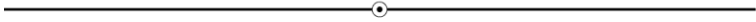


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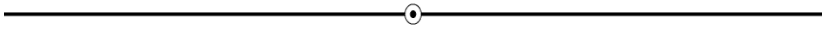
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THEORY, HISTORY AND LITERARY CRITICISM

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## Restif de la Bretonne et Gérard de Nerval : (auto)biographies excentriques

Elena Mihaela Andrei\*

### Restif de la Bretonne and Gérard de Nerval: Eccentric (Auto)biographies

#### Abstract:

This present article highlights how the writer of *Les Illuminés* defies the genre of the biography and of the autobiography, transgresses the constraints of the biographical genre and dissimulates the gap between him and his *biographies*, story of life and work, hence the lack of boundaries between history and fiction, reality and imagination, true and false. The biography of the other, synonymous with disguised autobiography, becomes in Nervalian aesthetic a personal semantic matrix: from the social to the individual, from the knowledge to the experience, from the historic time to the individual time, from the reality to the fiction and vice versa everything is, to the feather of Nerval, moved or off-centered.

**Keywords:** (auto)biography, eccentricity, identification, gap, dissimulation

Restif de la Bretonne et ses écrits ont suscité et suscitent encore l'intérêt des exégètes : Michel Dansel consacre une place importante à cette figure singulière du XVIIIe siècle, dans son livre récent, intitulé *Les excentriques*<sup>1</sup>. J. J. Moreau de Tours, beaucoup plus avant, avait introduit cet auteur dans *La psychologie morbide dans ses rapports avec la philosophie de l'histoire*, le qualifiant d'excentrique<sup>2</sup>. Gérard de

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<sup>1</sup> Voir Michel Dansel, *Les excentriques*, Robert Lafont, Paris, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Voir comment J. J. Moreau de Tours suit de près Gérard de Nerval lorsqu'il dit que: « les singularités de Restif ne ressemblaient guère aux singularités en manchette de Haydn et de Buffon. Entre autres excentricités de Rétif de la Bretonne, nous citerons les suivantes : « Tantôt il se condamnait au silence, faisant vœu de ne parler à personne, tantôt il laissait croître sa barbe et disait à quelqu'un qui le plaisantait : « Elle tombera que lorsque j'aurais achevé mon roman. – Et s'il a plusieurs volumes ? – Il en aura quinze. – Vous ne vous raserez donc que dans quinze ans ? – Rassurez-vous, jeune homme, j'écris un volume par jour. » (Voir J. J. Moreau de Tours, *La psychologie*

Nerval, quant à lui, s'arrête sur la vie et l'œuvre de cet auteur dont les excentricités et le caractère original rappelle les excentriques anglais : « On sait maintenant sur la vie étrange de Restif tout ce qu'il faut pour le classer assurément parmi ces écrivains que les Anglais appellent *excentriques*. » (Nerval, 1984 : 1056). Le mot d'*excentricité* revient deux fois dans le texte nervalien, consacré à Restif de la Bretonne<sup>3</sup>.

Dans cet article où l'on est loin d'épuiser les questions sur les notions de biographie, d'autobiographie ou d'excentricité, notre intention est de comprendre pourtant comment réussit Nerval – l'auteur des *Confidences de Nicolas* –, à s'identifier avec le discours et les quelques *lignes de vie* de son biographié – Restif de la Bretonne –, et à mettre, en même temps, à distance son analyse, adoptant un discours critique par rapport au libertinage des personnages et à tout ce qui pousse à l'extrême leur conduite. S'agit-il d'un regard critique rétrospectif sur un soi-même qu'il a été, dans son enfance ou dans sa jeunesse, mais qu'il n'est plus le même les années passant? Dit d'une autre manière, comment Nerval réussit-il à la fois à s'approprier le discours de l'autre (on connaît bien l'ampleur des emprunts de l'auteur de l'œuvre rétivienne) et mettre à distance son analyse ou enlever ce qui ne s'accommode plus avec ses crédos et systèmes de valeurs morales? Dans la préface du volume *Les Illuminés*, qui intègre le texte de Bretonne, il n'est pas difficile de saisir le discours ambivalent de Nerval, discours qui résonne d'ailleurs dans la source originelle de telle façon: Nicolas, comme Nerval, avait « tout jeune absorbé beaucoup de nourriture indigeste ou malsaine pour l'âme » (Nerval, 1984 : 886).

Pour Restif de la Bretonne, les expériences réelles de sa vie sont celles qui lui fournissent la matière pour la *composition* de ses romans, contrairement à Gérard de Nerval, qui prétendait mettre à part sa « vie réelle » et sa « vie poétique<sup>4</sup> ». Si pour Restif les frontières qui séparent

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*morbide dans ses rapports avec la philosophie de l'histoire*, Victor Masson, Paris, 1859, p. 542–543).

<sup>3</sup> Consulter Gérard de Nerval, *CN, NPI*, p. 1040 : « étrange nature, vie littéraire dans ses écarts et bizarreries reflète le cynisme du XVIIIe siècle et présage les excentricités du XIXe siècle », respectivement *NPI*, II, p. 954 : « D'ailleurs, il ne *composait* que ses propres ouvrages, et telle était sa fécondité, qu'il ne se donnait plus la peine de les écrire : debout devant sa casse, le feu d'enthousiasme dans les yeux, il assemblait lettre à lettre dans son *composteur* ces pages inspirées et criblées de fautes, dont tout le monde a remarqué la bizarre orthographe et les excentricités calculées [...] Cependant aucune de ces excentricités ne rebutait les innombrables lecteurs du *Paysan perversi*, des *Contemporaines* ou des *Nuits de Paris* ».

<sup>4</sup> Voir la Lettre au docteur Labrunie, 12 juin 1854, *NPI*, III, p. 864 : « c'est plein d'exagérations, bienveillantes sans doute, et d'inexactitudes qui m'importent fort peu du reste puisqu'il s'agit d'un personnage conventionnel... On ne peut empêcher les gens de parler et c'est ainsi que s'écrit l'histoire, ce qui prouve que j'ai bien fait de mettre à part

la vie de l'écriture, ainsi que le réel de la fiction ou de la convention s'opacifient, voire s'effacent, l'écriture transparente et confessionnelle de soi et de la vie réelle semble pour Gérard de Nerval n'être possible à pratiquer qu'à travers l'indirect, la déviance, l'oblicité, la dissimulation et l'ex (-) centricité. Faire de sa vie une œuvre, comme Chateaubriand, Proust ou Gide l'ont bien fait, n'était pour Nerval qu'une permanente tentation et une fantaisie, mais qui l'aidaient, sans doute, dans son acte de création. Les détours face au réel, les projections, les altérités expérimentées, les identifications déguisées et les avancées masquées tiennent, avant tout, aux choix esthétiques de l'auteur, à ses conceptions de l'art, de l'autobiographie, de la réalité, de la fiction et de l'invention en littérature. Les dissimulations et les fuites de Gérard ont aussi une portée autobiographique, étant, plus précisément, d'une part, sa réponse à l'impuissance d'écrire – sans détours – sur soi-même, de concentrer ou de fixer son identité psycho-littéraire, d'autre part, son avancée camouflée face aux regards insistants des autres; on connaît bien les indiscretions de Jules Janin et d'Alexandre Dumas par rapport à Gérard de Nerval, leur stigmatisation de la folie de cet auteur et les répliques désespérées de Nerval aux accusations, afin de convaincre ses deux contemporains de sa raison<sup>5</sup>. Nerval ne s'identifie pas, cette fois-ci, avec les héros de son imagination, mais avec des individus historiques. En fait, il s'identifie et se démarque en même temps ; c'est l'identification à la fois oblique et à distance qui lui permet d'écrire sur soi-même et sur les autres.

Suivons de près Marina Mureșanu Ionescu qui peut nous aider à comprendre les rapports entre biographie et autobiographie, entre identification et distanciation, bref entre objectivité et subjectivité dans l'acte de l'écriture :

La situation est ambiguë et assez indécidable dans *Les Illuminés* par le fait que la distance est à la fois zéro et maximale-le il de l'énoncé, étant un substitut du *je*, une autre hypostase du *je*, il est identifiable au *je* de l'énonciation. Si l'on empruntait un procédé genettien, on pourrait dire que l'essence des *Illuminés* est résumable dans (ou est une expansion de) la phrase : « Je suis à la fois et tour à tour Raoul Spifame, l'abbé de Bucquoy, Restif de la Bretonne, Jacques Cazotte,

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ma vie poétique et ma vie réelle. » ; Voir Michel Brix, « L'autobiographie et la problématique du réalisme », in *Écritures de soi : secrets et réticences*, Bertrand Degott et Marie Miguet-Ollagnier (éd.), Paris, L'Harmattan, 2002, p. 29–47.

