

Autonomous Discourse. Strategies of Communication

Review

Arthur Suciu,

Autonomous Discourse. Strategies of Communication
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Coherent and problematizing, constructed on investigative principles, Arthur Suciu's second edition of *Autonomous Discourse. Strategies of Communication* (2024), published by Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” from Iași, represents a real contribution to the field of Communication Sciences. Its aim, to lay the foundations for a theory of autonomous discourse, reveals from the researcher not only a penchant for grand theoretical constructions but also mastery of an (original) method of analysis that attests to a solidly grounded, carefully conceptualized, and above all, interrogative endeavor. Without claiming to be a metanarrative, his study, beyond its initial projection as a research thesis, constitutes an explanatory construct – the product of a series of exercises in lucidity behind which one can read a long-practiced research experience – born from the need of man (whether intellectual or not), as an integral being, (1) to build, through writing, a space that allows for the unconstrained existence of the self and (2) to resist the pressure of homogenization from an ideological discourse that aspires to reduce him to a mere consumer. This aspect greatly broadens the investigative scope of his work, making it a book that addresses not only specialists but all those who choose to live lucidly:

This research no longer targets the effects on the private individual, effects that are ensured through institutionalization at the societal level, but the effects on the individual in his capacity as part of the public and as a consumer. Quantitative research aims to gather information regarding the individual's consumer status: his preferences, desires, and needs concerning one or another area of life. In this

way, man in his capacity as man, man in his entirety remains unexamined. (Suciu, 2024, p. 21)

The approach, surprising by the very dialogue it involves, reveals a work written at the intersection of three research directions: one, the result of initial training, on which are laid the logic of demonstration, conceptual clarity, and interrogative appetite (*Philosophy*), the second, the result of a professional choice, from which part of the conceptual apparatus and integrative vision are born (*Communication Sciences*), and a third, stemming from a passion, which, long and lucidly practiced, has transformed into a semantic pool from which the author recovers, reinterprets, and recirculates cultural tropes (*Literature*).

The aim of the argumentative architecture, as I mentioned, is the construction of a theory of autonomous discourse, conceived as an analytical tool capable of making visible the strategy behind certain if not every discourse. Even though today the concept of discourse, through repeated use or through a detrimental conceptual expansion, seems to have lost its precision and, along with it, its meaning, Arthur Suciu's recuperative effort, coupled with the science of conceptual delimitation, shows that the term has not yet lost its analytical validity. Clearly defined and used restrictively, discourse means for the author “a part of a language, of a whole, as an actualized system,” “the current expression of a language and, at the same time, [...] a taking of a position” (Suciu, 2024, p. 18). Exercising such a perspective, what we call “reality” becomes a construct articulated discursively, and its function, referentiality, an illusion, the product of a dominant ideology that mediates man's encounter with the world in which he lives. This is demonstrated by the distinction his work operates with, that between “heteronomous discourse” (or discourses with integrative purpose) and “autonomous discourse” (or discourses aimed at ironic distancing, essentially scriptural practices with an artistic stake, expressions of an individuality existentially engaged in the effort to dislocate the joints of the social order discourse).

Starting from the observation that autonomous discourse has lost much of its subversive value, and thus its autonomy, in contemporary society, Arthur Suciu launches the following hypothesis: if discourse considered as a whole possesses an ironic characteristic, then irony, not a trope, but a macro textual strategy, which attests to a taking of a position, an exercise in existential engagement, a vision articulated on broad spaces, becomes a mark of autonomy. By clearly delineating between the main types of discourse of the era, the concept proposed by the author becomes not only a tool for reading autonomous discourses but implicitly for reading the discourses of power, which the autonomous author, through

fictionalization, rewrites with the express intention of exposing them. He does this in a subversive manner, by distanced reference to a heteronomous discourse whose referentiality is dislocated, that is, questioned and exposed as a construct oriented towards transforming man into a subject of ideology. Hence the entire functionality attributed to the concept: the power to interrupt the coherence of heteronomous discourse (and to expose its incongruities, the reductive perspective under which man is viewed, despite the complex apparatus that contemporary society places in the service of analyzing his needs) and to create an alternative to it (a space inhabited by the problematic being of the author who forces his reader to enter into dialogue with himself and with the world), the ability to draw attention to the transmitted content, an existential, engaged content, expression of a creative individuality (in a communicational context characterized by the preeminence of media) and its inconsistency as a being subjected to time (when the fear of death pushes man to try various types of positioning).

However, the surprise comes from elsewhere. The validity of the concept proposed by Arthur Suciú is also verified in the related field of literature, in his book, one of the forms of autonomous discourse, an expression of modernity (which, not coincidentally, finds its optimal medium of communication in the novel, a literary genre that makes engagement with the real, i.e., actualization, presentification its distinctive note). What does literature become in the reading exercise proposed by Arthur Suciú? An expression of creative individuality, of anxiety pushed towards madness, of existential engagement in a scriptural exercise that, although relying on what the author calls projective assumption (a phenomenon known in literary sciences as objectification), does not cut off, but paradoxically increases the text's subversive value, by offering the writer the freedom to talk about anything. A practice that allows the autonomous author to exercise one of his creeds, the search for freedom of expression, to dismantle the illusion of referentiality and to re-establish the encounter with the real, to problematize by broadening the meanings of life, by provoking and maintaining throughout the reading a dialogue with the world, a dialogue that places man at the center.

The strength of autonomous discourse thus stems from the rupture it causes with ideology (which is why it will always be perceived as a threat to social order), from its ability to reinterpret heteronomous discourse (which it exposes), from the possibility of taking distance (irony can even be directed at itself), from being in a constant state of legitimization crisis (which forces it to reinvent itself and thus maintain a perpetual dialogue with heteronomous discourse), from the fact that it gives expression to individuality and man's need for freedom, from the discursive

alternative it offers (as a response to a heteronomous discourse that makes man a prisoner of a closed fiction). All these make autonomous discourse the testimony of an individual's response to the world he inhabits, to time, and to himself.

In conclusion, the theory (practically a reading grid) proposed by Arthur Suciu helps the contemporary reader, whether specialized or not, to better understand the difference between dominant discourses (which make man a subject of ideology) and dominated ones (which give man, through problematization, the opportunity to live his existence in the proximity of lucidity), between the ironic (or intentionally subversive) and the ideological (or unconsciously servile) nature of discourses, finally between existentially engaged literature (through the very exercise of its autonomous discourse) and consumer literature (a systemic alternative to the autonomous one, meant to dissipate its dislocating force). In this sense, the second part of the work, the applied one, makes the analysis of the discursive strategies behind the autonomous discourse exercised in a few exemplary chosen texts a true spectacle. A thesis, therefore, rigorously articulated, conceived as a hermeneutic exercise, both clarifying and sophisticated, presupposing intelligence, pride, honesty, and boldness, which constitutes a contribution, with an indubitable social impact, to the assumed field of research and to the understanding of the contemporary world. A work that once again proves how important it is for man to build, over time, starting from serious formative readings, a pattern of reading what we call the social. A study that makes challenges the key to a re-encounter with the world, in which the author teaches us to read the social and its (programming) codes as a book.

References:

1. Suciu, A. (2024). *Autonomous Discourse. Strategies of Communication*. Iași: Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”.