” attitude toward the artistic exercise, which demonstrates that the direct relation to essences is not exclusively reserved to the theoretician and does not represent the philosopher’s monopoly. Equally legitimate, the artist can resort – in his own way and by virtue of delegations specific to his craft – to the universal conceptual heritage, betting on the essence, as confident as the investigating reason when building its epistemological edifices. And he performs his task only when he reaches from the essence to a new notion, only when he realised a conceptual *transfiguration*, a metamorphosis by means of which an enriched content has been obtained.

Hence, the artistically elaborate concept is built on the skeleton of the paradigmatic one and assumes up to a point its formal limitations so as to find then a way to overtake them according to a modality which could include them, maintaining their steady significance as well as finding an adequate form to integrate them in something superior. Besides, this new concept entertains a special kind of trade with universality, as it contains integrating relations, which the simple functionality the paradigmatic one benefits from in nature, lacks. It is the result of the artistic step, which becomes from this perspective a spiritual step, whose rationality orients the entire endeavour toward the absolute, ascending a special and privileged step toward him. The spiritual significance of the artistic step translates this closeness which starts from the initial “will” of form and ends with a specifically aesthetic participation to universality, with an original way of placing oneself directly in the “play” of the most comprehensive harmony, with an uniquely ascending way to which the end of the road means complete and durable fulfilment. By means of art, man is closer to the absolute both as the beholder and as the creator, and he becomes a genuine pathfinder, avoiding the trodden way to access the land of essences by offering a new version of relating to them, by the indefatigable construction of new concepts. And the work is an image-based bridge (perceptible, visual) between the concept-paradigm and the concept-result, between the object inspiring the creator and the final conclusion of the interpreter, validating it by responding to man’s noble mission of being, here on Earth, God’s continuator, an imitator of His grand example.

In this conception, the absolute is the starting principle and final target of a spiritual exertion that makes every authentic artistic work a new connection offering to man an intermediate disposition, meaning a path to follow. He starts from a state of grace and incessantly tends to join it again. This can be translated at the reduced scale of every artistic creation in the mediation between the two concepts with a status of centrality, between two rational “representatives” of the spiritual eternity. It changes the very core of a general, hieratic given, whose nature is congeneric with the constant forms originating in the divine “laboratory” in order to reach a profoundly humanised *analogon*, where the universalistic conceptual fibre is not lost, but the consciousness gains spiritual state, subjectivity gains colour, the primordial eidetic core gains converted character. And this change represents a *conceptual transfiguration* carried out with exclusively artistic means, meant to find the ideal combination of suggestive techniques, to embody expressive “slyness” worthy of the span of the original parable. Transfiguration illustrates the determination accompanying the artistic step, as it is its faultless

barometer.

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Transfiguration makes the transition from a neutral (theoretical) concept to an axiologically vested one (no matter how paradoxical the wording may seem), to a concept which *means* something not only in the exclusively logical sense of denomination, but also in the subjective sense of affective participation, of mediation understanding by means of interiority, of a full circuit pervading the human being in his entirety (and which can engage him together with his sensitivity, talent, sympathetic availability). It roots in the sphere of feeling in order to extract suggestive determinations, to impress, to get the whole bunch of effects aiming at a participative, involved comprehension (which “receives” it doubled by acceptance and appreciative initiative of an aesthetic nature).

The phenomenon of the contrast of significance would be a self-evident example in this case. It can be carried out by combining various elements with divergent significance in an artistically created form that assumes a secondary harmony, finding a unifying interpretation to itself despite the antinomic substratum and even profiting from its expressive virtues. A portrait using the artistic media of contrast will benefit from highlighted features, unexpected results (e.g. stressing some characteristics by means of and in the presence of their opposing determinations), from the impression of the spectacular an assumed antithetic may offer or the feeling of tension an exposed polarity may suggest. Here the form is thus constructed so that the aesthetic appreciation may be aroused, so that the impact of the subadjacent message may be maximum, considering that an accentuated conative virtue of the work brings a surplus of value to it and makes the transmission of some meaning valences impossible to suggest in any other way. The contrast plays the role of building a concept where the synthesis of contraries has a precisely addressing role, which makes the contemplative intuition more easily overcome everything that could pertain to the kingdom of appearances, where the penetration “beyond” is facilitated by a deliberate and undignified urge to speed up the comprehensive endeavour (by a direct invitation, unavoided, toward a dialectic leap and an effort to unveil meaning). It produces a unifying transfiguration that gathers opposing paradigmatic concepts in order to reveal a hybrid notional compound handling the artistic function of a symbol as well as the theoretical one of paradox, which amplifies an initially indifferent reciprocity expecting an emotional elicited, consented, guaranteed effect. Here, the interpretation treads on a favourable ground, the ground of rational schematism that has been verified for a long time

and which can offer solutions to understanding validated by an experience exceeding a relativising hermeneutic wimp (which would leave up each beholder an already settled out option). Hence, an actualisation of potentialities, contained in the eidetic concept, is obtained, speculating the field left free by the divine intelligence (or by the nature of the universal reasoning apriorisms) in favour of a conceptual derivative which surprisingly succeeds in rendering potential to the categorial effect of the paradigmatic notions by objectifying individualising, and particularising. Making the exemplary reason in the area of the ideal in a work with concrete features a central theme keeps all the essential attributes of the represented object, to the extent which “the thing does not have its own nature as long as it does not have its form and appearance”⁷. The more so, the form underlines the definition and confers it an axiological rank, while changing its existential register.

A second self-evident example is that of the suggestion of movement, the so-called “poses of movement,” present both in painting and in sculpture. This artistic effect contains a paradoxical intrinsic mark as well if it represents in a static form certain postures with dynamic intentionality, or as long as it can project temporal perspectives (a before or an ahead) on the instantiation exposed, choosing the richest and the more relevant present moment and profiting from the special virtue of the visual symbol to “concentrate” events with more ample happening in a single image. He finds the most suitable way to evoke expressively the general concept, which gathers the elements of the event and encloses, within the limits of the form, a whole world of significances, a sectorial destiny, a story. As “painting succeeds in presenting the human, soul, and inner element”⁸, the theme of a human nature is represented by a diversity of combinations of suggestive elements which convey the impression of movement, connecting together “adding-up” concepts and offering a quasi-epic perspective on the realities rendered. Hence, the dynamic concept resulted may suggest up-lifting feelings (if the story evokes historical dramas), may create an effect of compassion (if the image presents a scene related to the themes of suffering, for instance) or it may even inspire fear (where the dynamic effect or the characters’ “life” lowers the scales toward the aspect of tragic tension). The extraordinarily wide emotional palette which can “enter” the painter’s or sculptor’s repertoire helps the hermeneutic spirit to identify the most appropriate elaborate concept, the only one from whose perspective all features present in the work can be grasped (with their meaning-related implications as

⁷ Aristotel, *Metafizica* (Metaphysics), Iri Publishing House, 1999, p. 174.

⁸ Nicolai Hartmann, *Estetica* (Aesthetics), Univers Publishing House, 1974, p. 212.

well). It is also an appropriate reaction to the form embodying this concept and supports its axiological side, which speculates the virtues of proportions and harmony in the form in order to translate them in the language of a spirituality of attitudes, of liaising to the absolute. Here the segment of events assumes the temporariness and integrates itself by means of the conceptual definition in a higher condition of eternity, in the vast super ordinate “landscape” which is the global image of the world (and which includes the particular fact similarly to the elaborate concept entering the significance relationships with the entire corpus of interpretation). Here, one can probably see best the long range of the conceptual transfiguration, its re-spiritualised stake, the overtly reunifying intention of the creative endeavour, which claims to be an alternative way of accessing the world of essences, a noble option by means of which any particular snapshot of life finds the liberating solution. Therefore, even when the artist fixes the ephemeral, he bears in mind a more profound meaning, leaving the interpretation of the fragment open to toward general features, toward a holistic vision. The road from the paradigmatic to the concrete-universal winds through form and act artistic synthesis.

Finally, the third self-evident example is mostly to be found in painting, the effect of three-dimensional spatiality, namely the play of planes of appearance and the harmony of lights with shadows. This is the place of each creator’s mastery, of the trial of his artistic intention, to the extent where he is able to offer an impressive perspective on a landscape or a portrait, revealing foreground and background features, highlighting expressions of the face with their emotional correspondences, suggesting inner or spiritual states. The special way in which he renders an initially neutral reality reveals here – probably better than anywhere else – the force of conceptual transfiguration of art, rooted in the possibility to outdistance, by stressing some elements which would become the nucleus of the perspective, of the formal or initially conceptual given, under the circumstances where each artist becomes an *interpreter* of reality, where he opts out for one manner of representation on another. With landscape, “the painting of light, the painting of atmosphere, the rendering of distance in space by successive planes, all these depend on the discovery of a way of seeing”⁹, meaning we assume one vision of presentation of the harmonious ensemble of elements of the picture. With the portrait, as we find out from the example of the great artists’ self-representations, the freedom of choice of the rendering manner expresses different conceptions of the same object turned into a theme, revising the artistic endeavour

⁹ Nicolai Hartmann, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

each time from a different angle, by means of ever-different tendencies of accentuation. An elaborate concept is thus obtained, whose definition reveals directly the aim the creator pursued when he projected his work, it reveals the essential of the rendering intention and opens a bridge of access to the features of his artistic self that appears most saliently at the level of the defining option of style. Further, a painting school always represents a trend of thinking, a genuine kit of philosophical, conceptual attitudes where eternal themes as well as new trials find a suitable manner to access the beholder's soul and an original form of establishing itself (by delimiting from the manner proper to other artists or other trends). This assumed trend leaves a mark on the concept-result and always guides interpretation, meaning it delimits and details that open, by comparing and contrasting, the paradigmatic concept to other ideal realities, to which it could not have been linked. And the conceptual outdistancing encounters availability to novelty and the disinterested curiosity of the beholder for as long as the exigency of a novel perspective on the fact presented is an almost mandatory condition of any encounter with art and for as long as each contemplator looks forward to leaving the interaction with the work of art enriched with a new spiritual acquisition or at least impressed, "moved", sensitised. The conceptual metamorphosis gains thus a direct, pragmatic goal, closer to the momentous effect than to the integrative commandment in the field of essential relations. It is meant to generate mutations of vision, to dislocate inertias, to hasten the event of individual progress by direct suggestion, by discreet invitation to reconsider, to modify the self.

These three examples present the huge potential of spirituality hidden in the simple form, an up-lifting resource of significance that waits being unveiled by the blessed hand of the artist (guided by an inspired consciousness, connected to the conceptual hierarchies of the absolute). With the help of these three examples we can see how the creative personality responds to a call, which commits it to the depth of its constitution and exceeds it by means of the range of its effects, of their universal and forever surprising stake.

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The relationship between form and rationality came to life at the same time as philosophy. Heidegger points out that "what places itself within its limits, completing itself and staying that way, has form, *morphe*. The form, as the Greek construed it, draws its essence from self-placement-within-the-limits, self-placement which becomes thus salient"¹⁰. And the limit determines by its defining

¹⁰ Quoted by Herbert Read, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

function, by essence, quality – this one determining in its turn the distinctive and elective nucleus of the concept. By form, matter reaches the supreme step of spirituality to the extent that a participation descending to the principle is possible (“form is prior to matter [...] it has the feature of existence to a higher degree than matter”¹¹), to the extent that the spiritual ascension is transcendently “regressive”, assuming a forward movement toward the fundamental, toward the universal reason which underlies in a categorical manner the real. In this “dematerialisation of the material and materialisation of the immaterial”¹² lies the decisive step which transforms the pragmatic instrument in a work of art and here, at the encounter with the spiritual, the form begins its conceptualising adventure, which makes possible the privileged access to *eidōs* – which is the aesthetic creative act. This act implies, on its subjective aspect, “choosing from among more alternatives, weighing their possibilities” and consequently “it is not [...] a spontaneous act, but a meditative and a rational one”¹³. On its objective aspect, though, rationality enters its full rights to the extent that it mediates a conceptual transfiguration, to the extent that one bears in mind the spiritual evolution, the spectacularly rational result (the one that is meant to surprise thinking as well not only the aesthetic appreciation, an ephemeral category of an enlightened emotionality).

Although eternal forms equally become ‘material’ for creative associations with an aesthetic significance and transcendental guide of such associations, for as long as the difference of the artistic step is not merely an appendix of rationality, we can support, in line with the Jungian spirit, the theoretical endeavour of constructive aesthetics, focused on the hermeneutics of the elaborate notion and different from a reductive aesthetics (reducing to something already known). Revealing would then be the spiritual teleology of the artistic result, its integration in more comprehensive categories of meanings, and not merely an interpretation of its constitutive elements, a “genetic” vision meant to reconstitute their creative welding and to point out the thread that connected and cemented the ensemble. This thread has a particular meaning which defines the individuality of each work of art and which self-inserts in the self of an overflowing rationality, reviving it with its contribution. It helps the constructive aesthetics to identify at the beginning a unity of the work and then, grasping similarities of the manner of conceptual transfiguration, to define the style of a creator.