<sup>5</sup> Keiko Tsujikawa choisit les passages éloquents à ce sens : *NPI*, III, p. 457 : « [...] c'est bien assez de se laisser clouer ce masque au visage dans les endroits où l'on ne peut faire autrement. » et *NPI*, III, p. 685–686 : « Qu'on nous pardonne ces élans de personnalité, à nous qui vivons sous le regard de tous, et qui, glorieux ou perdus, ne pouvons plus atteindre au bénéfice de l'obscurité ! ».

Cagliostro et Quintus Aucler dont je raconte la vie-par là donc je me raconte.  
(Mureșanu Ionescu, 2007 : 203)

Si l'on en croit Daniel Sangsue, c'est l'ambiguïté même qui caractérise l'excentricité<sup>6</sup>. En résumé, le rapport de ces deux hypostases, l'une objective, l'autre subjective, ne réussit, chez Nerval, jamais à se stabiliser, dans le sens que les marques du « je » et du « il » restent presque toujours indéterminés ; ils changeant continuellement de place et de rôles, s'entremêlent, se superposent et fusionnent tout en restant séparés. C'est ici, dans cette dynamique complexe des instances du « je » et du « il », que consistent tout le paradoxe et toute la difficulté de comprendre l'écriture nervalienne, ses inflexions incessantes, ses lignes de convergence, de cristallisation et de fuite. « Je suis l'autre » qu'avait écrit Gérard de Nerval de sa main *en marge* d'un frontispice pourrait aussi renvoyer à l'autobiographie et à la biographie. De plus, le style indirect libre que l'on peut remarquer à tout pas dans le récit nervalien est l'interface par excellence de l'immixtion ou l'interférence entre les paroles du personnage et les paroles rapportées par le narrateur, entre, plus exactement, « je » et « il ». Pour renforcer l'argumentation dans ce contexte, nous avons choisi une définition qui semble mettre très bien en évidence le brouillage des marques énonciatives, voire jusqu'à la substitution entre les paroles de l'autre et les paroles du narrateur :

Mais, par ailleurs, le discours indirect libre permettant de manifester le discours du personnage par l'intermédiaire du discours du narrateur, le « je » de la proposition originale continuera malgré tout à parler, mais un je se confondant, comme dans un camouflage, avec le « il » du soi-disant discours rapporté. [...] Qu'est-ce donc ce « il » dénué de toute personne, ce « il » impersonnel, ce « il » qui parle comme « je » alors que lui-même n'est pas un « je », puisque précisément, le « je » qu'il était au départ a été transformé en un « il » [...] dans le discours indirect libre, grâce à l'omission du verbe introductif, l'auteur présente l'énonciation du héros comme si lui-même la prenait en charge, comme s'il s'agissait des faits et non simplement des pensées ou de paroles. Cela n'est possible, dit, Lerch, que si l'écrivain s'associe avec toute sa sensibilité aux produits de sa propre imagination, s'il s'identifie complètement à eux. (François, 1990 : 5-6)

Dans le discours indirect libre, que le narrateur emploie tout en racontant les histoires de Nicolas des *Confidences*, réside toute instabilité de ces marques énonciatives, toute ex(-)centricité et toute la compréhension du rapport entre biographie réelle et biographie excentrique, entre réalité et fiction. Plus précisément ce sont la

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<sup>6</sup> Voir Daniel Sangsue, « Vous avez dit excentrique ? », *Romantisme*, n. 59, 1998, p. 52 : « C'est l'ambiguïté même de toute excentricité ».

contradiction, l'incohérence et l'instabilité de ce discours qui permettent que l'excentricité soit mise en discussion.

C'est dans ce jeu mutuel, générateur sans doute de tension, entre participation et distanciation, entre « un désir d'affirmer son individualité et le besoin de souligner son appartenance à une communauté » (Tsuji-kawa, 2008 : 125) que le récit se tisse tout en englobant cette dynamique des oppositions, des acceptations, des négations, des compromis et des dévoilements.

La plupart des exégètes nervaliens se mettent d'accord sur l'idée que la vie de l'autre, que Gérard de Nerval prétend biographier, devient souvent le terrain où celui-ci dévoile et re-voile ses propres préoccupations, ou le miroir dans lequel il peut regarder et étudier sa propre individualité : « L'intérêt des mémoires, des confessions, des autobiographies, des voyages mêmes, tient à ce que la vie de chaque homme devient ainsi un miroir où chacun peut s'étudier, dans une partie du moins de ses qualités ou de ses défauts<sup>7</sup> » (Nerval, 1984 : 1038).

Le *miroir textuel* n'est pas le miroir magique et trompeur dans lequel un autre personnage nervalien perdait ses reflets et voyait son double réel se dirigeant vers lui, mais le miroir scopique et édificateur, où Nerval peut étudier ses défauts et ses qualités. Mais pour s'analyser et prendre ensuite distance par rapport aux propres reflets dans ce miroir, il faut tout d'abord être ou se trouver *dans* le miroir ; cela ressemble au geste du spectateur du théâtre qui, pour libérer ses pulsions, fantasmes et passions, doit s'éloigner de la scène. C'est de cette manière que le miroir est à la fois concentrique et excentrique, intérieure et extérieure. Le texte nervalien est, lui-aussi, une scène, l'autre scène ou la scène elle-même ; le texte miroir de Restif est, pour Nerval, l'espace de sa propre lecture, de ses reflets, de son expérience d'altérité, mais aussi l'espace où l'intériorité du texte et l'extériorité du discours critique, les effets de lecture, générés par le texte, et les effets d'autoanalyse se croisent. C'est en ce point à rappeler que la plupart des exégètes nervaliens conclue que *Les Confidences de Nicolas*, brodé sur le roman autobiographique de Restif, *Monsieur Nicolas, ou Le cœur humain dévoilé*, n'est que l'« autobiographie déguisée, mais claire » (Schaeffer, 1977 : 40) de Gérard de Nerval.

L'autobiographie romancée de Rétif de la Bretonne représente pour Nerval non seulement une occasion de s'étudier, de se taire sur soi-même et de se dire à travers les autres, de fuir face au réalisme transparent ou face à l'enchaînement logique des événements, mais aussi

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<sup>7</sup> Voir *Châteaux de Bohême*, *NPI*, III, p. 679 : « l'expérience de chacun est le trésor de tous, la vie d'un poète est celle de tous ».

de corriger les excroissances de l'imagination, les défauts et la conduite libertine du jeune Nicolas, qui peuvent aussi bien être les mêmes pour l'auteur des *Confidences*. Ici, dans le miroir de l'autre, Nerval réfléchit sur soi-même, s'offre donc à un exercice d'introspection, et se juge<sup>8</sup>. Comment analyser ses propres qualités et défauts sinon à distance ? Comment purifier l'âme et l'esprit sinon interioriser la parole de l'autre, s'identifier avec elle jusqu'à ce que l'auteur fixe ses visions, son rêve et ses chimères ? Ensuite, traversant le miroir, l'auteur fait le retour, hors du cadre spéculaire, à la vie de l'autre. Entre ces deux mouvements, l'un centré et l'autre décentré, Nerval tente de marquer la zone intermédiaire ou les failles et de mettre à part les convergences, les jonctions et les points de ralliement, ainsi que les divergences et les disjonctions entre lui et l'autre. Dès lors son écriture ex(-)centrique est soumise à une permanente fluctuation entre rejet et identification, entre la critique des « bigarrures de l'âme » et la validation de l'excentricité ou de la démesure :

Pratique déviante, oblique, excentrique : l'écriture de soi suit un orbe capricieux dont le tracé diffracté reconfigure, dans l'optique d'une accommodation graduelle et changeante, le profil insaisissable de l'écrivain. Que dit Nerval de lui, c'est-à-dire de son rapport à soi et au réel, de cette vérité-là, entière, décisive, qui ne soit en mesure d'être formulé, exposé et clarifié par la prose de la confession, par la logique de l'autobiographie directe ? [...] l'écriture se doit d'inventer des conduites de contournement, des espacements et des déplacements, en somme toute une économie de la dispersion et de la multiplication-à l'image de ce personnage de Rétif, Multipliandre, que Nerval se plaît à évoquer en rappelant qu'il " a trouvé le secret d'isoler son âme et son corps et de visiter les astres sans perdre la possibilité de rentrer à volonté dans sa *guenille* humaine ". En sorte que parler de soi par le truchement habile des autres - biographies, portraits- n'est rien qu'une manière de faire silence sur soi, de fondre le moi dans la taciturnité d'un dire impossible. (Scepi, 2010 : 97)

L'on est déjà habitué de ne pas prendre les paroles de Gérard de Nerval telles quelles, notamment lorsqu'il affirme que ce qu'il a écrit n'était guère une invention, mais qu'il suivait de près les documents réels qu'il avait consultés. C'est le cas de Raoul Spifame et de l'*Histoire de l'abbé de Bucquoy*, mais c'est aussi le cas des *Confidences de*

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<sup>8</sup> À consulter Jean Richer (sous la direction de), *L'Herne. Gérard de Nerval*, Édition de l'Herne, n. 37, 1980, p. 235-236 : « Toujours visible dans l'œuvre elle-même, et pour ainsi dire parallèle à son développement, ce processus d'assimilation continue explique aussi l'identité vague et instable du narrateur, qui est tantôt héros, tantôt spectateur, tantôt entraîné par son discours, tantôt capable de le juger à distance. Et c'est grâce à ce don du flottement-sa seule véritable souveraineté -qu'il réussit à suspendre l'œuvre et à l'isoler en l'écartant à la fois de la réalité vécue, vers laquelle tend l'auteur doué de raison et de l'irréalité totale, qui teinte le héros atteint de la folie ».