¹¹ Aristotel, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

¹² Herbert Read, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

¹³ Tudor Vianu, *Estetica (Aesthetics)*, Pentru Literatură (For Literature) Publishing House, 1968, p. 279.

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The Logics of the Rational World

Marius-Costel EȘI, *Lecturer Ph.D.*
The Teacher Training Department
"Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, România
mariusesi@yahoo.com

Abstract

As long as the logic represents a rational activity then we can justify the idea that the development of some methodological problems supposes, in fact, an analysis of the language. In this way, through the different approaches of logics, are emphasized important moments in the understanding and using process specific to the argumentative course of action. It deals with some combination among the historical ways of approach, through which the use of the concept "logics" reminds of evaluations, reevaluations and contextual-scientific delimitations. Therefore, to reflect on an idea of what argumentative discourse means, in effect requesting the validity of the communication act itself.

Keywords: *traditional logic, logical-mathematical formalism, paraconsistent logic, temporal logic, monotonous reasoning.*

Using a formal(ised) language determines simplicity, rigor and precision in the process of logical analysis. In fact, the formative role of logics resides exactly in the development of the critical dimension of thinking. Also, at the level of the argumentation strategies, the understanding activity represents a means by which the obtained results can be evaluated from both an objective and subjective point of view. Thus the understanding activity can neither be analyzed nor become concrete at the level of the discursive act in as much as one uses certain arguments which afterwards prove their usefulness. It has to do after all with transmitting and receiving the discursive content. Such a discourse is however, at an interpersonal level an argumentative one. In other words, it reminds of words and interpretations. Moreover, the argumentative discourse also sends to the descriptive-temporal dimension inciting sometimes even to some action. This aspect expresses the fact that an argumentative discourse represents an "instrument" through which some reasoning is conferred to a certain state of fact.

That is why, I think, and this idea can be supported that the argumentation in the concretization process itself pertains to the ways of using the language. In this way, the spiritual-social conditions favored throughout years the evolution of logics especially. The logic (at its primary stage and in a conceptual form differs from what we have today) becomes, thus, pragmatic, due exactly to those who “used” it in a certain historic context. Therefore, it is specific to this field to make reasonings. The conceptual elements within these arguments can be found among the thinkers from the Ancient Orient, those from Ancient Greece and Rome.

Gradually the traditional logic (characteristic to the ancient period) and that coming soon after (characteristic to the modern period) has not been sufficient to argument and explain certain ideas and theories that remind of the scientific practice. “The science revolution” determined an upside down of the old conceptions, but not always radically. The traditional problems are retaken and reanalyzed from totally different perspectives (inter-, multi- and even transdisciplinary). The idea of mathematical logic can be found again in the period when mathematics succeeds in developing itself due to the appearance of the infinitesimal calculation stressed out by Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). The coming up of the modern logic (the symbolical logic or mathematical logic as it is also called) finds its origin in the paper, “The Mathematical Analysis of Logic” (1847), by the Irish thinker George Boole (1815-1864) where logic is analyzed as a component of mathematics. At the same time, one should not forget, from this viewpoint the researches done by Augustus de Morgan (1806-1871), P.S. Porečki (1846-1907) and John Venn (1834-1923)¹.

The new paradigms have generated the development of some formal logical systems. A situation of this kind which is promoted by a new type of logic can be found at thinkers such as Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), Gotlob Frege (1848-1925)², Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947). Of course one should not forget the role played by the thinker John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) at the development of logic with the paper, “A System of Logic” (1843). According to this thinker logic is conceived by relating to psychological aspects. Through this psychologism they tried to demonstrate that logic is subordinated to psychology.

As a reaction to this trend the logicism appeared (understood as antipsychologism) through which they tried to show that the psychological factors

¹ These thinkers are considered the founders of *the algebra of logic*.

² Gotlob Frege tried to build an arithmetic axiomatically; he also succeeded in creating the first scientific system of propositional logic.

have no role in giving arguments and demonstrating some theories and problems specific to the formal logic. From this perspective, Edmund Husserl's phenomenological conception is relevant (1859-1938), according to which the theorems and the demonstrations of formal logic does not suppose at all the intervention of some psychical factors. In fact, this reaction belonging to Edmund Husserl is aimed at Christoph von Sigwart (1830-1904), German logician and philosopher who considered that logic has to have some psychological substantiation. However, in Edmund Husserl's case we can find some aspects through which the psychological elements are in correlation with the logical elements (specific to the mathematics of those times) when, for example, we can analyze the process through which one reaches the concept of "number".

Gradually we can see in the scientific research field the connection between mathematics and logic through the specific reasoning models³. An example in this case can be that of logical-mathematical formalisms through which the scientific theory can be explained and explicated in a certain research field (justifiable context). From this perspective many extensions of logic through some architectonics totally different from the classical one have been tried. "In old times people thought that there were fundamental laws of logic such as the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of the excluded tierce and the identity principle. Today different logics are built that do not follow these principles. The intuition logic does not follow the principle of the excluded tierce⁴, the paraconsistent logic does not respect the contradiction principle and Schrödinger's logic does not obey

³ An argument that can be brought in support of this idea is the fact that as a result of modern researches it has been said that the logical operations are set within some mathematical structures. In this sense, it has been demonstrated that the propositional logic represents a Boolean algebra due to its algebra structures.

⁴ In trivalent logic the excluded tierce principle is not valid and the existence of *the excluded quart principle* is admitted which can be formulated through $p \vee \overline{p} = 2$ ("2" represents the value of true along with the values "0"- false and "1"- undefined in the system of trivalent logic), in Nicolae Both, *The Algebra of Logic with Applications*, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1984; in fact *the excluded quart principle* (*quartum non datur*) has been formulated with the help of the "dubitative" functor (marked with D) by Clarence Irving Lewis and C.H. Langford when they dealt with the analysis of Jan Lukasiewicz's modalities; also, in the context of appearance and development of *n*-valent logics the existence of *excluded quint principle* has also been proved (formed from the excluded tierce principle for false sentences and the excluded tierce principle for the true sentences) which in L_4 has the following form: $\lambda_{1x} \cup \lambda_{2x} \cup \lambda_{3x} \cup \lambda_{4x} = 1$ (in Grigore Moisil, *Încercări vechi și noi de logică neclasică (Old and New Trials in the Neoclassical Logic)*, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1965, p. 11, 168).

the identity principle”⁵. In this way, they realized that the logic of sentences can be used in the research of the brain (at the basis of this idea there seems to be “certain hypotheses obtained through abstraction from the neurophysiologic data”⁶) or technology (“In this way, with the help of the logic of sentences one can establish, for any series of connections in derivation, the conditions this series is permissible because we can reach a decision for all the logical-sentential expressions. The trials can be thus replaced by a logical calculation. Through it the problem of logical analysis of the relay and contacts circuits is solved”⁷). Therefore, a series of theoretical-abstract analyses can find a large practicability in a variety of scientific fields. There are known, regarding this problem the applications of the polyvalent logics in quantum mechanics. An example in this case is given by Paulette Février’s applications in the case of W. Heisenberg’s uncertainty relations through the construction of a trivalent logic. The relevance of the practicability of logic is visible in the case of the paraconsistent logic. The latter proved from the very beginning its usefulness in robotics, intelligent systems, medicine, air and urban traffic control etc. Another example of efficient use of the “new logic” is that where the accidents can be analyzed with the help of the formalization of temporal logic, using the logical operator “since”⁸. Moreover, from this point of view we can notice the introduction of temporal logic in the field of IT⁹ too, when we try to check some programs and systems.

Still in the context of pragmatism that logic proves to have, we can mention, from this viewpoint its applications in the field of economy. Thus, through a coherent, logical attitude, the economic theory can be organized and systematized at the best level of functioning and understanding. Its applications can be found in different fields of economy. In this way, through logic we can support the idea of functionality of the economic system. As it is known, according to the principle of sufficient reasoning in order to accept or reject a sentence we must dispose of a sufficient (satisfactory) reason. Furthermore, formulating some economic theories supposes mentioning at a theoretical level some relations between different

⁵ Jean-Yves Béziau, “Teoria evaluării” (The Theory of Evaluation), in Newton da Costa, *Logici clasice și neclasice (Classical and Neoclassical Logics)*, Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, p. 303.

⁶ Georg Klaus, *Logica modernă (Modern Logic)*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, p. 136.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

⁸ http://profs.info.uaic.ro/~alaiba/club-i/index.php?title=Descoperirea_cauzei_erorilor_cu_logica_temporal%C4%83 and <http://www.rvs.uni-bielefeld.de/publications/Reports/FailTemLog.html>, accessed in 29 August 2008.

⁹ This problem was dealt by Amir Pnueli (n. 1941), An Israeli IT specialist, awarded with Turing Prize in 1996.

conceptual entities. It is visible in this situation the usefulness of a logic of relations in combination with a propositional logic where the existence of a logical implication of the kind: “if p , then q ” is admitted. If there are two economic coordinates - the price¹⁰ and the required quantity (demand)¹¹, then we can establish according to the principle of sufficient reasoning a relationship between the two coordinates that is, a specific relationship of causality. This relationship can be expressed through the formula: “If the price increases, the required quantity decreases”. Furthermore, if there are the notations p = “the price increases” and q = “the required quantity decreases” then we can easily test (on the basis of the sufficient reasoning principle) the existence (or nonexistence) of the necessary condition, of the sufficient condition at the level of the two sentences, respectively. Applying the formulae from within the compound propositional logic, that is, the formula, “ $(p \rightarrow q) \equiv (\sim q \rightarrow \sim p)$ ”¹² for the sufficient condition and the formula , “ $(p \leftarrow q) \equiv (\sim p \rightarrow \sim q)$ ”¹³ for the necessary condition and, after we substitute the propositional variables with the (logical economic) in question sentences, that is using the formulae: “ $(q \rightarrow p) \equiv (\sim p \rightarrow \sim q)$ ”¹⁴ and, “ $(q \leftarrow p) \equiv (\sim q \rightarrow \sim p)$ ”¹⁵, we can easily notice that the hypothesis made from an economic standpoint can be sustainable (because of the sufficient reasons but the necessary ones are not admitted as being correct from a logical point of view). Hence, it is obvious that there is a pragmatic combination between the logic of principles, the logic of the compound sentences and the logic of relations. All these discoveries and applications have determined the researchers try classifications and divisions regarding the logic field.

A first difference that can be made is that relating to the number of logical values: the *bivalent logic* (which operates with only two values, true and false) - *polyvalent/multivalent/plurivalent logic*/ (which introduces other values too, such as: absurd, undetermined etc). It is admitted that there are two forms of polyvalent logic that is the standard logic and the non-standard one. Thus, it has been

¹⁰ The price represents the quantity of currency given by the buyer to the seller in exchange of a good or service. In other words, it represents the value form of measuring a good or service.

¹¹ The demand represents the quantity from the goods that a consumer can acquire during some time depending on the price.

¹² The propositional formula “ $(p \rightarrow q) \equiv (\sim q \rightarrow \sim p)$ ” is read: “if p , then q ” which is equivalent with: “if non- q , then non- p ”.

¹³ The propositional formula “ $(p \leftarrow q) \equiv (\sim p \rightarrow \sim q)$ ” is read: “only if p , then q ” is equivalent with: “if non- p , then non- q ”.

¹⁴ The propositional formula “ $(q \rightarrow p) \equiv (\sim p \rightarrow \sim q)$ ” is read: “if q , then p ” is equivalent with: “if non- p , then non- q ”.

¹⁵ The propositional formula “ $(q \leftarrow p) \equiv (\sim q \rightarrow \sim p)$ ” is read: “only if q , then p ” is equivalent with “if non- q , then non- p ”.

admitted that the mathematical logic is formed of a standard logic and a non standard one. In its turn the non-standard has in its structure the field of the modal logics and the field of the polyvalent logics. From this perspective, the existence of some new types of logic based on axiomatic systems caused an abandonment of the idea of some unitary logic based on bivalence (the way the standard logic functions).

Another distinction is the *traditional logic* and *the non-traditional one* (*deviated, applicable*). Among the traditional logics we can find the logic of sentences and the logic of predicates. Within the non-traditional logic we can place the multivalent logics (fuzzy logic¹⁶, intuitive logic), the modal logics (deontic logic, epistemological logic, temporal logic etc), the logic of preferences, the operational logic, the paraconsistent logics (or “dialectical”), the topological logic¹⁷.

A fourth distinction is *the monotonous logic- the unmonotonous one* (or *non-monotonous logic*¹⁸). Monotonous logics (traditional logic, multivalent logics, modal logics) are those through which a valid reasoning is formalized. The unmonotonous logic is the one which deals with the unmonotonous reasoning that is, that reasoning which supposes the derivation of some conclusions from incomplete premises. Robert C. Moore¹⁹ identified within the unmonotonous reasoning (1983) the implicit reasoning (through which a plausible conclusion²⁰ is derived from incomplete or decisive premises) and the self-epistemic reasoning (which is analyzed by the epistemic logic).

Even if these distinctions are not sometimes very well established in the specialty works, we have to remember, however, the rational character that logic sets upon the scientific knowledge in general. Still, the appearance of such distinctions generated scientific courses of action more or less independent from

¹⁶ Fuzzy logic (or vague logic), defined by Lotfi A. Zadeh (1965) and turned into an axiom by Bas C. Van Fraassen is the one that uses a field of logic values in the interval [0, 1], in comparison with traditional logic which uses only two numerical values (0-for false and 1-for true) – (for example: the high numbers class represents a fuzzy group because its belonging function tends towards 1 as long as the numbers increase)

¹⁷ Topological logic represents a system built by Hempel (1936) within which certain comparable values are used such as: “truer”, “less true”, “as true as” etc.

¹⁸ Non monotonous logic is the one that has the property of being monotonous according to which if a conclusion results from a group of premises then from a better reason than the first the former results from a larger group of premises.

¹⁹ Robert C. Moore, “Semantical considerations on non-monotonic logics”, *Artificial Intelligence*, Volume 25, Issue 1, Elsevier Science Publisher Ltd. Essex, Uk, (January) 1985, pp. 75-94.

²⁰ Such an example can be the following phrase: “In the absence of an obvious reverse we suppose that a fish can swim”.

the previous ones through which the performances of the logical have become concrete in the (inter)disciplinary applications. We deal with a logical-philosophical reflection on which *a logic of scientific research* was born. From this point of view, there are structures characteristic to the logical-scientific language and specific modalities of construction of those certain structures which are tackled. Therefore, the development of a new logic (a “new logic”) determined the appearance of a new model of scientific construction through which the scientific theories have experienced approaches and explanations from totally different perspectives.

In these conditions, the communication as an intentional activity supposes a conventional character at the level of the interpersonal relations, meaning that the former is almost every time orientated towards the interlocutor. Thus, the argumentative discourse is built having the goal of persuading and sometimes even of manipulating. That is why the information which is transmitted and the linguistic structure of the formulations which form that certain information are very important. Consequently, an argumentative discourse aims at modifying, transforming the receiver’s (receivers’) certain inside moods.

Discursiveness in the process of (logical) argumentation must take into account a series of aspects connected to the used concepts, the definitions resulted with the help of these concepts, the analyzed theories (by resemblance and distinction), examples, quotations (which send to the argument of authority) etc. In fact, discursive argumentation is a specific form of substantiation. This aspect expresses the fact that the argumentative formulations many times are determined by certain interests and needs.

The argumentative performance has as a starting point a certain logical mechanism of the transmitted discourse. Still, the logical mechanism of this type of discourse depends on the discursive expressions from an argumentative process, too.

From this viewpoint, the argumentation act relates to the way in which an expression is pronounced. The moment an expression is pronounced the subjectivity (the human being) accomplishes three acts: “(1) a locutionary act (indicating a meaning and a reference), (2) an illocutionary act (transmitting a characteristic force, an act which makes the expression become formulation, promise, order etc. (3) a perlocutionary act (determining a psychological effect on the auditory: approval, satisfaction, fear etc)”²¹. Also, an important role in this

²¹ Petru Ioan, *Analiza logică a limbajului* (The Logic Analysis of Language), “Al. I. Cuza” University Press, Iași, 1973, p. 194.

mechanism is played by the logical operations where terms (notions) appear²². In this way, the argumentative performance supposes a discursive and coherent order through which some significance is given to the transmitted message. The fact that not always the logical order is synonymous with the linguistic order is interesting. This idea can be justified through the fact that the schematization of these two types of order can transmit distinct but void of meaning ideas. As long as there is still a general discursive schematization, then the transmitted message acquires significance sufficient for the receiver.

The argumentative performance represents, in fact, at an educational level a transaction, as a result of which the actors involved in this course of action have something to gain. An important aspect in this process is to know how to accept the compromise in order to turn it into an advantage. Consequently, a performance is done at different levels. The moment one tries to obtain performance the one who proposes to gain something as a result of this course of action usually sets within some limits: the maximum of performance and the minimum of performance. This can only become concrete as long as the logic not only becomes concrete, “but it is also a criterion on which we can and we must rely to support our ideas.”²³

Of course, an argumentative performance must take into consideration those aspects connected to critical thinking. In this sense, to study an argumentation by relating to its practical aspect supposes inoculating some understanding and habit to think critically²⁴. Moreover, in a critical approach the problem that arises is that of discernment. Thus, the latter represents a feature of critical thinking which reminds of tolerance and self consciousness. Maybe not by chance the argumentative performance of a discourse relates to the problem of language as well.

As a result, understood as a complex system of signs, the language supposes in its structure the existence of two components: *the lexis/ the vocabulary* (which represents the total sum of signs specific to that certain language and has a dynamic character) and *the grammar* (that is the totality of rules referring to the way in which signs are used; grammar has in general a stable character). If certain

²² One can mention that in the specialty literature the analysis concentrates here on *a logic of terms*, there on *a logic of notions*; that is why we have preferred to specify in this context both formulations; however, in most logic works the term is understood as a word or a group of words through which a notion is expressed (the meaning itself of the term).

²³ Gheorghe Enescu, *Tratat de logică (Logic Treaty)*, LIDER Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 5.

²⁴ Drăgan Stoianovici and Ion Stepănescu, *Logică și argumentare (Logic and Interpretation)*, Sigma Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 135.

criteria are followed then there are:

(1) The natural language (the language spoken by a certain nation, the behavioral language and the artificial language (the logical language, the mathematical language, the language specific to the traffic rules etc);

(2) The verbal language and the non-verbal language (the physical criterion);

(3) The first degree language/object language and the second degree language/ metalanguage (the meaning criterion);

Moreover, from a syntactical point of view, the structure of language is given by *categoremes*²⁵ (fundamental categories) and *sin-categoremes* (auxiliary categories). Also, the language must reflect at the level of discursiveness a certain *sense (meaning)*, which participates in its turn in forming *the sign*. In conclusion, the study of the theory of logic supposes some relating to *a natural logic*, through which the world is getting more beautiful and wiser. Thus, the capacity to understand the objective (and physical) reality generates some argumentative architectonics meant to justify the charm of such full of mystery world. The idea of logical analysis reminds implicitly of the idea of conceptual meaning.

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²⁵ From the category of *categoremes* we can find: terms and sentences.

8. Stoianovici, Drăgan, & Stepănescu, Ion, *Logică și argumentare (Logic and Argumentation)*, Sigma Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001.
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The concept of literature and its terminological parameters

Mariana Cozma PASINCOVSCHI, *Ph.D. Candidate*
“Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania
Faculty of Letters and Communication Sciences
Romanian Language and Literature Department
mariana_amalia12@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study aims to find answers to the question “what is literature?”, presenting numerous attempts to fit this term, starting from the value criterion, the category of art, to find that literature is an art of movement. Another goal involves matching the term “literature” with a relatively recent concept, “literarity”, and trying to see how literature literarity can be established.

Keywords: *literature, literarity, formalist, art, dynamic reality, conventions.*

To understand the specificity of the literary work and to demonstrate, where possible, its literarity, we should ask, first, what is literature?

At first glance, the question seems to have no difficulty, but analyzing it carefully, we realize that we face the most difficult and the most fundamental problem that a man of letters can ask. A simple look at the historical evolution complicates even more this problem: “For twenty-five centuries people have written works which today we call literature, but the modern term of *literature* is barely two centuries old”¹. What is therefore literature and when is this term considered as a literary art?

Viewed through the prism of its evolution, history of literature provides us with several meanings, two of which are especially valid today:

“1. Literature = everything that is written, printed or published in any way, «writings» - a meaning that appears in phrases such as *primary literature, secondary literature, specialty literature, opera literature, piano literature, cosmetics literature*;

¹ Jonathan Culler, *Teoria literară*, trans. Mihaela Dogaru, Cartea Românească, Bucharest, 2003, p. 29.

2. Literature = «beautiful literature», fiction, which means texts with claims of aesthetic values”².

One of these two meanings, which founded the literary favoured position was, especially the latter, the “fault” being borne, after H. Rudiger, by the “almost religious reverence for the artwork and the artist” which, *since the 18th century, has given literature and poetry a sacred and esoteric halo*”³.

The appropriate term of the meaning we give to today’s literature was, in Ancient Greece, the term *poiesis*, a term which referred to all things created by man. Aristotle⁴ restricts its meaning to the scope of objects we now call literary. Those who led, however, to the meaning of the modern Western sense of literature as an imaginative writing were the theorists of the German Romanticism in the late 18th century, a precise source for this being the book *On literature in its relations with social institutions*, published by the French Baroness Madame de Stael in 1800. Later, in 1839, Sainte-Beuve is the one who reduces the scope of literature to “all imagination and artistic productions”⁵.

There were, moreover, several attempts to fix the essence of literature. In Russia, for example, in the late eighteenth century there was an attempt to free literature from the influence of the royal court and give it a more independent and professional character. But literature came into social life and only in the mid-1820 the situation changed, the year 1825 taking literature out of its incarcerated state.

The *criterion of value* has always been inherent to the concept of “literature”, finding its expression in many restrictive definitions of literature. There was also the effort to fix the essence of literature by means of the category of *art* (applicable to O. Walzel, E. Staiger, R. Wellek, W. Wimsatt and others); Wolfgang Kayser gives literature an “objectuality of its own kind” (*Gegenständlichkeit eigener Art*), and T. C. Pollock “introduces a categorical system, which is very close to that of Barthes/Pollmann. Namely, he distinguishes, apart from everyday language with its simple communicative function (*phatic communion*), two specific forms of language action: referential symbolism in scientific language and evocative symbolism in the language of literature. Where the evocation of one’s own experience is missing, we speak about pseudo-

² Heinrich F. Plett, *Știința textului și analiza de text*, trans. Stănescu Speranța, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, pp. 8-34.

³ *Apud* Heinrich F. Plett, H. Rüdiger, *op. cit.*; pp. 8-34.

⁴ Aristotel, *Poetica*, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1957.

⁵ Adrian Marino, *Biografia ideii de literatură*, II, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1992, pp. 163-165.

literature⁶. Wilhelm Kayser's considers that literature is, firstly, "a domain of game, closed in itself, a very specific world, governed by its own laws, independent of any reality", and its function is "to take the human out of his links with reality and to free him of any determination"⁷.

The formalist schools speak about "literature in itself and by itself", "the first law" of literature being "to remain its essential purpose"⁸. There appears, therefore, a very common perspective at the time. We also note the definition of literary specificity as a *pure form*, an orientation commonly identified with *formalism*. As art, literature will be considered as a "verbal creation", literature will be equal to text and, last but not least, it will be defined in terms of *system-structure* (I. M. Lotman, M. Bakhtin, T. Todorov, R. Barthes⁹).

Caught in a vast and inexhaustible network of associations at different levels and in different frames of reference, as those social, historical, ideological, cultural and intellectual, literature varies depending on ages, currents, styles, each historical moment having its specific literature. Thus, literature becomes "an act of speech carrying a significantly universe depending on specific contexts", all the meanings tending to "continual clarification and radicalization"¹⁰. For this reason, even if the sequence of boundaries between literature and non-literature could be continued, no definition would be entirely satisfactory. How to explain, however, this and why is it more and more difficult to give definitions in literature?

We could get a first answer from Pompiliu Eliade who, in 1900, opening a university course on "What is literature?" said: "No word is more difficult and easier to understand than this. But it must be defined precisely because of its intrinsic difficulty and its own ease. Who knows how to answer clearly this capital question: what is Literature? And on the other hand, in a vague way, who does not know what is Literature? There are two specialties of the human mind in which the profanes interfere..."¹¹. Considering that *literature is an art*, Pompiliu Eliade hurries to assert that it is *the art of movement*. Being a social and not an individual phenomenon, "the process is open, because the idea of literature [...] is always

⁶ Heinrich F. Plett, *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Apud* Wilhelm Kayser, *Die Wahrheit der Dichtung*, in *Poetică. Estetică. Sociologie* (Studies of literature and art theory), Anthology, preface and bibliography by Vladimir Piskunov, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1979, p. 280.

⁸ Adrian Marino, *op.cit*; p. 248.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 276.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 274, 286.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

“created”, which is reductive and, at the same time, productive process”¹².

Referring to the same point, Boris Eihenbaum would emphasize: “There is no uniform, stable and homogeneous literature, which would have a permanent own chemical formula. Literary fact and literary era are complex concepts which are constantly changing, since both the relationships between the elements making up the literature and their functions are also changing”¹³.