*Nicolas* : « Nous essaierons de raconter cette existence étrangère, sans aucune prévention comme sans aucune sympathie, avec les documents fournis par l'auteur lui-même, et en tirant de ses propres confessions le fait instructif des misères qui fondirent sur lui comme la punition providentielle de ses fautes » (Nerval, 1984 : 957). Il y aura certainement d'autres exemples à donner dans ce sens, mais pour l'instant on s'y arrête. On sait bien que les textes qu'il consulte et exploite ne sont pas des documents scientifiques ou historiques, mais plutôt des histoires fictionnalisées. Keiko Tsujikawa et Jean-Louis Bonnat nous font découvrir le travail de recomposition de Nerval en montrant que l'auteur se détache souvent du texte-source de Restif: il cite, emprunte et plagie beaucoup, mais il supprime aussi des éléments, détourne les sens, ajoute des lieux, des personnages et des situations nouveaux<sup>9</sup>. Bref, la biographie que Nerval prétend nous donner n'est en fait qu'une *biographie détournée*. De plus, aux dires de François Dosse, le biographe ne peut raconter la vie intérieure du biographié, or Gérard de Nerval s'excentre de cette règle du genre, sa « biographie » étant plutôt une physiologie morale. Cela nous amène à dire qu'écrire une biographie est, pour Nerval, aussi difficile qu'écrire une œuvre autobiographique, d'où son ambivalence et flottement permanents.

Michel Brix nous fait découvrir par exemple un Gérard de Nerval qui lit les mémoires et les confidences de Nicolas rétivien avec le crayon et les ciseaux du censeur moral à la main (Nerval, 2007 : 9) édulcorant ainsi les scènes d'orgie<sup>10</sup> et de viol et effaçant celles d'onanisme et d'inceste ; de plus, Nerval, à la différence du texte de la Bretonne, préfère plutôt de dramatiser l'histoire de la vie singulière du personnage. Ainsi, le travail de biographe-analyste de l'auteur s'avère complètement sélectif, dirigé certainement en fonction de son système moral et esthétique, et de ses préoccupations personnelles.

La censure des passages licencieux, que Nerval applique sur le texte autobiographique de Restif, n'est-elle, avant tout, sa réaction envers le réalisme littéraire poussé très loin ? C'est de cette manière que l'on s'étonne de rencontrer dans *Les Confidences de Nicolas* une voix ex(-)centrique, ambivalente et ambiguë, à la fois sympathisante, neutre et critique par

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<sup>9</sup> Voir Jean-Louis Bonnat, Hélène Girard, « Gérard de Nerval : lecteur et biographe de Nicolas Restif de la Bretonne : (un essai sur les modalités de l'auto-analyse et de son élaboration, à travers biographie et autobiographie, du point de vue du genre littéraire), Université de Nantes, 1980.

<sup>10</sup> Voir Frank-Paul, Bowman, « Corps et orgie chez Nerval, *L'Imagier de Harlem* », Corps/décors, Femmes, orgie, parodie. Hommage à Lucienne Frappier-Mazur, sous la direction de Cathérine Nesci, en collaboration avec Gretchen Van Slyke et Gerald Prince, Amsterdam, Atlanta, Ga, Radopi, 1999, n. 22, p. 221–235.



rapport à la religion chrétienne répressive, aux conduites hérétiques, aux débauches, aux dépravations et par rapport aux vices des personnages. Nicolas est toujours décrit d'une manière ambivalente puisqu'il est, lui-même, une « âme indécise, énergique seulement dans son amour de la nature et du plaisir » (Nerval, 1984 : 1030) un « esprit de paradoxe, illuminé parfois d'un éclair de vérité » (*Ibidem*), une « nature la plus fortement électrisée de son siècle » (*Ibidem* : 1040).

Pour conclure notre analyse, on peut souligner le fait que les êtres et les traits ne peuvent exister chez Nerval qu'en relation, en transformation, en mutation, bref, en délocalisation. Les biographies des autres et sa propre biographie ne sont pour cet auteur « incommunicantes » et cela grâce à l'implication personnelle de celui-ci, à son besoin d'excentration et de recentrement. L'impossibilité d'être, le manque d'unité et de réalité, le besoin d'altérité et d'identification font que la position de l'auteur des *Confidences* par rapport à son biographié soit toujours précaire, opacifiante et excentrique.

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## The “Elsewhere” as a Personal Semantic Matrix in Vasile Alecsandri’s Travel Writings

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### **Abstract:**

A literary and spiritual document, Vasile Alecsandri’s travel writings constitute the subject of this paper. Apart from their value in terms of education and pleasure, they reveal the psychological structure of the traveler, his attitude towards life, as well as his capacity to artistically transform the real events he experienced. Moreover, travel writings attract interest from an esthetic point of view; thus, given that the pilgrim Alecsandri made the genre flourish, it marked an important sector in the literature of the 1848 revolutionary period. The present analytical-interpretative study of its most characteristic aspects highlights descriptions, portraits, the writer’s irony, lyricism, his talent and, even more importantly, his constant involvement in the national and social struggle of this agitated epoch – the involvement of a patriot devoted to his country. All the reasons stated above suggest that Alecsandri’s prose constitutes a major chapter in his creation, travel memoirs being the most significant part of this prose. Writing about Alecsandri as a prose writer means, first and foremost, considering the interpretations of memoir literature, on the one hand, and the constants of its subject matter, on the other.

**Keywords:** travel memoirs, pilgrim writer, reporting, ethnography, anecdote, sun, sea, picturesque, hazardous

*“Alecsandri’s prose is more viable than his poetry.”*

G. Ibrăileanu

To analyze and interpret the travel memoirs written by Vasile Alecsandri, which represent a cherished and valuable work, means to focus our attention on the prose written by the long acclaimed poet and playwright. Alecsandri was also a talented prose writer, not only “our greatest poet” (as Eminescu wrote in 1876) and the founder of the national theatre through his plays, where the truth of life becomes the truth of drama. His value as a poet and playwright has long overshadowed his real value as a prose writer.

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Only in 1919, in an article, *Vasile Alecsandri*, published in *Literary Notes* [*Însemnări literare*], Ibrăileanu opposes “the strong preconceived idea that Alecsandri is, above all, a poet”. Emphasizing qualities and skills such as “sprit of observation, objective view on life, wit, humour, clarity, etc.,” all these being “qualities of a prose writer and not at all of a poet writing epic poems and even less lyrical ones,” the critic concluded firmly: “Alecsandri’s prose is more viable than his poetry” (Ibrăileanu, 1968: 25–26).

G. Călinescu, in his *History of the Romanian Literature from its Origins to the Present Day* [*Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*] (1982: 317) and in his monography of the writer (Călinescu, 1965: 111), adopts Ibrăileanu’s perspective in more detail: “perhaps from Alecsandri’s work more lasting is the one in prose”. Perpessicius, Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, Şerban Cioculescu, Al. Piru, Paul Cornea and a few more literary historians adopted the same position towards the traditional perspective.

What attitude towards Alecsandri’s work is, then, appropriate so as not to diminish the complexity of his vast and varied creation? The scientific approach was offered as early as 1886 by Titu Maiorescu, in his important study *Poets and Critics* [*Poeţi şi critici*]. Aware of the national calling of the forty-eight writer, he wrote:

In Alecsandri’s work vibrates all the heart and feeling of his countrymen, that could take shape in a poetic form in the relative condition of our people today. The charm of the Romanian language in the folk poetry – appears in *his* poetry; human love and the longing for our country – were embodied by *his* creations the beauty of our land and of the air we breathe – were described by *him*. When the elite society could benefit from a theatre in Iasi and Bucharest – *he* was the one who answered its needs by writing comedies and dramas; when the people was called to arms – *he* alone warmed our soldiers’ hearts with his poems (Maiorescu, 1984: 487).