We see therefore that the very fact of evolution liquidates any rigorous static definitions. The “taste” with political and literary ideologies, thus “exhausting” a type of literature to make way for a new phenomenon, that “came from its basements and its service courts”, as says Viktor Shklovski¹⁴. Therefore, “literary individuality is dynamic as literary era, within which and with which it is moving [...]”, and “to replace the dynamic point of view through the static one is to doom many important and valuable literature phenomena.”¹⁵

Being a “dynamic linguistic construction” or an *art of movement, an ideology vehicle and its destruction instrument*¹⁶, “a coherent structure, a homogeneous space, in which the works interfere”¹⁷ closely related to a specific historical time, to a socio-cultural complex and a certain mentality, “literature” hardly bears a discussion of its principles, discovering, through each type of culture and every age, its own criteria which will help to recognize the literary objects. Therefore, abandoning the pretence of literary theory to offer an immanent definition of literature, every aspect of its nature is just a speculative instrument, capable - as Monica Spiridon¹⁸ notices - to equip us with a critical view. Our goal is to correlate the term “literature” with a relatively recent concept, “literarity”, and see how, in these circumstances, *literature literarity* can be established.

Very often mentioned, the concept of *literarity* tends to be confused with *literary* and with the verbal condition of literature, there being even some swings

¹² Adrian Marino, *Hermeneutica ideii de literatură*, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1987, p. 17.

¹³ *Ce este literatura? Școala Formală Rusă*, Anthology and preface by Mihai Pop, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, p. 75.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 604. “During the decomposition of the species, it goes from center to periphery, and a new phenomenon from the little nothings of literature life appears in its place; it comes from its basements and service backyards”.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, Iuri Nicolaevici Tînianov, pp. 606-607.

¹⁶ Jonathan Culler, *op. cit*; p. 49.

¹⁷ *Poetică și Stilistică. Orientări moderne*, Prolegomena and Anthology by Mihail Nasta and Sorin Alexandrescu, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, p. 292.

¹⁸ Monica Spiridon, *Despre „Aparența” și „Realitatea” Literaturii*, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984, p. 14.

and terminological alternation – *literalness* / *literarity*. Thus, “essence, purity, poetic and lyric nature, and other definitions of literary characteristics, tend to be replaced by a new term, which pretends to be the most «specific» of all: *literarity*”¹⁹. We might ask, looking at the stated assumptions, how did we get to this situation? What is the origin of this concept and what is the current which created it?

Having a sufficiently slow and tortuous genesis, the concept brings to our mind the Russian Formalists (this current has its beginning in 1915-1917): in 1915, the *Linguistic Circle from Moscow* is founded (R. Jakobson, O. Brik, B. Tomashevski, I. Tynianov temporarily Mayakovsky), and in 1916, in St. Petersburg, the *Society for the study of poetic language* (Opojaz), which groups together L. Iacubinki, E. D. Polivanov, V. Shklovski, B. Eichenbaum, S. T. Bernstein.

What is the momentum of this movement occurrence? What are the principles that characterize it? How does a criterion become operative in defining the literarity and what does it mean to speak about literature “literarity”? – These are just some of the natural questions that arise, inviting us to an objective reflection of this complicated and, at the same time, very actual phenomenon. We will, therefore, notice the track of this movement, pointing out the key elements that led to its imposition and to the consolidation of an autonomous and concrete science of literature, paving the way for many modern structuralist researches.

The movement that we call formalist appeared in Russia, on the eve of the October Revolution, as a reaction to neo-grammars in linguistics, to historical positivism in literary criticism and to naturalism in literature. Therefore, its fundamental features such as “distancing from the past”, “the link with the revolutionary literary movement”, “seeking new paths to know and understand literature”, “intransigence in maintaining positions” and “confrontational tone” have their full explanation in this context. Without being interested in the methodology problems of literary studies, but in those of literature as object of study, what characterizes the formalists is the wish to prepare, “from the intrinsic qualities of literature, an independent science”, knowing theoretically and historically the art deeds of the word²⁰. Thus, creating its poetics opposed to methods that judged literary work by joining it to exogenous fields, such as biography, psychology, sociology, religion etc., the formalists have reconstructed the literary object as an autonomous object, seen through its artistic specificity.

¹⁹ Adrian Marino, *op. cit.*; p. 256.

²⁰ M. Bakoš, Prefață in *Ce este literatura? Școala Formală Rusă*, p. VII.

Their goal was to analyze literature as a system, and “revealing the artistic methods” is their slogan. As Gérard Genette noted, “this *theoretization* of the literary fact has had a decisive influence and a prolific posterity, allowing, in particular, the development of *the structural perspective, the narratological study and the semiotic criticism*”²¹.

Putting, at the beginning, literary research in the series of language facts (thus removing it from general, psychological or sociological cultural series), the early formalism attempts to establish the literarity through an “exclusive cantonment within the limits of the verbal message”, being nothing but a meeting place for critics and linguists in the realm of the *poetic language*. Conceiving literarity through its relation to a *range of reference*, “a broad and persistent tradition of understanding literature as *deviation* or *divergence* towards a factor *ab quo*, or “zero degree” has its origins here”²². The remarkable observations made, in connection with this, by Monica Spiridon, who has even established a difference between the formula of *Opojaz* and the new research direction: “establishing the polarity *poetic language / practical language*, the early *Opojaz* doctrine actually tried a systematization of the defining marks of the literarity by framing an absolute invariant [...]. As for the latest research [...], they rather align to the contemporary effort to offer an *empirical basis* for the notion of literarity [...] through its equivalence with an entity that is supposed to be «directly observable»: in this case *literary language*, the antipode of the normal one...”²³.

The object of literary science must therefore study specific features of literary facts through which they are different from all other facts: “the object of literary science is not literature but “literaturnost” (literarity), which is what makes a literary work from a fact”²⁴.

Aiming for a linguistic type method, the method of Russian formalists involves certain “empiricism”, as M. Bakhtin (whose ideas, being original, could be recognised only by dissociating them from the “formal method”) would find. Referring to this issue, Eichenbaum argues his “empiricism” in an article from 1925: “the «watchword» of the formalists poetic was to release the poetical discourse from «the philosophical and religious tendencies» of the symbolists; whence «the pathos of the scientific positivism that characterised them», «a rejection of philosophical assumptions, of psychological and aesthetic

²¹ Gérard Genette, *Marile curente ale criticii literare*, translation by Liliana Buruiană Popovici, Institutul European Publishing House, Iași, 2000, p. 34.

²² Monica Spiridon, *op. cit.*; p. 21.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 21-22.

²⁴ R. Jakobson, Prefață in *Ce este literatura? Școala Formală Rusă*, p. IX.

interpretations etc. ... It was necessary to deal with facts... Science had to be concrete»²⁵.

The feature of the second period of the Formalism is the observation about how a language fact can acquire a literary status (especially through the evolution of literary theory developed by Tynianov, *О литературной эволюции* (About literary development), 1927). It is now established the category of *literary fact* that comes to replace that of *literature*. Redefining literary work as a system, not only as a sum of means, the formalists refer therefore to a dynamic reality, this phase containing now “the germs of a more comprehensive vision of reality”.

Speaking about the *differential* nature of literary quality, the Formal School also involves the particularly actual problem of peripheral facts presenting, from a new perspective, the general relationship between literature and society.

Sorin Alexandrescu²⁶, in his *Introduction to Modern Poetics*, captures very well these aspects: Moving the focus from “the ‘effect’ or the ‘expressiveness’ explained by the stylistic approach to the autonomous significance towards the psychical or the social aspect that generated it and perceive it”, furthermore, integrating the local process in the work *system*, “the «language» and the «artifice», the defining aspects of the literarity, thus become analyzable structures in literary texts [...]”. Therefore, concludes Sorin Alexandrescu, “we easily recognize in this reasoning the design of the literary ‘element’ on a syntagmatic and a paradigmatic axis, in the sense they would be later defined by Jakobson”²⁷.

Incurring these observations, it seems natural to ask ourselves how literarity manifests itself and what would be its criteria.

A convincing answer is proposed by Monica Spiridon. The author considers that, “not having an empirical identity on the textual plan, literarity fact does not coincide with a particular type of text - as formalists believed - but only reduces itself to an effect of the text, based on a conventional judgement. It is, first of all, a matter of conscience. Therefore, the concept called to designate it in the terminological arsenal of literary theory always refers to a prebuilt model”²⁸.

As for literarity criteria, the perspective proposed by Heinrich F. Plett²⁹ seems interesting. Starting from the four perspectives proposed by the American

²⁵ *Apud* B. Eichenbaum, M. Bahtin, *Probleme de literatură și estetică*, translation by Nicolae Iliescu, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, pp. 8-9.

²⁶ *Poetică și Stilistică. Orientări moderne*, Prolegomena and Anthology by Mihail Nasta and Sorin Alexandrescu, Univers Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, p. XCV (*Introducere în poetica modernă*).

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Monica Spiridon, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

²⁹ Heinrich F. Plett, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-34.

literate M. H. Abrams in his book *The Mirror and the Lamp*, theories that have decided, according to their dominance, what was or was not literature, Plett also chooses the four dimensions, trying to clarify how literature “literarity” can be established. We speak therefore about:

1. *the mimetic notion of literature* - the oldest criterion for delimiting literary phenomenon, but this is a restrictive notion as it excludes from literature any non-mimetic work, such as *poetry*, and not only this;

2. *the expressive notion of literature*, expressive meaning *emotionality*, *spontaneity* and - what is clear from these two - *originality*;

3. *the receptive notion of literature*. The reader is at the heart of this concept and the manner and the intensity in which he is affected by the text is the standard measure for what can be considered literature. In other words, the texts without effect are non-literary, and those that have an influence on the receiver are literary.

4. *the rhetorical notion of literature*. In this case, the notion of literature excludes any *non-rhetorical* text; on the contrary, it also involves, for example, non-fiction texts, to the extent that they prove a linguistic artificially artistic form.

Analyzing these perspectives, Heinrich F. Plett’s conclusion is the following: “*the four perspectives of the literature are not isolated and absolute, but intermediate*”, though, “the works of literature theory that emphasise a single aspect are not missing”³⁰.

Thus, the mimetic aspect, the expressiveness, the deviance, the originality, the poetical and the narrative aspect put us on the ground of literarity, operating as perception and recognition criteria of literature in cultural codes of historical and social community. Therefore, “speaking about literature «literarity» is, first, to admit that the study of cultural phenomena must be integrated into a context and that the production of meaning in a culture is always governed by a system of specific conventions.”³¹

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The Origin and Evolution of the Referendum

Ștefan Alexandru BĂIȘANU, Associate Professor,
Department of Philosophy and Social and Political Sciences
Faculty of History and Geography, "Ștefan cel Mare"
University of Suceava, Romania
baisanu@yahoo.com

Abstract

The procedure of a legislative referendum is met at the Romans. For them, "lex" meant convention. Terminologically, and not only, the institution has its origin in Roman law, where the gerund of the verb referare designated a procedure through which the entire elective, different from the plebs, was directly consulted regarding a precise subject, the adopted decision being therefore legitimate.

Keywords: *referendum, law, Constitution, popular vote, Parliament, electorate.*

1. The origin of the referendum

The procedure of a legislative referendum is met at the Romans. For them, "lex" meant convention. When the convention came between two physical persons, "lex" meant contract, and when it interfered between the magistrate and the people, it meant law, as the form of expression of the right¹. Gaius said that the law is what the people decides, *quod populus romanus iubet atque constituit*.

The magistrate would introduce the bill by an edict. People would debate the magistrate's proposal during unofficial meetings, and afterwards the magistrate would be called in commissions to pronounce. Citizens could not bring amendments to the law project. If they agreed, they would answer by yes, *uti rogas*, and if they did not, with no, *antiquo*. There was a real legislative referendum on the edge of a legislative initiative emanating from a state authority.

The Roman people would participate in making legislative, electoral or judicial decision, being organized in commissions or distinct gatherings: *comitia curiata*, *comitia centuriata*, *concilium plebis* and *comitia tributa*.

¹ Emil Molcut and Dan Oancea, *Drept roman*, Sansa SRL, Bucharest, 1993, p. 41.

Comitia curiata had an increasing importance at the beginning of the Republic, being developed for the adoption of laws for the senior magistrates, laws through which people delegated the power and promised to obey.

Comitia centuriata was made of land owners.

Concilium plebis was the plebeian assembly that originally adopted decisions bend for the plebeians only. Through the Hortensia law, once the decisions are binding only for citizens, patricians start to participate in the concilium's works, seeking to defend their interests. Therefore, *concilium plebis* turns into *comitia tributa*.

Comitia tributa included all Roman citizens organized on tribes; it becomes a legislative gathering.²

The difference between plebiscite and law is clearly defined by Gaius: "The law is what the people command and decide. The plebiscite is what the plebs decides and command."³ Plebs are different from the people because the term "people" includes all citizens, even patriciens, meanwhile "plebs" includes only the other citizens, without the patriciens. Through the Hortensia law, all people must obey plebiscites, which have been therefore assimilated to the laws.

Hence the tendency to despise the plebiscites, in the modern sense of the word, as it originates in a legislative body without quality. If ,for the Romans, the inferiority resulted from the lower quality of the citizens that formed the plebs, in modern times the inferiority of the plebiscite emanates from the person who manipulates the popular vote, either through his personality, either through more obvious methods of constraint against the people who allow to be manipulated.

In the old diets of the Germanic and Swiss confederations, the confederate states' representatives only stated *ad referendum*, meaning their decisions were confirmed by the Governemnt of their state.⁴

The term "referendum" has its origin in the habits of the ancient confederations. Inside the diets, the communes were represented by trustees. They had to submit *ad referendum* about all the problems for which they were not able to vote. The citizens who had a voting right expressed their vote *ad referendum* to accept or to reject new propositions.⁵

² *Ibidem*, p. 28.

³ Gheorghe Ciulei, *Curs de drept roman* , Faculty of Low from Cluj, 1948, p. 15: «Lex est quod populus iubet atque constituit. Plebiscitum est quod plebis atque constituit.»

⁴ Dan Claudiu Danisor, *Drept constituțional și instituții politice, Curs de bază*, Universitaria, Craiova, 1999, p. 261.

⁵ Catherine Clessis, Didier Claus, Jacques Robert, Patrick Wajzman, *Exercices pratiques – Droit constitutional*, Montchrestien, Paris, 1989, p. 271.

2. History of popular consultations in Romania

In the Romanian countries, Cristian Ionescu considers that the drafts of Constitution and the 1848 revolutionary programs have constitutional value, as a beginning of fundamental organization for the Romanian people. In this context, the Constitutional Act from Islaz, which includes The Proclamation and The Revolutionary Programme of the Romanian Country from 9 / 12 June 1848 is the first Constitution of the Romanian countries.¹ Under this name it was submitted for the approval of the Islaz Assembly and presented to Mr. Gheorghe Bibescu, who signed it. After the constitutional theory, this meeting was actually the first Constituent Assembly of the Romanian people and the document was approved by the first constitutional referendum held in Romania. The popular vote gave the required legal force for the act to be promulgated by the ruler of the state.

A referendum which the theory calls plebiscite was held in 1866, when, following Ion Bratianu's proposal, a popular vote was organized to name Prince Charles of Hohenzollern as the successor of Mr. Al. I. Cuza, who would accept the throne under the name of Charles I. It was plebiscite because the successful outcome of the election was due to the personality of the politician Ioan C Bratianu and not to the consideration that the German prince might have enjoyed, being virtually unknown across the Romanian countries.

The 1866 Constitution did not foresee the possibility of organizing a referendum, the power belonging to the ruler and to the national representative. The executive power belonged to the ruler. The constitution was influenced by the Belgian Constitution of 1831, its major influence being criticized by Charles I, who, in 1870, wrote: "These people, politically and socially educated mainly abroad and completely forgetting the circumstances of their country, are not interested in anything else than in applying here ideas that were watered there, dressing them in some utopian forms, without investigating whether they fit or not. Thus, the unhappy country, which was always bowed under the yoke of the toughest, passed suddenly and directly from a despotic regime to the most liberal constitution", *Algemeine Ausburger Zeitung*, 27.01.1870.⁶ Although the King characterized it as liberal, the times were not so liberal to allow the direct intervention of the electorate in the city life through referendum.

The 1923 Constitution was a rigid one, which meant it was a constitution that could not be changed by an ordinary law. Although it was a special procedure for this purpose, the revision did not include any popular vote, there was no referendum for the ratification of the review. All the review system included a

⁶ Ion Rusu, *Drept constituțional și instituții politice*, Lumina Lex, Bucharest, 2004, p. 61.

Parliament specially elected for this purpose and the King. People did not intervene in any proceedings of popular vote.

Paul Negulescu states the difference between the rigid and flexible constitutions. “For example, the English Constitution entitles the English Parliament to make, whenever it wants, amends to the Constitution, without carrying out any information other than those required for ordinary laws. From this point of view, there is the adagio that the English Parliament can do whatever it wants, except a boy out of a girl.”⁷

Plebiscite, so labeled by historians and lawyers, was organized in 1938 by King Charles II to vote on the Constitution of 1938. Article 100 of the Constitution provided, however, that whatever the outcome of the plebiscite, it automatically entered into force. The result of the vote showed that voters supported the decisions of the King, obtaining 4,297,581 votes for and 5438 votes against. The last act of entry into force was promulgated through the High Royal Decree no. 1045 of February 27, 1938.⁸

Ioan Muraru and Elena Simina Tănăsescu do not consider the referendum as a foreign body in the Romanian democracy, especially the happy experiment of the ad-hoc gatherings. Thus, it was stipulated in the Constitution of 1948, the consultation decision belonging to the Grand National Assembly and in the 1965 Constitution, according to which the Great National Assembly would decide the consultation of the people by referendum about the measures of particular importance for the country's supreme interests.

The current Constitution includes the national referendum, which belongs to the field of constitutional law, and the local referendum is mentioned in the law no. 215/2001 regarding public local administration, therefore being considered by the authors belonging to the administrative law.

3. The concept of referendum

Paul Negulescu encloses the referendum procedure alongside the popular veto or the popular initiative in the semi-direct democratic government. The author qualifies the referendum as a popular one and he defines it as “a system of constitutional establishment in which an elected law by the Parliament is not perfect unless it is approved by the nation”.⁹ The semi-direct system contains a

⁷ Paul Negulescu, *Curs de drept constituțional roman*, Bucharest, 1928, p. 472.

⁸ Cristian Ionescu, *Drept constituțional și instituții politice, Sistemul constituțional românesc*, vol II, Lumina Lex, Bucharest, 2001, p. 65.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 285.

delegation offered to the Parliament and the act made by the agent is ratified by the principal, namely the nation.

So, Paul Negulescu is the adept of the civil mandate theory, as a legal status of the parliamentary mandate that he exercises every elected of the nation and the referendum as a ratification procedure of the operations performed by the agent.

Moreover, “what the Parliament votes is just a project that becomes law only by people voting it. The nation cannot make changes, they shall vote only yes or no, to accept or to reject the project.”¹⁰

There have been many criticisms against the referendum system, by the fact that people would be too often called to issue the various legislative works, and the nation’s reaction would eventually have no interest, due to such a process of considerable importance for the collectivity. Another criticism refers to the high costs of organization and the time relatively consequent that it is required, that could be used in a more productive activity.¹¹ Another criticism concerns the referendum as contempt of the Parliament, because its work is subject to the popular vote.

The motivation of such a process derives from the fact that the nation is the one who must decide on issues they are directly interested in and therefore the fact that the mandate comes to examine the work carried out by the agent cannot be a disregard, so that it becomes mandatory for all the citizens.

Ion Deleanu does not give a classic definition of the referendum, but he remembers it in the section relating to the exercise of sovereignty. Thus, he states that “the nation the detentor of the sovereignty, exercises the national sovereignty through its representative bodies and by referendum.”¹² So the referendum is the fundamental rule that ensures the direct participation.

Dan Claudiu Danis says that the popular intervention is generically called referendum, but the semi-direct rule disposes of several forms of intervention: the referendum, the popular veto, the popular initiative and the revocation. Thus, the referendum is “the process by which the nation is related to power.”¹³ The author believes that whenever an act is subject to the popular decision we talk about a popular referendum. The classic model appears as a direct participation of the sovereign will of the electorate to legislate. The delineation is not very accurate and can be also available for the popular veto and even the plebiscite.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 285.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 293.

¹² Ion Deleanu, *Instituții și procedure constituționale*, vol II, Servo-Sat, Arad, 1998, p. 213.

¹³ Dan Claudiu Dănișor, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

The author also highlights the undemocratic aspect of the referendum. “The referendum, the direct expression of the sovereign will of the nation, establishes in the politics an absolute weapon”¹⁴. When the control of this weapon is given by the Constitution to a single protagonist of the political game, he becomes excessively strong. He will use the referendum at a moment when he decides to choose alone or almost alone, concerning the theme established in some terms wanted by him. This weapon will legitimize his power, because the distinction between a genuine referendum in which the popular sovereignty is active, and a plebiscite in which it is passive and has to choose between giving up and picking one, is very hard to do. There were leaders who have used this method in a tragic way: Napoleon, Hitler, Franco, and in a way less tragic, the General of Gaulle.

Thus no weapon should be available to any constitutional body, especially not to an executive one. The referendum leads nowhere as a technique of democracy if it can be accomplished in other ways than initiative or the popular veto.

Pierre Pactet defines referendum as being the main technique of the semi-direct democracy and it develops through the consultation of the electorate regarding a problem or a text that will not become perfect and definitive or in case of a positive outcome.¹⁵

In the French constitutional law, referendum means popular voting, it is the procedure through which the electorate is called to express directly regarding a measure that the political power takes or is about to adopt.¹⁶

Ion Rusu believes the referendum is a “political judicial tool efficient for the triumph of democratic principles, with the condition that it is preceded by a large information of the electorate through all means of information”.¹⁷ Out of all the fears expressed by various authors, it emerges that the proper information of the electorate tends to become a component of the referendum that would ensure it not transforming into a plebiscite.

The referendum or the plebiscite represents the direct vote of an entire electorate about approving or rejecting a proposition.¹⁸ This way, a Constitution, a

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 268.

¹⁵ Pierre Pactet, *Institutions politiques, Droit constitutionnel*, Masson, Paris, 1985, p. 92: «la consultation des électeurs sur une question ou sur un texte qui ne deviendra alors parfait et définitif qu'en cas de réponse positive.»

¹⁶ Catherine Clessis, Didier Claus, Jacques Robert, and Patrick Wajzman, *Exercices pratiques – Droit constitutionnel*, Montchrestien, Paris, p. 271.

¹⁷ Ion Rusu, *Drept constituțional și instituții politice*, Lumina Lex, Bucharest, 2004, p. 49.

¹⁸ www.wikipedia.org: “A *referendum* (plural: «referendums» or «referenda» [N.B. *referenda* imply a plurality of issues.] or *plebiscite* (from Latin *plebiscite*, originally a decree of the

revision of the Constitution, a law, a revocation or a mere political governmental matter can be adopted.

The authors of the mentioned site consider that the terms of referendum and plebiscite are similar, but in practice they use the term plebiscite in the context of voting major problems of a state, such as sovereignty. But plebiscite also designates the procedure through which a dictator or an autocrat organizes popular voting that cannot be free and democratic. The term referendum is used especially for the common, usual adaptations in a democracy.

The Irish Republic has used both referendum and plebiscite to adopt its Constitution. The conclusion expressed in the end would be that we can use the referendum for a democratic state and plebiscite for the states where there is a personality cult.¹⁹

Referendums are still very rarely used in practice, being also a controversial matter. It usually only exists complementary to a representative legislative authority.

The defenders of the referendum consider that the decision should be taken away from the elites and voted directly by the people. Direct democracy would be preferable and the referendum must prevail over a decision of the Parliament. Another argument is the popular sovereignty that must be exerted by its detentor in fundamental matters of the state.

4. Criticism of the referendum

Critics believe that representative democracy is superior to the direct one. Representative democracy is a system in which the elected apply independent judgments, they are only mere delegates automatically tied to the voting machineries. Furthermore, it is said that the referendum is used by the politicians as a method of escaping from the responsibility of taking a controversial decision. Most fundamental changes would not have been possible if they had not been submitted to popular vote, because the people are reticent to changes: the abolition of slavery, universal vote, because the electorate is driven by feelings and interests rather than by deliberate conclusions. They can be influenced by strong personalities or proper propaganda. Such instruments might lead to the “tyranny of the majority” and the erosion of minorities or individual rights.

Concilium Plebis) *Is a direct vote* in which an entire electorate is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal.”

¹⁹ *Ibidem*. “Here too, «plebiscite» will be mainly used for un-democratic states where we are likely to find a cult of personality, and «referendum» for democratic states.”

This opposition to the referendum has its origin in its successful use by Hitler or Mussolini, who have used plebiscite to limit their power. For this reason, after World War II, Germany has not provided or organized a referendum at federal level.

To conclude, the British politician Chris Patten is quoted, who has talked about the possibility of organizing a referendum in Great Britain regarding the U.E. Constitution in an interview for BBC in 2004:

“I believe that referendums are horrible... they were Mussolini and Hitler’s favorite tools in spreading the plebiscitary democracy. They underestimate the Parliament (Westminster). What they do realize, as I’ve seen during the last elections, is the fact that if you have a referendum about a matter, politicians, during the entire campaign, will say that they do not discuss and they must not discuss about it, this is referendum. The result is that at the last elections euro was highly debated. I believe referendum is fundamentally anti-democratic in our system and I do not want to deal with it. To make a long story short, governors only take it into consideration when they are weak.”²⁰

Another possibility of manipulation would be submitting to popular vote the same question several times until it passes, due to the elective’s fatigue. Repeating a referendum for the same matter has become phenomenal, never-en-dum.²¹

The definition offered by the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language describes the referendum as a direct consultation of the citizens, called to pronounce themselves, through vote, about a law project of high importance to the state or about matters of general interest.²²

The definition does not cover the entire range of types of referendum because the authors have decided to give a descriptive definition, in our right existing constitutional referendum, more commonly met and that cannot be ignored in defining this type of popular consultation.