“What exactly” – the critic wondered “lies Alecsandri’s unique value in? It is in his *wholeness* (italics by L. B.) of his literary action” (*Ibidem*). Nobody can argue that. Alecsandri’s value and importance “lies” in the global meaning of his work, a work in which the spiritual freedom of the agitated century he lived in found its aesthetic expression.

Out of his literary creation we will choose to focus on his prose affirming our belief that, like his poetry and theatre – and maybe to a greater extent than them – his prose is the result of his intellect and feeling, the result of his inner life. Out of a psychological base a lifestyle takes shape and moreover a style of communication. For him, writing becomes a way of expressing his creative individuality.

The defining traits of Alecsandri's personality, added to his intellect and his artistic talent led to the originality of his work. These are to be found in his prose as well. A prose which is calm, relaxed, cheerful, just like his own philosophy, optimistic and often ironic and moralizing, like the attitude of a man with strong ethical beliefs, a prose of serene and objective lyricism, like the Latin, Apollonian writer, always ready to explore the varied joy of life. Alecsandri's spirit of observation lies in the fact that his eye are like a painter's, able to capture and enjoy the show of life. The author had the gift to capture the beings and objects that surrounded him with their specific characteristics. Sometimes the writing appears plain but only to suggest the impression created. The writer introduces us into the details of real life "in a world that is palpable, not a projection of his imagination" (Cornea and Păcurariu, 1974: 114).

Due to this original mixture of characteristic traits, Alecsandri's prose can't be classified, remaining surprisingly original. Narrative wise, Alecsandri reminds us of Felix Aderca, who, in his novel, *The God of Love – Zeul iubirii*, surprises us by combining three narrative perspectives: first, second and third (Băiceanu, 2014). Vasile Alecsandri avoided classifying his work which was printed during his lifetime. Those who printed his work after his death tied various ways to systematize and classify his work but they were all conventional and arbitrary. In Alecsandri's prose, memories combine with direct observation, description with narrative, anecdote with irony and sarcasm, while romantic elements coexist with realistic and classicist ones, in a combination which characterizes his style in an original way, giving him a unique status in the literature of those times.

Not extensive in length and written at long intervals, Vasile Alecsandri's prose writings were published, as the author himself mentioned in the preface to *Literary necklace [Salba literară]*, in 1857: "Literary Dacia" ["Dacia literară"], "Propășirea", "Literary Romania" ["România literară"], "Bucovina", "Bison" ["Zimbrul"], "The Star of the Danube" ["Steaua Dunării"] and in several almanacs edited by his friend, Mihail Kogălniceanu. When in 1875, he begins to publish his *Complete Works [Operele complete]*, the volume *Prose [Proză]* follows after his three volumes of theatre in 1876, comprising the texts from *Literary necklace [Salba literară]*, to which he also adds *A Journey to Africa [Călătorie în Africa]* and several "studies" and "biographies". These are the only editions published during his lifetime. Others, such as the short story *Mărgărita*, fragment of a novel *Dridri*, the work entitled *Vasile Porojan*, his political memoirs appear later, in his posthumous volumes.

Heterogeneous in its expression, Alecsandri's prose ranges from: sketch, short story, novel, story, travel diary, political pamphlet, literary letter, etc.

This diversity is, however, only apparent as through reading and analysis it becomes obvious that as in the case of other Moldavian writers it has its source in the personal life of the writer and that of his time. Autobiography and evocation, his prose, original as it is, is based on memories and observation. His subjective memory and his naturally endowed creative personality are so strong and his power of observation so accurate that the use of imagination seems to lack entirely. Most of his narratives belong to the field of memoirs. The variety is more apparent than real, since most texts have their source more or less in the writer's experience. Both in the texts that rely on fiction and even more in the others the writer makes use of his life experience, the texts being mostly first person narratives.

His first short stories, *The Florist of Venice* [*Buchetiera din Florența*] and *Mount of Fire* [*Muntele de foc*] (published as *Souvenirs from Italy* [*Suvenire din Italia*]<sup>1</sup>), *Dridri* and *Margărita*, and then the pages so full of his heart's warmth, dedicated to Negruzzi, Bălcescu, Russo, Lamartine, Prosper Mérimée, tens and tens of letters based on memories. "The Travel Diaries" ("Jurnalele de călătorie"), *A Walk in the Mountains* [*O plimbare la munți*], *Borsec*, *The White Lake* [*Balta Albă*], *A Journey to Africa* [*Călătorie în Africa*] are also memoirs. Even *The Town of Iasi in 1844* [*Iași în 1844*], *The Story of a Gold Coin* [*Istoria unui galbân*], where he describes the simple, ordinary, daily life, appear as memoirs as well- those of everyday living. This living reality can't be put down to literary mimesis, as it is the pure expression of his own structure, of his authentic writer's calling. Alecsandri lives in an atmosphere dominated by memories, where the pleasure of telling and listening "write, write, make me relive again in the past represented by yesterday, which has all the characteristics of a century" he would tell a French friend (Alecsandri, 1911: 74), and he insisted by telling I. Ghica: "Tell me everything you know... Tell me... Tell me...", becomes a way of life, and his writing, as it so clearly was said "the imprint of memories on paper" (Ghica, 1976: 415), not only for the joy of telling

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<sup>1</sup> "In Alecsandri's work, Italy is the country of oranges and endless seas, of imposing palaces, of art galleries, and opera events, of heavenly landscapes, of love and love songs, of harmony between sky and earth, the sacred and profane, of real and imaginary, of good prevailing over evil, of delight, of dream and ecstasy" (Trifan, 2014). *The Image of Italy in Alecsandri's Work*. [*Imaginea Italiei în opera lui Vasile Alecsandri*.] [http://confluente.ro/Elena\\_trifan\\_1395416667.html](http://confluente.ro/Elena_trifan_1395416667.html), accessed on 1 May, 2015.

them, or listening to them but also for their functionality for their value as a historic and human document. When “time destroys everything without mercy”, we need this “proof” which “reminds us of the past, bringing to life, through narratives, various periods with original characters and events in the history of the country” (see Doina Curticăpeanu’s detailed comments, 1977: 13–22). Facts of life and psychologically significant people, caught in the passing of time, are brought together in his prose pages, offering us, as he himself said, “a kind of museum which is worth visiting”.

Written over a long period of time and at long intervals, and heterogeneous in form, Alecsandri’s prose appears in front of our eyes in genetic periods and of successive ages, the process of growing being marked by the distance between the literary conventions of those times and the originality of the writer which is the result of self discovery. The writer frees himself from the conventions and clichés which characterized his work in a period of obedience towards the model of the times and as an answer to the reading public, as for him the truthfulness of the real world and the veracity of human activity are an essential trait of life. The observation made by T. Vianu in relation to C. Negruzzi’s work “an outer life more than an inner life” (1966: 59), is valid for many writers, contemporary with the author of the short story *Alexandru Lăpuşneanu*. With the passing of time Alecsandri offers more and more attention to the ordinary world, keeping fresh “all that his eyes could see and his ears could hear”. Turning towards the active life of the period, he discovers, with satisfaction, “various types of people, various types of character of great interest for the social and historical study” (Alecsandri, 1904: 25). The analysis of the contemporary environment becomes an artistic norm and the technique of observation a constant literary procedure.

These precious literary techniques can also be found in his travel memoirs, which are the focus of the present paper, which represents a good opportunity to prove the depth and the authenticity of the technique of observation and his priceless gift as a story teller.

We find them, first, in his collection of “physiologies” *The Town of Iasi in 1844* [*Iaşii în 1844*], *A Ballroom in Iasi* [*Un salon din Iaşi*], *Borsec* and *The White Lake* [*Balta Albă*]. The sketches were integrated into the travel stories for the purpose of creating a narrative as the one in *The Decameron*. Thus, the first part of *A Journey to Africa* [*Călătorie în Africa*] (1855), will comprise *Illusions Lost* [*Pierderea iluziilor*] (“The Romanian Bee” [“Albina românească”], 1841) and *Mount of Fire* [*Muntele de foc*] (“The Romanian Bee” [“Albina românească”], 1843), and the second version of *A Walk in the Mountains* [*Plimbare la munţi*],