²⁰ www.wikipedia.org, “I think referendums are awful ... they were the favourite form of plebiscitary democracy of Mussolini and Hitler. They undermine Westminster. [parliament]. What they ensure, as we saw in the last election campaign say oh we’re not going to talk about that, we don’t need to talk about that, that’s referendum. So during the last election campaign the euro was hardly debated. I think referendums are fundamentally anti-democratic in our system and I wouldn’t have anything to do with them. On the whole, governments only concede them when governments are weak.” (BBC, 2004)

²¹ “Never –en-dum”.

²² Romanian Academy, *Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române*, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p. 906.

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Ioana Muraru and Elena Simina Tănăsescu define referendum as a “procedure of democratic consultation of the people”²³. The consultation can be initiated by the state authorities or even by the nation itself, can have a purely informative purpose, for a clearer information about the public will, or a decisional propose, which imposes to the authorities that have initiated it.

Another delimitation of the concept, based on the fact that, most often, the people appear as a referee for extremely important problems or extremely general as they might be, describes the procedure as being “by excellence a way of directly exerting the state power.”²⁴

Terminologically, and not only, the institution has its origin in Roman law, where the gerund of the verb *referare* designated a procedure through which the entire elective, different from the plebs, was directly consulted regarding a precise subject, the adopted decision being therefore legitimate. Also in Antiquity, the referendum was appreciated as an excellent tool of the direct democracy, in which the electors expressed their opinion and adopted a decision directly, without any intermediate.

The concept of participative democracy cannot be considered perfection, having panacea value for all states and all government forms. In this regard, the authors quote: “The project regarding Recommendation no. 1704(2005) of the Parliament gathering referring to referendum: towards the establishment of good practices in Europe.”²⁵

This rapport was written by the Council of Europe to remove any feeling of obligation of the states in their regulatory systems specific instruments of representative democracy. This rapport was prepared based on the contribution of teachers Francois Luchaire, Andorra, Peter Van-Dijk, Olanda and Giorgio Maliverni, Switzerland. They point out that the recommendation values the intentions of the Venice Commission towards ensuring a real democracy, but the formulations are partial and they draw the attention to the advantages the referendum presents, without mentioning side effects and without referring to the positions of different states about the referendum. They say there should also be place for the ideas that emphasize the fact that the referendum, especially if it has a constraining character, can seriously limit the Parliament’s competence. It could also have unsuspected effects on the responsibility of the representative authorities, without necessarily and systematically leading to strengthening the

²³ Ioan Muraru and Elena Simina Tănăsescu, *Drept constituțional și instituții politice*, vol. II, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2006, p. 132.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 134.

²⁵ www.venice.coe.int cited by Ioan Muraru and Elena Simina Tănăsescu, p. 138.

democracy in those states. Abuses being always available, they could determine the strengthening of the executive in disadvantage of the legislative, either indirectly, by circumventing the legislative by the executive by editing legal standards or by using the referendum to enhance the legitimacy of the executive, creating the so-called “plebiscitary derive”.²⁶

There is also a legal definition of the referendum offered by Law no. 3 in 2000, regarding the organization and the deployment of the referendum. Thus, “the national referendum constitutes the form and method of direct consultation and expression of sovereign will of the Romanian people regarding: revision of the Constitution, dismissal of the President of Romania, problems of national interest.”²⁷ The local referendum is also reminded, regarding problems of special interest for that certain administrative-territorial division.

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²⁶ Ioan Muraru, Elena Simina Tănăsescu, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

²⁷ www.superlex.ro Legea nr. 3/2000 concerning the organization and holding the referendum, published in Monitorul Oficial, Partea I, nr. 84 din 24 februarie with subsequent modifications art.2.

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The discourse of Power and the Power of Discourse

Assumption of the philosophical concepts of Humanity, Reason, Morality and Authority in sequences of classical literature. A case study: Caragiale's Năpasta

Ioan FĂRMUȘ, *Ph.D. Candidate*
"Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, Romania
Faculty of Letters and Communication Sciences
Romanian Language and Literature Department
farmusioan@yahoo.com

Abstract

Fiction has always been interconnected with the problem of morality, whether we speak of a thematized assumption, or of a more subtle one.

The problem of the control of the perspective upon a character (whether fictional or not) always represented a preoccupation not only for the philosophical, mass-media or political discourse (especially in the context of the postmodern society), but also for the literary discourse, a privileged space, taking into account the fact that it facilitates, while at the same time, hides the manner in which the mechanisms of power function. Thus, if the discourse of power has the power to manipulate the reader's assumptions, it has, at the same time, the power to undermine these assumptions, to set under a suspicious look the whole mechanism through which fiction works.

Thus, the article I propose indulges in analyzing the discourse of Power and the power of Discourse in the case of the fictional language. The essay focuses on Caragiale's Năpasta, a text that thematizes the manner in which fiction creates some expectancies into their readers, the way in which a text tries to control the reader's answer, to force him, if he is not paying attention, to identify him with some unreliable perspectives or characters.

In this manner, notions such as Humanism, Reason, Morality, fundamental concepts for the discourse of Reason in the XVII and XVIII c., become, in Caragiale's Năpasta, ambiguous and problematic notions, both for the status of the characters as for readers of the story.

Keywords: *reading, morality, manipulation, power, reason.*

1. The beginning and the end

"[...] de-aia te-am luat, ca să te aduc în sfârșit aici. De la început te-am bănuțit. [...] Mai întâi, mă hotărâsem să te curăț – ba era să bag și alt suflet în păcat!

– pe urmă am stat să mă gândesc mai bine. [...] nu te puteam lăsa să treci dincolo așa nejudecat aicea. Te-am judecat, te-ai mărturisit, trebuie să-ți dau acum pedeapsa ce ți se cuvine c-ai răpus pe omul ce mi-era drag ca lumina ochilor, tu, care mi-ai fost urât totdeauna ...”¹ (my underlining). That is the speech that practically puts an end to Anca’s plea before she gives Dragomir away to the people, a moment that should mark the end of the conflict, the triumph of the truth and the solution of the moral dilemma in which the drama positions its reader.

This ending, as we can see from the fragment quoted above, represents nothing more than the purpose of Anca’s punitive act that bears the responsibility of restoring the moral disorder of the drama produced by the killing of Dumitru. The text thus (or my interpretation rather) builds around this powerful ending that Anca presents as the purpose of a punitive act that she assumed.

Therefore, there exists a powerful sense of the ending that the drama builds into its reader to whom it appears both as a purpose of Anca’s punitive act, and as a satisfaction of the reader’s wish for moral fulfillment, for restoration of order.

But the end of the drama is more than dilemmatic implying not only a dispute around justice / injustice, reason / madness, guiltiness / non-guiltiness, freedom / prison (binary oppositions that the text so intelligently works with), being also a dispute around positioning the reader around the moral perspective that the reading of the drama presupposes (starting from this ending).

2. *The scenario*

The drama opens up abruptly; from the first replies we find ourselves at the very climax of the story. Anca, Dragomir and Gheorghe find out that the Law – the one that functions outside and that Gheorghe’s newspaper brings inside – may make possible the deresponsibilization of a person that committed a murder, if within ten years, the murderer confesses. This possibility makes the engine of the text spin around because for Dragomir there appears an opportunity to get rid of his tormented consciousness that consumes him from the inside, and also the possibility to get rid of the punishment for his crime, while for Anca there appears both the possibility that Dragomir might get away unpunished, and also the confirmation of the suspicions that were the cause of her living along with Dragomir for eight years. But Anca does not wish only for a confirmation of her suspicions, but to imprison Dragomir, a personal vendetta that the presence of Ion makes possible.

Thus, along the drama we witness a long process of investigation, judging

¹ I.L. Caragiale, *Teatru*, Eminescu Publishing House, Bucharest, 1971, p. 311.

and sentencing of the one that from the very beginning we know to be the killer of Dumitru. But the text favors Anca's drama which it situates at the centre of the story forcing thus the reader to read *Năpasta* from the point of view of her system of values (a system that the reader is tempted to assume). Let's not forget that Anca is given the larger space in the drama's length (she is present in all of its scenes) and that she is the only one to whom it was granted the privilege of the monologist discourse (a discourse attributed, traditionally, to tragic characters in dramatic texts).

But the punitive act that Anca undertakes presupposes the coexistence of a large number of roles that she has to play ranging from that of an investigator and a prosecutor to that of a judge. Yet, to assume all of these roles presupposes the existence of a system that would make them possible, a system of values to which the status of one character or another might be related.

The beginning of the drama, the one which is being conventionally determined by the newspaper that Gheorghe brings inside, practically establishes a part of the paradigms around which the drama might be read: the possibility that a man that is not crazy might go mad or the possibility that an innocent man might be locked up. Starting from here all the other perspectives of the text develop (that of freedom or that of justice, for example), perspectives that cannot be discussed outside the question of morality (a dilemma that involves the very positioning of the reader).

The possibility of assuming a moral position is facilitated when the two perspectives that the text opens up (that of madness and that of guiltiness) occupy some clear, non-problematic positions. But in *Năpasta* the two possibilities seem to function rather as masks that change from one character to another. More than that, the moral question of the drama cannot function outside a rational system that would legitimize it, that should establish, in a clear manner, which are the guilty and which are the mad ones. And when Anca assumes the responsibility of punishing the guilty ones, she becomes herself (or rather she wishes to become, legitimizes her acts through) a voice of this system, as Constantin Hârlav mentions in a afterword dedicated to the dramatic work of Caragiale: "În dimensiunea gravă, Caragiale mitizează rațiunea, parcă neliniștit de forța ei distructivă: Anca face din rațiune instrumentul răzbunării"².

Thus far we have seen that all the text's characters oscillate somehow around this position of madness: Ion – being the text's declared madman, and also the one that was imprisoned for a crime he had not committed –, Dragomir – as the

² Constantin Hârlav, "Fragmente pentru o «mitologie» caragialeană", in I.I. Caragiale, *Teatru*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984, pp. 263-264.

character that near the end, unable to defer any longer the fatality of his sentence, goes mad –, Gheorghe – as the character mad enough to follow the steps of Dragomir because of his deep love for Anca. The one that seems to escape(?) this position is Anca, and that is because in and through her speaks an entire system of values that makes the punitive act possible. There is an entire rationalist discourse that she identifies with and that she puts to work so that the punitive act may be exercised.

But there also exists in *Năpasta* the question of guiltiness. We see Dragomir guilty for murdering Dumitru, but it is Ion that is being imprisoned for the murder in Dragomir's place. Gheorghe then is ready at any time to take the place of Dragomir (the same as the latter has done). Yet not even Dragomir is as free as he thinks because as he too feels that the house he lives in along with Anca is much more like a prison because if for Ion the dungeon is more of a prison of the body (because in his case, as Anca mentioned, "D-zeu, cine știe pentru ce păcate, l-a aruncat în prăpastie, dar a fost și bun și i-a luat mintea cu care să-și judece ticăloșia: i-a dat greutatea ... dar i-a luat cumpăna!"³), for Dragomir the house he lives in is more like a prison of the soul: "Ba zi că e o femeie nebună, care mi-a stricat mintea și mie. Eu sunt sănătos, crezi, de când am luat-o?"⁴.

Thus we can very easily see that the positions that these characters fill are far from being clear, univocal, non-problematic. Moreover, the system that stands behind them, system that should have offered clarity to the positions that they occupy in the above mentioned binary oppositions, fails. Anca, the character through whose voice this system speaks, is herself exposed to the contradictions that the text raises. We have seen that the text focuses on her dilemma – which it puts in the centre of it – she being thus presented as the oppressed one. Yet if we look over again we see that Dragomir also is one of the oppressed ones as a person whose consciousness is corrupted, who is tormented by remorse and that lives a continuous state of terror. The same holds true / may be said about Ion (though the discussion around him is much more complex and necessitates a separate discussion). In the end we see that Anca holds the position of prosecutor and judge, but the reasons for which Dragomir has been imprisoned are different from the real ones, thus she enters herself the group of the guilty ones.

Somehow the system that the text sets behind Anca's punitive act fails. Rationalism, as this is the ideology that marked the birth of the prison in the 17th and 18th centuries, as M. Foucault mentioned in *A supraveghea și a pedepsi*.

³ I.L. Caragiale, *Teatru*, Eminescu Publishing House, Bucharest, 1971, p. 287.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 277.

*Nașterea închisorii*⁵, is put to a trial and fails because the binary oppositions that the text works with are canceled, being far from clear and univocal.