contains *A Masquerade Intrigue* [*O intrigă la bal-masché*] (“Propășirea”, 30 January 1844) and *Toader and Mărinda* (“Calendar for the Romanian People” [“Calendar pentru poporul român”], 1844). The first which appeared in “Calendarul Foaiei sătești” for the year 1845, an authentic image of the times ingeniously combines sociology and history, anecdote and humour and sarcasm, in a varied combination of “speech”: direct and indirect, etc. Like other forty-eighters who “painted” the social environment in Iasi at the middle of the previous century our prose writer presents its two faces “one Oriental, the other European”. Back then the capital of Moldavia, was a junction between “tempting Oriental-Phanariot old habits and new times”. It is around this antithesis that all the memories and direct observations of the writer of the four sketches are organized, which all make up a real “social and historical study”. The contrast makes its presence felt from the very beginning of the description. Seen from above, from the top of the hill “Răpidea” the panoramic view of the town (“mountains rich with vineyards, orchards reaching down into the valleys... the white banks of the river Bahlui”), offers a breathtaking sight: “one of the most beautiful and most wonderful in our country, where there are so many wonderful and beautiful sights” (Alecsandri, 1983: 87)<sup>2</sup>. The illusion disappears as soon as he reaches the town with its streets and houses. Scene after scene, we can see palaces, historical monuments, churches, expensive shops and stalls. With an eye for the significant detail and a feel for the authentic, the writer goes into people’s houses, notices their clothing, listens to their conversations, evaluates their manners, only to be surprised by the “charm” of the “two faces”. “Long and loose garments made way to tighter ones [au dat rând straielor] from Europe, Red and yellow boots made way to luxury footwear; wide sofas turned into elegant sofas” (*Ibidem*: 84–85). Yesterday people used to say “hojgholdum” and “telebimu”, today they say “bonjour and bonsoir”, yesterday they would eat “fruit preserve” and drink Turkish coffee, today – French pastry [“confeturi”] and English tea. The writer does not forget the inhabitants; all the social classes, all ages, all trades are analyzed from the same critical perspective. Romanians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, are all presented with their physical and moral characteristics with their reactions and speech, on the background of a period well established in time. Minute observer of the human being, Alecsandri is also a minute painter of the social environment, where colour does not

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<sup>2</sup> Printed only in 1857, the text had been written 16 years after the writer’s first journey to Italy, when he returned from Paris, together with C. Negri and N. Docan.



exceed. The writer knows the complex dialectical relationship between the individual and the world around him, between character and circumstance. Portraying and recreating, he perceives everything in a critical manner, as beneath the picturesque and amusing apparent contrasts, lies their source: social inequality. After a long accumulation of kaleidoscopic images, coloured by feelings and nuanced by humour, irony, maliciousness, satire, the conclusion is drawn: “The town of Iasi is a theatre decorated with palaces and huts standing next to each other, where the actors being luxury and poverty” (*Ibidem*: 88) or: “The town of Iasi looks a lot like a nobleman dressed in expensive clothes, surrounded [încongiurat] by gypsies in rags [...]. The head is wearing a crown while the feet are bare” (*Ibidem*: 90).

Due to its semantic and artistic load, the sketch makes it easy for the reader nowadays to study and understand the older times in Romania.

The next stroll in Iasi, promised to M. Kogălniceanu (who this piece of prose is dedicated to) in the last lines of the text, is restricted to the presentation of a “ballroom in Iasi” [“salon de Iași”]<sup>3</sup>. Alecsandri gathers, in an ingenious and free manner, in an elegant ballroom in Iasi, under the “golden light of bronze candelabrum, men and women, young and old, all dressed up and makes them talk, play musical instruments, dance, tell unusual happenings, and gossip. The conversation – *causerie* – of the ones present serves as a pretext for the writer to stigmatize – in a polite way the shortcomings of the “high” society: the superficial and precious women, the stuck-up conservatory elderly, the demagogic youth. It is a valuable historical document of the times, which the writer manages to bring to life, creating the illusion of life, breaking the monotony of indirect narrative by introducing the dialogue and the piece of prose is full of dynamism. Alecsandri enriched indeed the literary style.

He met C. Negri’s sister, Elena, whom he loved and to whom he dedicated romantic, heart-breaking poems. Elena Negri suffered from tuberculosis and died in 1847, on a ship traveling to Constantinople. She was accompanied by Vasile Alecsandri, Costache Negri and Mihail Kogălniceanu. Alecsandri, wrote the poem *Little Star* [*Steluța*], in memory of Elena, which became well known during those times. The love

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<sup>3</sup> Part of the sketch appeared earlier, in 1853, in “Almanac for the Romanians” [“Almanahul pentru români”] (the scene presenting the sinking of the ship in the Danube); the first three scenes appeared in “Literary Romania” [“România literară”], 1855, and as a whole in *Literary necklace* [*Salba literară*], 1857, and *Prose* [*Proză*], 1876.

story between them took shape in *A Journey to Italy a Diary* [*Jurnal de călătorie în Italia*]. During the summer when Elena died, Vasile Alecsandri went to a health resort which later inspired the short story *The White Lake* [*Balta Albă*].

Travelling further, he reaches “feredeie”, the spas, *Borsec* and *The White Lake* [*Balta Albă*], writing two of the best pieces of observation in prose of the time. There is no hesitation in them, and although they seem at the beginning to be mere circumstantial writing, they place Alecsandri among the best representatives of observation prose of the middle of the previous century, together with Negruzzi and Kogălniceanu. Spontaneity seems to do him good, as it emphasizes more than other pieces of writing the characteristics of the writer: the verve of the conversations, friendly irony, the freshness and authenticity of the observation, the ability to create a coherent universe out of disparate social elements, a meaning that goes beyond the mere juxtaposition of what he notices.

“The first, *Borsec*<sup>4</sup>, is a physiology of the then small health resort, which he captures in its amusing, caricature-like details, worthy, the writer thinks, of the famous Gavarni” – a French caricaturist, famous in 1950s, from whom he received, as he did from Hogarth as well, suggestions for his physiologies.

The new decor is sketched – as in *The Town of Iasi in 1844* [*Iașii în 1844*] – in a panoramic manner. This convinces the writer that Borsec “can’t be called either a hamlet or a village, because it has no paths [uliți], no sheds, no inhabitants. It is just a group of 50 deserted wooden houses, and looks very much like flies that lie dead in winter to come back to life in spring (*Ibidem*: 192). People of all nationalities and walks of life gather here, brethren “if not in Christ” then in “Borvis” [“frați de nu-întru Hristos”], to drink health from the healing spring [“beie sănătate la izvorul tămăduirii”] and to bathe. In an amusing yet ironic way, the writer notices that “equality, which will never really strike roots on earth”, rules over Lobogo, “a cold bath where carbon gas boils ceaselessly” and where one “couldn’t tell the difference” between emperors and shoemakers [ciobotari] due to the way in which “the coldness of the water and the gas” wrinkles them “all alike”.

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<sup>4</sup> In 1844, Alecsandri was at Borsec for health reasons and, writing the first part of his Diary, printed it in “Propășirea,” nr. 42, on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1844. As a whole, it appears the following year in “Calendar for the Romanian People” [“Calendar pentru poporul românesc”]. It will later be included in the volume *Literary necklace* [*Salba literară*], 1857 and *Prose* [*Proză*], 1876.

The scenes, artistically drawn, capturing unexpected details, with consequences on characterization (lessons learnt from Balzac and La Bruyère being fruitfully used) describe, while alternating joke and irony, the ritual of the cues at “the wells and baths”, of the walks “glass in hand”, then people’s talks and ridiculous clothing, the ball in a “wooden hall” lit by “about twenty candles made of tallow”, etc. Out of the realism of the scenes depicted and the burlesque, which accompanies the scenes, takes shape an entertaining prose whose value also lies in the depth of the observation.

The same impression is made by the witty description of the other resort *The White Lake* [*Balta Albă*]<sup>5</sup>, which, according to all its commentators is one of the best pieces in prose by Alecsandri.

The freedom which characterizes his writing determines the writer to choose an ingenious way to organize the subject matter. In order to present his impressions which come from “kingdom of contrasts” in an objective manner, the writer imagines a young French painter who stops in Brăila, as the beauty of the Danube wins him over. His intention is to get to know Wallachia, “this unknown country”, his geography teacher had never said anything to him about.

The reactions of the unaware foreigner, who is telling his adventures to his friends, while facing a newly discovered reality, are some of the most unexpected. He is first surprised by the way people travel in Wallachia. “Instead of malpost or coach, a small box full of hay, on four wheels with broken spokes [spițele]. Four small horses, skinny and scarred by whip marks and a wild little man, bearded and in rags, armed with a long whip [stânjân]...” After a tormenting journey, shaken [hurducăturile] by the cart he reaches the *White Lake* [*Balta Albă*]. Here, instead of “a town like Marienbad or Ems or Baden”, he finds a “village made up of poor thatched huts [bordeie] with crown-like stork nests.” Instead of “beefsteak” [“biftec”] in a “pub” [“tractir”] and a “soft bed” – a night spent in a hut “on a wooden bed, without sheets or pillows or anything”. The young traveller’s impressions are totally reversed when, after going to bed convinced that he finds himself in a “wild country”, he wakes up in a world of “European carriages, full of

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<sup>5</sup> It was written in the summer of 1847, when Alecsandri was also in this town for treatment, and it was published in 1848, in “Calendar for the Romanians” [“Calendarul pentru români”] by Gh. Asachi, under the title *24 Hours at the White Lake* [*24 ceasuri la Balta Albă*]. It was republished in “Literary Romania” [“România literară”], 1855, no. 31–35 and then included in *Literary necklace* [*Salba literară*] and *Prose* [*Proză*], 1876. It should be mentioned that the author also published a French version in “Illustration”, no. 596–599, of 1854, under the title *Le lac blanc* – “traduit du Moldave”, which might have been done by Vasile Alecsandri himself. Also see Elena Rădulescu-Pogoneanu. 1940. *Alecsandri’s Life* [*Viața lui Alecsandri.*], Craiova, Editura Scrisul Românesc, p. 100.