The end of the text should have marked the “triumph of reason” and “the emergence of the truth”, does not put an end to the initial conflict, it only suspends it temporarily. How does the reader position himself towards this ending, how does he answer to the invitation of identifying with the triumphant character at the end of the drama, how does the reader respond to the text’s continuous challenging of his views (starting from this ending) remain some dilemmas that my reading of the text cannot overpass.

3. *Auctorial figures*

There is in the literary works of Caragiale a predilection for authorial figures, for director-like characters that, positioning themselves both outside and inside the text, determine, put into motion, while at the same time solve the conflicts that spin around them and the characters around them. *Năpasta* is no exception to that, placing at its very heart another “deus ex machina” figure – a woman this time – around which oscillate the destinies of three men: Dragomir, Gheorghe și Ion (four if we add Dumitru also).

Though placed at the very heart of the drama and presented as the oppressed ones, Anca is far from being cast in the role of the victim, acting more like an oppressor to the characters around her. Far from being a tormented consciousness (as is the case of Dragomir, for example) Anca represents a form of authority, a character that assumes (as the voice of a rationalist, oppressive and authoritarian, yet moral system) the responsibility of discovering and punishing the presupposed murderer of Dumitru.

As an authorial, oppressive figure she is the one that puts pressure on all the characters’ psyche, that manipulates the events in her favor (in the favor of her demonstration rather), that gives the characters around her a role in the story that she herself creates while at the same time closing the drama’s physical and psychological space. All of the drama’s characters live inside this closed space that she creates and manipulates, forcing them to become nothing more than mere tools, puppets. How does she manage to do that? By resorting to the instrument that her position of investigator, prosecutor and judge possesses – the power of language, the power of fiction, the ability to work with versions of reality. That is why all the characters of the drama seem to be prisoners of that closed space, their

⁵ Michel Foucault, *A supraveghea și a pedepsi. Nașterea închisorii*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997.

escape being forbidden.

At the other end, Dragomir is the only character that recognizes and accuses this fiction of the closed space that Anca creates; he is the only one that perceives the house as a prison and himself in the mouth of madness. He therefore is the only one thus, that (even though completely guilty, thus in a less appropriate instance) deconspires Anca's fiction: "Ba zi că e o femeie nebună, care mi-a stricat mintea și mie. Eu sunt sănătos, crezi, de când am luat-o? ...Uf! M-am săturat! De opt ani de zile, Dumitru și iar Dumitru; pe el îl auz când vorbește ea, când mă uit la ea, îl văz pe el ... Eu trăiesc în casă, mănânc la masă, dorm la un loc cu stafia lui ... Așa! Asta n-o să mai meargă mult!"⁶. The past, the one that Anca opposes so stubbornly to Dragomir's wish for escape, closes any way out, while the present becomes only a form of suspended time.

So there exists in this text a past story, organized around the killing of Dumitru and a present story that is centered on Anca's punitive act, stories that have Ion, Dragomir and Anca as connectors. Ion is the one that fills (unwillingly) Dragomir's position in the first story leading to a partial/open solving of the conflict of the past story. On the other hand, in the second story, the one set in the present, Ion determines the solving, for the second tome, of the conflict of the first story. The differences lie in the fact that if in the first story, the past one, his role was part of a scenario determined by fatality / destiny, in the second story his position is determined by the role that Anca assigns to him in her own scenario. Thus, Ion becomes nothing more than a tool through which Anca tries to control the story, to impose a meaning to the events, one (closed) interpretation.

In the first story, the one set in the past, Anca held the position of "object of desire" (R. Girard), a passive position (that of an object) as we see, the trophy that Dragomir wanted. In the second story, she passes from a passive position (that of an object) towards an active one (that of a subject). She now becomes an authority figure that determines decisively the outcome of the conflict. Her position is thus an interested one, organized around a (premeditated) purpose. She rebuilds the pattern of the ordinary story (that of the murdering of Dumitru, in a triangle that included Dumitru-Dragomir-Ion), forcing the position of Ion to be filled by its rightful "owner", Dragomir. Because she feels the (outside) Law does not compensate for her wish for order, for moral fulfillment, and risking that the first story might remain open (unsolved), she rewrites it, assuming a demiurgic, auctorial role. She assumes thus a paternal (ordering, corrective) position,

⁶ I.L. Caragiale, *Teatru*, Eminescu Publishing House, Bucharest, 1971, pp. 277-278.

rewriting reality (if we look backwards), manipulating the events and controlling its meanings, asking for a closed interpretation. In her fiction (the one she presents at the end of the drama to the people brought there by Gheorghe) the characters around her become nothing but tools. Gheorghe, at the beginning, and then Ion too create opportunities into the fiction of the closed space that Anca controls.

Dragomir is the guilty one for the failure to solve the conflictual situation of the past story. He is the elliptic character of the “triangular desire” that he is a part of along with Anca and Dumitru, because his position was filled in by Ion. That is why, in the story set in the present, Anca will reopen the triangle, forcing the exchange Ion – Dragomir, by bringing back Dragomir to the position once (accidentally) occupied by Ion. Her purpose thus is oriented towards repairing the errors, towards reestablishing the moral equilibrium and towards closure.

In the second story, Dragomir is a tormented character, consumed by remorse, wishing to get away (first of all from the fiction of the closed space into which Anca holds him prisoner). Otherness, in the case of Ion – madness –, that characterizes him in the second story, takes shape only in contrast with Ion (because Dragomir recognizes many times that he is in the mouth of madness).

Regarding the story from this perspective, that of Anca’s punitive act, the closure of the initial triangle (by bringing back Dragomir to fill in Ion’s position) would seem compensatory. Anca becomes thus an authority figure that wishes the closure, the control of meaning, the control of the reader’s answer – one may say –, as long as she expects that her act of punishment will be a credible one (hence the need for witnesses at the end).

4. *From a detective story pattern to a judiciary one*

As we have seen from the preceding chapters of the essay the text gives birth to some dilemmas that ask the reader to assume a certain position, especially in what concerns the question of morality. In the next chapters we shall see how the reader is constructed, forced to assume a responsibility towards the text.

It has been said about this text that it uses a detective story pattern, but one may observe easily that the patterns of this type of fiction, as they have been described by Tzvetan Todorov in “The typology of detective fiction”⁷, suffer some changes, important to the determination of the position into which the text situates its reader, because, somehow, this text undergoes an evolution from the detective story pattern towards a judiciary one, according to the roles that Anca assumes

⁷ Tzvetan Todorov, “The typology of detective fiction”, in David Lodge, *Modern Literary Theory and Criticism*, London and New York, Longman, 1988, pp. 157-165.

along the drama.

Thus there exists a detective – easy to recognize in the figure of Anca – and a murderer – a position occupied by Dragomir. There also exist two stories: an absent story, that of the murder (that is organized around Dumitru, the absent character of the text) and a present story, a story of investigation that functions inside the triangle Anca – Dragomir – Dumitru. Yet the murderer is known from the very beginning, because of Anca’s suspicions, and thus there is nothing that might have remained hidden to the reader. That is why Anca wishes for a reconstruction of the story of the murder, not through a process centered on a discovery, but through a confirmation (in other words a confession). Thus the story is not in so much one of reconstruction, but rather one of punishment. The importance of the process of deduction – so decisive in the detective story pattern – disappears because Anca’s position shifts from that of a detective, towards that of a judge, as her purpose is not that of revealing, of uncovering, but that of accusing and sentencing.

Now, as Anca is set in the centre of the drama, as the text follows her investigatory act, the reader is set into a position not only of “revealing” along with her the motives of the crime, but also of identifying with her position. Thus the position that the reader is situated in is no longer that of an apprentice (a position traditionally assigned to the reader in the detective story pattern), as it is not his apprenticeship that is being intended, but, since the purpose of the investigating act is no longer one of discovery, but that of accusation and sentencing, the position to be filled in by the reader would be that of a “witness”, of an assistant / spectator in a court of law. Because what Anca does in this text is to build an accusation that aims at the punishment of Dragomir.

Thus far, we have seen that we know from the very beginning the names, the motives and the participants in the act of the crime, thanks to her suspicions and to her insinuating game. That Dragomir already lives in a (psychologically) closed space, is indicated by his very words. Before Anca delivers Dragomir through the ending she herself imagined: “de-aia te-am luat, ca să te aduc în sfârșit aici. De la început te-am bănuțit”⁸, she wills put him to a real interrogation (“Stăi drept ... adună-ți mințile câte le mai ai și răspunde la ce te-oї întreba ... Pentru ce l-ai omorât? [...] Cum l-ai ucis? spune. [...] Cum ai făcut? [...] El ce-a făcut?”⁹), with the help of which she might get a confession – that, as M. Foucault noticed, “constituie o probă atât de zdrobitoare, încât face inutile căutarea altor probe și

⁸ I.L. Caragiale, *op. cit.*, 1971, p. 311.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 309-311.

recurgerea la anevoiosul și îndoielnicul procedeu combinatoriu al indiciilor.”¹⁰ And the obtaining of this confession, which must lead to the truth, will bring about a change in Anca’s behavior because now, not only does she know the story (the truth), but she controls it also. By controlling the story, Anca will change its elements so that at the end she will deliver to the “witnesses” – the ones that Gheorghe brings to her house – a story that (ironically) repeats the first one (that of the murder of Dumitru), yet hides its contradictions, its differences.

Thus, the ending of *Năpasta* seems to be ironic on two accounts: first of all because it reactivates the old scenario of the crime (according to a pattern of repetition), of the judiciary process that made possible the locking up of Ion (and here we must read a subtle critique of the system that made this scenario possible) and second because the story is constructed around a detective story and a judiciary pattern, patterns that in themselves involve “a disturbance of order in the wake of an originary event [...], followed by a re-establishment of order by the discovery of the criminal”¹¹, and also because “the genre [...] depends on an outcome in which society’s and the reader’s desire for moral restitution is fulfilled.”¹²

In the chapter “Ideology” from *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory. Key critical concepts*, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, discussing the patterns of the detective fiction, consider that “classic detective fiction must distance itself from an ideological critique of society which, however, can never be finally erased”¹³. Thus, even though it is not thematized explicitly in the text, a critique of the society (understood as a critique of the system that made possible the appearance of the prison) is present. The locking up of Ion is twice as inhuman because it also represents a “judiciary absurdity” because, as Foucault would say, inside the rationalist system, which made possible the appearance of the prison system, it is “imposibil deci să declari pe cineva în același timp vinovat și nebun.”¹⁴

Anca herself, as a voice of this system of exclusion, of penitence, even though she recognizes the absurdity of Ion’s existential condition: “Dar e nebun... Mai are nebunul bunăvoie?... Lumina soarelui fără lumina minții...”¹⁵, does not

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

¹¹ Andrew Bennett, Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory. Key critical concepts*, Prentice Hall, 1995, p. 134.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 134.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 136.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁵ I. L. Caragiale, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

have any remorse in using him as a tool in the accusation, judging and sentencing of Dragomir: “Nebunul ăsta tot e osândit o dată... Pentru un păcat, două ori zece, un om tot cu o viață plătește... Și fără altă vină nouă, nebunul tot are să fie prins până la urmă și întors de acolo de unde a fugit. [...] Așa-așa... locul lui e la ocnă...”¹⁶

The difficulty of discussing this character appears when the question arises, if not of the reader’s identifying with him – an impossible identification, I might say –, at least of the reader’s positioning with respect to Ion. If it is easy to see the oppressed in the figure of Anca (who loses her husband and accepts to live for eight years in the company of his murderer) – as much of the critical reception around the drama did, or in the figure of Dragomir (whose consciousness is marked by remorse, a prisoner in the psychological prison that Anca had created all along those eight years), it is harder to see that figure in the person of Ion, the only one guilty without a fault, condemned by the very discourse that made his locking up possible, and also exiled into that “moral space of exclusion” (M. Foucault).

Thus Ion is excluded (removed from the centre) from a wide range of perspectives. Not only is his perspective on things ignored (see also Anca’s discourse in Act I, Scene VII), as he is not a rational character (that is why he cannot be judged nor be part of the moral order, that the end of the drama seems to re-establish), but he is the one that, without guilt, experiences the most inhuman condition (he is the one that absorbs the whole absurdity of the conflict of the drama) without being given a (credible) voice.

Through this character, reason – which made possible the appearance of the binary opposition that the text works with – exposes its limits, while the ending, which should mark the triumph of reason in its relation with madness, with immorality and the truth, manages to reposition our reading, by being unfulfilling in what concerns the reader’s wish for (moral) order.

Man, and ironically the most human position in the text is that of the madman, becomes nothing more than a tool through which the discourse of power legitimizes itself. Man thus becomes a character in a fiction that de-humanizes him, positioning him into suitable “subject positions” through which power can exercise itself. Reason, whose voice in this drama is represented by Anca, exposes its madness (for how should we interpret that wish for the ultimate / abstract truth, that fanatic belief in the idea of absolute justice, that institution of “fanatic justice” but as another form of madness, of reason taken to the extreme).