European people dressed in European [evropienești] clothing” heading towards “the pond shining in the sunlight [steclea]” (*Ibidem*: 211). A ball he attends the same night, among “people who were dressed and behaved like Europeans”, and “Romanian ladies, young and beautiful” who spoke “French as if they had come from Paris” make him wonder if everything was “a dream of his own imagination” or “reality.” One of the young men at the spa gives him the answer – the writer himself – “We find ourselves in the land of the most original contrasts; here luxury and poverty, pain and joy, new and old ideas everything is mixed with a huge effect on the eye and mind alike [atât ochilor cât și minții]” (*Ibidem*: 215). When at the end of his “24-hour journey” at the *White Lake* [*Balta Albă*], the narrator wants to find out if “Wallachia is part of the civilized world or a wild province [o provincie sălbatică],” the writer, faithful witness of what the foreigners saw, does not answer any more. Wallachia was just like Moldavia, which he had presented in a different physiology, “a kingdom of the most original contrasts” [“împărăție a contrasturilor]” and this is exactly what he intended to show us in a natural and vivid way, in a colourful text which alternates narratives (retelling memoirs alternates with direct speech, etc.). However there is also a serious tone as the writer warns us about the risk that snobbery and shallowness represent for a real social and spiritual progress. The travel memoirs strengthen our belief that the writer found the source of his writings in himself, and the role of the present pages is none other than to convince as to the importance of the bond between the work of art and its creator and as to the qualities as a narrator that this creator, Alecsandri, had.

“The longing for something else and somewhere else” is a feeling rooted in his nature, an essential condition of his existence. He actually confessed that: Rarely can one feel the satisfaction I have at the beginning of my sea voyages, when I feel thrown out of the ordinary course of life” [din calea obicinuită a vieții] [...]. It feels I’m becoming someone else, that all my inner powers grow and I am the real me” (*Ibidem*: 237).

“A longing for travelling” makes itself felt early on in his life, even since he was a child, when, as a student at Victor Cuénim’s school in Miroslava, he would retreat during long breaks, on top of an old carriage, admiring “melancholically” the Socola hills, the passing of “clouds in the endless sky” and the flight of “flocks of cranes in the air.” The journey is also twofold and even threefold: imaginary, through reading and dreaming; real: when the dream of the image in the book comes true and reliving the journey by recalling it. Alecsandri the traveller experienced them all. He started with the imaginary which he

never abandoned. When, as a young man he could not leave his country and its needs, or as an old man he was lying on his bed, and he could not travel by carriage or oar, he would travel with the help of his imagination. These are “the armchair journeys” [“voiajurile în jilț”], which he often mentioned: “I’ve been on so many pleasant journeys like this. I’ve seen so many beautiful shores without leaving my armchair.” A sight—because “sight” is the real world to this “nomad”—which he truly appreciated was that of ports, where hours on end he would look at the shape of the ships like “enormous birds with their wings spread out” [“de paseri uriașe”] (critics actually wrote about “Alecsandri’s fascination with ships”) (Curticăpeanu, 1977: 90).

Each of them “brought in front of my mind’s eye the shores they had left and made me dream of those unknown places...” (Alecsandri, 1983: 235). The sea is the one which literally helps him live his dream. “Nothing absorbs the mind more than the delightful view of the endless blue...”

When he actually lives his dream, by travelling, Alecsandri always heads for sunny places, always in search of the sunlight. “I need the sunlight and the sight of the sea, the former to warm up my blood, the latter to rock my imagination...”<sup>6</sup>

Starting his journey, the traveller is not bound to a plan,

I don’t see journeys as most people do, that is sticking to a plan and following a beeline [a alerga țintă] like a journey car [din rolul de mașină drumeață]. For me a journey is only the one free from any external influence, [slobod de orice înrăurire străină], which only follows the whims of imagination [caprițiilor vremelnicii] and which is the result of no preparation and no definite aim... (*Ibidem*: 223).

Still, there is an aim, and that is enriching the mind and making the soul more beautiful, which is obvious in the short story *The Florist of Venice* [*Buchetiera de la Veneția*]. While visiting Italy he feels enriched by its art and deeply impressed by the southern landscape. He is impressed with the church Santa Maria de Fiore in Florence, designed by Giotto and Brunellesco, with red, white and black marble walls, with carriages and horses and attendant waiting in line in the market in front, and ladies keeld in the mysterious light of the stained glass.; a painting remind of Andrea del Sarto with “soft shades, spread like a sheer veil

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<sup>6</sup> In his letter of May 1888, which he wrote to his friend Al. Papadopol-Callimachi, apud, Al. Marcu, (1931), *Comments upon Romanian classics. Introduction. Vasile Alecsandri as a traveller*. [*Clasici români comentați. Introducere. Vasile Alecsandri călător.*], in vol. *Vasile Alecsandri. Journeys – Diplomatic missions* [*Vasile Alecsandri. Călătorii – Misiuni diplomatice.*], Craiova, Scrisul românesc, p. XI.

over the eyes”; the Donne cafe, full of customers indulging in “dolce far niente” all day long, where clean waiters are ready to suggest 20 sorts of ice-cream. Palazzo delle Cascine, around which gathers the aristocracy of the city, for romance after the sun set; the stroll through Boschetto, the meadow which spreads between the calm rivers of Arno and Miunione, under the slowly coming darkness; there come the Gallery, Palazzo Potto, with its shiny collection of masterpieces, the theatre of Perloga. The art lover proves himself again.

*A Journey to Africa [Călătorie în Africa]* represents this principle put into practice. While in Biarritz, on the shores of the Atlantic, he decides to visit Spain; then he changes his mind and heads to southern France, and from here when reaching the Gibraltar, he gives up on Spain for Africa.

He does the same while travelling through the country. *A walk in the Mountains [O Primblare la munți]* (1844) represents the beginning. On his way to the monastery of Pangareata and accompanied by three friends they intend to see Alexandru Lăpușnenu’s portrait and we find out that the portrait had been moved to the monastery of Slatina. They then decide to climb on Ceahlau, up to the peak Grohotis. Not before telling and listening to “stories”. A monk tells, through tears, an old love story and the travellers, in their turn – as in *Ancuta’s Inn [Hanul-Ancuței]*, years later – tell their own stories: *Toader și Mărința* – a romance and *A Masquerade Intrigue [O intrigă la bal-masché]* – an anecdote with a subject that was taken from a French play. They stop at Hangu, then continue to Durău, “hoping for some sour soup cooked by monks.” Another disappointment. The hegumen was away and so were the keys to the larder. Worn out and starved, they go back to Hangu in the middle of the night, through the woods, where everything seems “dreadful phantasmagoria... Hunger, the writer adds, must have a lot of influence on our imagination...” (*Ibidem*: 187). A shepherd who they meet on their way sings for them a “traditional song” [“doina”], “the most beautiful, sad, heart-felt I ever heard [...] Every time I hear this song [doina], I feel like Moldavia is crying after its lost glory” (*Ibidem*: 188). This is one of Alecsandri’s biggest revelations concerning folk poetry.

After many funny events, vividly told, the travellers return to Piatra Neamț, without having seen the portrait of the Romanian ruler and without having climbed the Ceahlău. But, at the end of the trip Alecsandri says: “that’s what happens to most plans, especially those related to journeys”. This short travel memoir is extremely valuable as it emphasizes another aspect of his artistic and moral portrait: Alecsandri the prose writer and nature. It is no one other than Alecsandri the poet,

Alecsandri we always knew, but in a perfect communion with nature, which he felt was a necessary condition to his very existence. “I need it, the way I need food and light.”

The endless panorama of the mountain, with its “grand and wild beauty” does not produce in the prose writer, as it does in other famous travellers, the feeling of the sublime. He avoids the landscapes which loses the calm of its clear outline and runs away from grand pictures. Just like in *Pastels* [*Pasteluri*], he stops in front of the picturesque which delight the sight: the glow of the river Bistriței in the sun, the show of a sunset, a rock in the golden ray of the sun. The variety of colours impresses him most and the effects of light touch him deeply. Light is everything in his descriptions, and it brings an individual type of colour and feeling. “When the sun appeared in the sky filling everything with light, Bistruta Valley suddenly shone majestically [...] How could not your heart fill with joy and satisfaction [...]”, the author makes a comment on the intensity of the impressions.