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 287.

At the appearance of Ion in the 5th scene of the 1st act, when Anca recognizes in him the one imprisoned instead of the real murderer, she puts his appearance under the sign of fatality/destiny, of necessity: “Cum a ajuns omul ăsta aici? ... Tu, Maica Domnului! i-ai fost călăuză; tu l-ai purtat pe căi necunoscute și mi l-ai trimes aici ca să ridice din calea hotărârii mele îndoiala”¹⁷. Reread from the perspective of the end, this positioning of Ion’s appearance under the sign of necessity creates meaning because it creates the expectation of some sort of order (divine, therefore a moral order) that a crime would produce, as happens, for example, in a Greek tragedy. More than that, Anca disapproves of the Law (the one that Gheorghe – by means of the newspaper – brings inside), proposing (somehow at the advice of Dragomir) a new Law, a moral (therefore compensatory) one: “ANCA: Cum adică? La zece ani un ucigaș poate veni să spuie singur ce-a făcut și lumea îl lasă în pace. DRAGOMIR: Așa e legea ... ANCA: Bună lege, zău! DRAGOMIR: De ce nu te pui să faci alta mai bună?”¹⁸

Why was it that the Law that Gheorghe brought inside wasn’t good anymore? Mainly because it left outside the question of morality. It was immoral for a person that had committed a crime to be left free. That is why Anca rewrites the Law, adding to it – through a compensatory gesture – the moral dimension that had been left out, therefore heading for closure (understood as reinstallation of order, recreation of the initial equilibrium that the murder of Dragomir broke).

But the ending enters an ironic contradiction with this expectance. The iterative pattern that Anca uses (that of making Dragomir fill in the position that was once occupied by Ion, to which the presence of the girdle and the blood stains might be added) does not manage to hide the pattern’s contradictions, its differences. The rationality of Anca’s punitive act does not manage to hide its irrationality, and thus the initial conflict does not find a clear outcome and the ending remains open.

5. The power of Discourse and the discourse of Power

If we reconsider the whole discussion, we see that, evidently the text tends to cancel any form of univocity, of clearness, the status of the drama’s characters, the positions that the latter fill in being problematic. In all of the drama’s characters we encounter the difficulty of defining madness, truth or morality, and that is why the masks they wear circulate. In the second chapter of the essay we have seen that

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 284.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 276.

the two stories that we find underlying this text (the present and the past one) seem to be split, somehow, by some sort of an ontological order, by the “will” factor more exactly. If the first story is put under the sign of fatality, the murdering of Dumitru creating disorder in Anca’s life, the second story seems to be somehow forged, artificial. The fatality now bears the mask of Anca, the one that assumes the responsibility of reinstating the moral order, of closing the conflictual situation and of catching and punishing the murderer. So the second story is nothing more than Anca’s fiction in which all the characters around her become tools, puppets, in which the events unfold according to the meaning that she is willing to impose on their interpretation. Fiction in this second story is a controlled one, going towards closure.

The moral restoration that the end should have produced is an illusory one because, ironically, even though Anca wishes for difference (proposing a better Law for the one that Gheorghe’s newspaper at the beginning of the text brought in), she repeats the same ideology that so unfairly had put Ion behind bars. It is not the truth but the evidence that triumphs at the end. And thus the morality of Anca’s discourse (the one that legitimated her punitive act) has been excluded.

Thus, from a point of view that considers reading, the end of the drama becomes nothing more than a trap, manipulating the moral expectations of the reader, expectances that the end of the text seem – but fails, in fact – to accomplish.

From many perspectives the drama is a limit text. First of all because it exposes the discourse of power, a discourse that is assumed by Anca, the auctorial figure in this text. Yet it is the excluded, the marginal that bear the marks of humanity and not a central instance as Anca that legitimizes herself through a rationalist discourse. Somehow Anca tries to fool us when she asserts that she wishes a change: “ANCA: Cum adică? La zece ani un ucigaș poate veni să spuie singur ce-a făcut și lumea îl lasă în pace. DRAGOMIR: Așa e legea ... ANCA: Bună lege, zău!”¹⁹ In fact she repeats the same scenario, the same ideology that had been used to imprison Ion. This way the drama suggests a model of reading the discourse of Power: unmasking its incongruence, exposing the irrationality behind reason, thus asking its reader to take a responsible position towards the moral question of the text.

At the same time, because of the presence of some authority figures, of some real forms of control, *Năpasta* dramatizes the manner in which a text, by means of some textual instances or fictional strategies tries to control the reader’s answer, to

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 276.

impose a meaning to him, to enclose him into a pattern of meaning, into a fiction of “the closed space” (I. Constantinescu). This enclosure of the meaning, this sense of living in absurdity is a constructed one and this fact is better exposed by the second story of the drama (the one set in the present) which, in contrast to the first one, as we have seen, has a somehow forged, artificial air. The idea that there is no escape is Anca’s creation. It is thus a constructed pattern of meaning. Caught into this moral dilemma, forced (by the different instances of this text) to take a position, the reader might become himself nothing more than a “prisoner” in the house of language.

As an authority figure, Anca is anxious. She does not want her “prisoners” to escape and that is why she forges a story out of which nobody can get out. Thus, the control of fiction entails a form of control of the reader’s answer. But there are instances that deny these forms of control. Dragomir, for example, is the only one that, as we have seen, recognizes and accuses this fiction of the closed space. His wish to escape this real prison (of language), a form of rebellion that we find also in Ion, becomes a form of resistance. The two (symptomatically guilty positions in the discourse of Power) become voices that try to expose this attempt at controlling the fiction, the prison of language, the fiction of the closed space into which they are held up prisoners.

Thus we can say that in *Năpasta* Caragiale thematizes the manner in which fiction creates some expectations in their readers, the way in which the text, with the help of some fictional strategies, tries to control the reader’s answer, to force him, if he is not paying attention, to identify with some unreliable perspectives or characters (because even though Anca’s behavior seems to be justified, identifying with her perspective is a trap), the manner in which we as readers find ourselves exposed to manipulation by an auctorial instance because in *Năpasta* there is no escape outside language, fiction.

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ESSAYS

PRESENTATIONS

REVIEWS

Literary Hermeneutics - a large vision upon the text

by Victoria Fonari, Chişinău, CEP. U. S. M, 2007

Review

Elena VOROTNEAC, *PhD. Candidate*
The State University of Moldova
Department of Romanian Literature and Literary Theory
Faculty of Letters, The State University of Moldavia

Abstract

This article represents the book "Literary Hermeneutic" by Victoria Fonari, Ph.D., the State University of Moldova. Hermeneutics, as a researching object, includes literary, critical, theological, juridical, linguistic, psychological, verbal and sociological knowledge.

Literary Hermeneutics is one of the most favoured disciplines. It is venerated both in Homeric exegesis from antiquity and in the improvement of the methodology interpretation of the canonical works, in which a vain moment is the deciphering of texts – the monuments and authors' comments from times immemorial, thus re-establishing a part of the human values. The re-establishing of the connections between the values of the past and their understanding from the present prospect is due to literary interpretation.

The demands of the paradigm of literary and artistic interpretation constitute a basic element which is important both for the writing of academic researches and for the literary values of understanding. It directs the student to scientific works and facilitates the professional activity of teachers, journalists, jurists and translators

Keywords: *hermeneutics, literature, value, text, art, culture, globalization.*

Nowadays, literary hermeneutics is one of the most discussed, but less investigated sciences. As the text determines a fan of interpretative mirrors, the art of comprehension involves a series of optics. Literary interpretation doesn't aim to undecieve the symbols, but to accumulate meanings. The exegetes, in raffles of manuals and scientific books, explain this phenomenon from various perspectives. However, there is a clear necessity for editing a curriculum that consistently, but briefly, involves more concepts about the art of hermeneutics and for providing a comprehensive analysis.

For this purpose, we remarked the book *Literary Hermeneutics*¹, published in Chisinau, CEP USM, 2007, written by Victoria Fonari, Ph.D., (it is the second monograph signed by the same author, and it is the seventh as regards the book). In this study, the researcher proposes a series of interpretations of the term hermeneutics, analyzed in the works of the European scholars. The following examples are relevant: “Hermeneutics is an art which establishes clear rules in interpreting the texts” (p. 15), hermeneutics is the science that relates to “value and to the degree of its ability in interpreting the message beyond the textual forms” (p. 23), hermeneutics – “method that enables us to seize (by comprehension) the intensity and the meaning of the existence lived by the subject during his existence” (p. 44), “Hermeneutics is the horizon of question from the inside which defines the significant direction of the text” (p. 53) etc. This didactic scientific information, together with all quotes characteristic of an investigation, is original as it is presented through the prism of their own vision. Optics combines the experience as a writer, teacher and researcher. The literary critic Ion Ciocan, PhD, professor, claimed in a speech that the survey of hermeneutics conducted by Victoria Fonari is special in that it provides a complex analysis of one’s own perspective, without deflecting from the concepts of scientists in the field.

The theorist Anatol Gavrilov, PhD, Academy of Sciences from Moldova, published in the same year his monograph *Criteria of scientific degree of literary terminology*². The bibliography includes the research carried out by Victoria Fonari.

In other words, the author doesn’t venture with some cheap compilations, but intends to make a relevant and serious research. Victoria Fonari not only renders the concepts of hermeneutics of the major scholars and spread schools (Schleiermacher, Origen, Dilthey, Gadamer, Ezio Raimondi etc.), but also analyzes, reinterprets it and guides the reader towards the real ways of theme comprehension. Most of the times, the author explains the theses of exegetes, referring to the texts of autochthon authors (Aurelius Basil, Ion, Gregory Vieru Nicholas Dabija, Arcadia Suceveanu).

Another strategy is that after each chapter there is a test that provides a personal rediscovery of the artistic texts from the optics of investigated concepts. It constitutes a discussion between the reader and the theoretical aspects, which finally requires a coagulation between the empiricism of knowledge and the

¹ Victoria Fonari, *Hermeneutica literară*, Chișinău, CE USM, 2007.

² Anatol Gavrilov, *Criterii de științificitate a terminologiei literare. Principiul obiectivității. Eseu de epistemologie literară*, Chișinău, 2007.

existential one. This guided communication reveals a vivacity of the strictly scientific text. Thus, the optics of the reader acquires value. The texts for practice are interestingly selected, sometimes controversial, sometimes they reveal the less known side, such as the text of Guatier referring to the drawings of Victor Hugo. And we immediately see the spot of coffee worked by the French writer. This is possible due to the tests and to the accumulated score. Each test involves some questions based on the studied chapter with reference to a proposed text. This very moment imposes to the work a prominent and intelligible allure.

The study made under the scientific and stylistic editorship of the academician Mihail Dolgan, includes a wealthy scientific bibliography. Referring to the ideologies on the concept of hermeneutics, Victoria Fonari, selectively faces, or renders very keenly the theses of notorious scientists: Roland Barthes, Connor Stevens, Jonhatan Culler, Umberto Eco, Michel Foucault, Paul Ricoeur, Gianni Vattimo, Nicholas S. Râmbu etc. This moment increases its value of didactic material, profiling an invaluable expression of infallibility.

The chapter “Value / Kitsch. Interpretative variants” is of a revealing value for the researcher. Here, the reader is given some guidelines in order to distinguish the value of the kitsch. In this respect, there are given a series of scientific theses that come to argue the criteria of the work interpretation and there are offered concrete examples that argue for or against the interpretation of a work. The researcher also moots some individual concepts of European scientists.

However, she mentions that hermeneutics aims to make clear obscure elements through conscious reflection. Then, when analyzing a literary work, it is taken into account the criteria for determining the veracity. In this respect, literary texts can be studied from many perspectives: historical, social, personal, psychological, grammatical, ethnic. Therefore, we must keep in mind that hermeneutics is closely related to the art of thinking, rhetoric, psychology, temporality, autobiography/the life of the author, authenticity etc. On the other hand, the seven types of interrogations of Bloom (literature, translation, interpretation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation), adapted from Sanders, are important in the process of hermeneutic analysis, thus revealing the subtext. However, this process wouldn't have the same effect if they didn't focus on key words: value, interpretation, truth.

So, being an unquestionable value, *Literary Hermeneutics* by Victoria Fonari, remains a valuable book for the young hermeneut. This didactic material guides her to an abysmal world of conceiving some profound values. Therefore, the weight of the exposed truth here is great. This book is not devoted only to philologists but can be applied in philosophy, economics, jurisdiction etc. In other

words, the science of hermeneutics directs a new era of thinking. You can't outface it if you are not ready. This book is familiar by the concept of hermeneutics from different optics and gives a brief empirical investigation of the artistic and critical texts. The work is useful for students, MA students, doctors, teachers, being dedicated to all the fans of hermeneutics.

Universitatea "Ștefan cel Mare" Suceava

720229, Suceava, Romania
str. Universității nr.13
tel: 0230 216147
0230 522978
fax: 0230 520080

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