The value of the world seen in the light, in case of this solar poet, is not only concrete, but also deeply symbolical.

*Journey in Africa* [*Călătorie în Africa*], which has become Alecsandri’s best work for a great number of readers who got acquainted with it, is an original type of diary since it includes “a continuous chain of stories” in the texture of his memories. Instead of the bottles of wine from *Ancuța’s Inn* [*Hanul-Ancuței*] by Sadoveanu, it is glasses of Malaga wine, punch – punci or French champagne that stimulate the narrators’ inspiration. Ship captains and passengers are involved in a competition of telling funny and sad stories, including the Romanian traveller. Being led by his confessed pleasure of telling stories, like in *A walk in the mountains* [*Primblare la munți*], *Flower girl from Florence* [*Buchetiera de la Florența*]<sup>7</sup> or *A saloon in Iași* [*Un salon în Iași*], he also relates two tales: *Fire mountain* [*Muntele de foc*] and *The first step in the world* [*Cel întâi pas în lume*]. “An unspeakable satisfaction” of the journey is, thus, prolonged in that of the story, “the punch improves through the fascinating conversation”, whereas Alecsandri’s diary acquires an unexpected form, as has already been

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<sup>7</sup> “Young Alecsandri was excited to visit «this world’s garden» for the first time, referring himself exactly to the whole of Italy, especially thanks to the fact that the region of «Piemont has the reputation of one of the most lively and merry cities of Italy». «Together with Florence, even more than it, Venice will remain for Alecsandri a bright retreat for his thoughts» (A. Roșca, 2013). *Vasile Alecsandri as a constant admirer of Italy*. [*Vasile Alecsandri veșnicul admirator al Italiei*.] <http://ceascadecultura.ro/Serveste/Articol.aspx?idart=3413>, accessed on 12 April, 2015).



mentioned, of a “narrative system following the principle of the Decameron”, the way it is ingeniously and originally called by G. Călinescu.

The itinerary of the journey is followed, with long stops, at the most important stages of the trip. Vasile Alecsandri’s journeys that fully reflect the author’s diligence represent a remarkable occasion for a literary pretext which in future will be regarded as one of the most varied in the literary universe of the author’s prose.

In the autumn of 1853, while in Biarritz, where the author is considering going to Spain, he meets an Englishman, Anghel, who convinces him to change his plans, leaving the Southern coast of France for Gibraltar. Having disembarked in Gibraltar, he decides to postpone visiting Spain and heads for the deck of a French ship that goes to Morocco. The most interesting part of the diary (due to its unusual character) is represented by the description of the African itinerary. Alecsandri is the first Romanian traveller who reaches this part of the world and, as Tudor Vianu states it, “reflects it in our literature” (Vianu, 1966: 105). However, the writer prefers, according to G. Călinescu, “a folder with light and impressionist sketches”, avoiding – again – “big pictures”. One cannot agree more. Alecsandri, for whom the visible world, as well as the exterior reality exists, first and foremost, through what faces the eye, perceives the African picturesqueness in a concrete way in his writings by means of the matchless descriptions of streets, interiors, persons and sights, all these floating “in the ocean of a burning light”. The most adventurous part of the journey is the way to Tetuan which presupposes crossing the Uadras Mountains in fierce heat, deserted places, the threat of being attacked by the robbers, thirst and suspicion – suspeciuine on part of the bedouins in rags. [...] Since, according to Alecsandri – which presents the evidence of a great change of things – “the strongest talisman for a European in the Empire of Morocco is to be English – «inghiliz»”.

In what follows the writer offers a kaleidoscopic chain of images and points of view with an almost cinematographic technique. Visual and sound notations form a quick succession, the general impression being determined by the global context rather than by the elements that it comprises. This is the way the accumulation of little facts, due to their density, produces the impression of a dynamic picture saturated with colour and full of life.

*Journey in Africa [Călătorie în Africa]* reveals him as a poet of the Mediterranean nature and, at the same time, a colourist and a painter whose aim is to restore its own way to state its existence in the universe of objects to every angle of the world. Even though the epithet is still a



stereotype, and the metaphorization is reticent, Alecsandri manages to individualize the scenery making it memorable. For example:

Now the shadows of night covered the ground and trees seemed like ghosts from another world running along the fields until they vanished in the distant darkness. Thousands of stars were shining in the arch of the sky; some of them were falling from the sky [ceriului], leaving a silver trace after them; others were reflected in the waters of Adur; others seemed to glide like big diamonds on the snow of the tops of the Pyrenees. Everything in the world was secretive and deeply penetrating; in the nature's dead silence, in the immobility of the objects that surrounded us, the speed of the coach [repegiunea malpostei] seemed to double, the clatter of horses and the sound of bells had something fantastic about them (Alecsandri, 1983: 193).

In the cases of other works, journeys and personal excursions also represent disguised fictional instructions and a source of inspiration (Cristea: 2010). Travel diaries by Vasile Alecsandri are a realization of a genius due to the richness of the ideas and the variety of the rendered feelings, the sharpness of observation and cheerfulness of narration, as well as the expressive relief of the style where the imaginative spirit of the narrator by vocation is accompanied by the conventional, and some new formal procedures that are always adapted according to the multitude of interior emotional experiences in front of the performance of the exterior universe.

For those few writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century travelling played a leading role in their spiritual lives, like in the case of Alecsandri. At the same time, this traveller, “with the instinct of a migratory bird”, the way he was so becomingly called (see Doina Curticăpeanu, 1977: 172 and on), who travelled all across Europe and reached the continent of Africa, who aspired to seeing America, Japan, Egypt and India, this “constant traveller” who used to begin a new journey – the imaginary one, continued in writing, recollecting it – at the very moment the previous one was finished – could not manage to find peace and happiness in a place other than home, in Mircești.

At the end of this analytical presentation of the most representative texts of travel diaries, as a result of our synthesis, we would like to conclude that Vasile Alecsandri wanted to make an object of cognition out of the material and spiritual existence of his time, as well as resulting from the observation of people and places for personal satisfaction. His attentive examination of life and surroundings always followed him through an emotional transposition where both cognition and love, guided by his talent, directed his interests towards the material and human universe, as well as towards the literary forms through which his spirit of observation as well as his unshakeable affection for people

could be specified with greatest clearness: recollection, physiology and travel diary. These are the forms of the narrative prose that discover Alecsandri in the equation of his own being.

With a sense of justice and a hierarchy of values, the judgment of posterity that has been directly nurtured by the essence of the works and from the point of view of the epoch that produced it should always remember that, on its best pages, Vasile Alecsandri's travel prose represented an artistic achievement in its time. As a result, we can speculate on the destiny and the orientation of the Romanian literature that followed in its modern evolution.

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## The Ecstatic Poems of Sufism\*

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### **Abstract:**

Sufism is the mystical path of Islam, also known as the Way of the Heart which implies being in love with God, without attachment to anything besides Him. Sufi mystics assert the possibility of knowing God through direct experience, not through reason, which revolves in the orbit of the material plane, unable to know the secrets of the divine world. Trying to put into words their experiences, Sufis have created ecstatic poems designed to express divine love, the proximity to the Loved and Beloved one.

**Keywords:** mystical, Sufism, ecstatic poems, ineffable, knowledge by love

In both sacred and profane languages, the notion of mysticism is quite confusing, referring to something hidden and unaccessible to common experience. The origin of this concept is the Greek verb *myo*, which means to “*close the eyes and the mouth, plug the ears, and join a secret cult*”. Based on its etymological sense, mysticism is “an action, an experience that takes place in secret, away from the eyes and ears, which for various reasons do not share things happening in secret” (Stroe, Bustle, 1998: 27).

Mysticism is an emotional and dynamic way of cognition; different from the notional, reflexive or intellectual cognition, it is a direct way of knowing an ultimate reality which can not be accessed any other way. Rational cognition involves splitting, differentiation and analysis of a certain part of the whole; reality is a Whole and at the same time the return to this very Whole through a process of intellectual synthesis. In the mystical experience this Whole is indivisible and identifies with itself in a kind of fusion accompanied by feelings of bliss, love and plenitude.

Similar to religion, mysticism's basic idea is that the fundamental nature of the universe and life consists of a spiritual essence, of an omnipresent reality that is central to all beings. In trying to describe the aspects of this spiritual essence, in addition to the experiences they go

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through, mystics are influenced by ideas and images of their own religion. Mystical steps happen in the context of tradition and historically constituted authority, which has its own values, customs, rituals, holy books, theories, dogmas and religious experiences. Often, throughout time, there were tensions between mystics and various forms of religious authority due to the tendency of the former to reinterpret sacred texts in the terms of their own experiences. Mystical experience, which is present in all religions, can not be characterized as a mere extension of religious life because it exists on another plane. The role of mysticism is to revive religion, to further religious faith, not through an intellectual assimilation of the religious dogma, but by rewriting it “in fire letters” (Bergson, 1992: 218).

E. Underhill notes that although “any religious system which fosters unearthly love is potentially a nursery for mystics”, true mystical formulae can not be limited to a particular religion, requiring knowledge of religious dogmas to which mystics refer to while describing their experiences (1995: 166). In the context of the actions characterizing various religions, mysticism takes into account the historical and religious processes but contains within itself its own foundations, giving religions another dimension: “Independent of any collective phenomena and social fact, it appears as a secret trip, perpetrated inside in search of *Deus absconditus*” (Davy, 1997: preface). Islamic mysticism (Sufism) like other mystic movements pertaining to monotheistic religions, aimed to go beyond the superficial aspects of rituals and theology, asserting the possibility of knowledge in and through the love of God.

Claiming that they have access to divine reality, whose inaccessibility is supported in traditional Islam, Sufis have been persecuted by the official religious authorities, especially by the orthodox Shiites. Relevant in this regard is that one of the most famous Muslim mystic, Al-Hallaj was accused of blasphemy by the Abbasid authorities in Baghdad and sentenced to death because he said “I am the Truth”. The essential characteristic of mystical experiences, regardless of the religious land they are cultivated on, consists, above all, in an ecstasy of the soul.

Compared with the ordinary religious man, the mystic does not defer the reunion with the supreme spirit until after the moment of death but tries to realize this union during his lifetime. Ecstasy is “a unique moment, without dimension and running time, the biggest challenge for mystics is the development of revelation rationally considered, adjusting it to the reflection mechanisms, in a review that evolves, necessarily, in time” (Gregoire, 1957: 95).

Access to mystical ecstasy requires certain spiritual preparations, the usage of means aimed at amplifying mystical states of consciousness as well as the reduction of rational consciousness to its limits. This alliance of spiritual and material methods is characteristic to Islamic mysticism. Sufism includes a ceremony called *Samā* which is centered on ecstasy inducing music and dances. *Samā* designates “The spiritual concert of Heaven. It unites song, music and dance, symbols of a celestial dance, which is a theophany, a manifestation of God in his omnipotence. Through its double ordered spin across a circumference, the Sufi symbolically enrolls in this divine order” (Chevalier, 2002: 116).

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Mawlānā Rumi, one of the most famous mystic Persian poets, born in 1207 in Balkh, now located in Afghanistan, was the founder of the Whirling Dervishes brotherhood. Rumi, also called the prince of Sufi poets, wrote poems that transcend time and cultures through their modernity and evocative power. Following the union of the divine and human nature, Islam mystical traditions are based on Prophet Muhammad’s ecstatic night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and his ascending along Archangel Gabriel to the seventh heaven. Once ascended to God’s throne, he received commandments and the eschatological perspectives of believers and nonbelievers were revealed onto him.

To enter into a mystical union and live annihilation in God condition- self extinguishing and merging with the divine- Sufis believe that there are three main conditions to be fulfilled: an essential grace of God, the guidance of a spiritual leader and the aspirant’s intense fervor. Going through the Sufi mystic (*tasawwuf*) path (*tarîqa*), an adept will need a master whose authority is guaranteed by the fact that he, in his turn, is one link in the chain that connects him to Muhammad, to his son in law Ali or one of his companions, the early caliphs. This is the “golden chain”, or the “chain of blessing” (Marquette, 1996: 140). In Sufism, as in other types of non muslim mysticism, prayer is a means of exiting one’s self and coming closer to divinity. The most important prayer, *Dhikr*, starts by continuously repeating God’s name and continues with placing its meaning inside one’s heart.

This prayer, similar to the Prayer of the Heart practiced in Christian Orthodox hesychasm, involves a mystical type of physiology and has two stages: “with effort, which implies the hidden wish to maintain the formula and therefore results in a pain felt in the physical heart; and without effort, in which the divine presence expressed by name, expresses itself though a sort of resonance of the formula with the physical heartbeat and with the pulse of the blood which courses through the arteries and veins, without any sort of pronunciation of the

words, not even mental, but through which the words flow” (Chevalier, 2002: 165).

As the organ of contemplation and spiritual life, the heart is made up of three parts: an outer part, an inner one and a deeper part, the heart’s quintessence. *Qalb*, the inner heart, is the place where God, as described in the Koran, planted people’s faith. Based on the meaning of the term, Sufis have correlated *qalb* with notions of knowledge and mystical union through love.

Mystical love, expressed by the term *mahabba*, is based on the belief that the relationship between man and God is defined by love; that He is the loved and beloved one and that this love “is an act of grace which concerns only the chosen ones, *al-awliya* and that the initiative belongs only to God” (Nicoară, 2008: 39). In order to achieve a level of love that allows entry into mystical ecstasy, it is required to access the deep shell of the heart, *fu ad*. Thus, a heart open to patience is emptied of everything except God and becomes ruled by Him. “How could I get close to other but You? All are dead to me, You are my only friend” (Sana’a, 2006: 138). The mystic, feeling God’s omnipresence in his heart, annihilates himself into God.

Knowing God by and through love, as postulated by both Sufism and other non Muslim mystic religions, lies beyond what can be transmitted through language and can not be described in words with a well-defined meaning. Mystical language is, in many respects allusive, and is, most of the times, poetical. The metaphors used by mystics add aspects, qualities and values to language; they talk about a reality that does not have direct access to a descriptive language. This language can be spoken only through transcending the current meanings of our words. The ambiguities of mystical texts, especially the poetic ones, are only for the interpret. The metaphors used to translate what happens in a mystical union lead us beyond the immediate accepted meaning of words, beyond the appearance of the objects denoted, their nature, and even beyond the interpret’s way of thinking. Many researchers question its very existence, indicating that mystic silence is more revealing, deeper, and has more meaning than what it says. The mystic’s call towards the ineffable is the result of multiple and excruciating efforts to put into words that which can not be captured in any form of representation. And yet, what we know about mysticism is revealed by mystical texts, whether they take the form of treaties or of poems. Mystical inventiveness, at a language’s level, denotes the fact that though a mystical experience is subjected to the constraints of a language, it still creates its own speech.



He who has such an experience “can not be silent and hide the secret, as he is overwhelmed with thrilling, joy, a superabundance which pushes him to share with the others the mystery of this state, but not in detail, yet rather hazy. If it’s a man who lacks scientific skills, he will speak in tongues. For example, someone got as far as to say, being in such a state: *Thank me, how terrible is my greatness!* Someone else: *I am the Truth!* And another one: *There is nothing in my past except God*” (Tufail, 2005: 84).

“Mystical saying” fundamentally means “translation”. “It enables a crossing. It forms a whole by unceasing operations on foreign words. It organizes from all this mottled material a chain of gaps but also lexical camouflages and quotes” (Certeau, 1996: 127).

Mystical phrases are distinguished more by their method of construction and less by their structure. Words are subjected to a “technical manipulation” and “the language is removed from the function of imitating things. Mystical language is the effect of work on existing language” (*Ibidem*: 127). Another important aspect of language refers to the analogy between the mystic and love metaphor. The mystic is not in love with the Absolute in a passive way; he feels a strong attraction for the over-sensitive object of his search.

Therefore, the language used is most often that of passion: “I have a lover and His love I feel / deep within me / if He wants to tread on my face, he does it / his Spirit is my spirit and my spirit/ is his Spirit / if he wants something, so do I and if I / want, He wants too” (Hallaj, 2008: 141).

Singing the ecstasy of divine love, Sufis use an erotic and bacchanal symbolism; they use the profane language of love which is then translated into the sacred language of love. The painful inability to express the infinite love felt in a language too human for a superhuman experience leads to the creation of intense writings, erotic phrases, whose symbolism is difficult to decipher. But beyond words or symbols used, Sufis know that such an experience is ineffable. Sufi mystical poems, well-known for their artistic and spiritual value, are designed to communicate something almost impossible to communicate, using symbols difficult to translate. If we stop at the literary dimension of the words used, we are not granted access to their hidden meaning; our understanding stops at the surface without comprehending the code that could read this symbolic versification. “For things to become even more complicated, under the symbolic code, in poetry lurks a hidden vision of the structure of the reality of human condition and of the spiritual path to which the symbols used by the poet only refer to” (Olaru, 2013: 10).

The most common symbols, taken from pre-Islamic traditions, are wine, drunkenness, the tavern, Boyfriend or Girlfriend, veil, pearl and

perfume. Prohibited in Islam for their effects on the senses and reason, wine and drunkenness are used as symbols to describe the indescribable states of mystical ecstasy. The one drunk on wine, as well as the one drunk with divine love, has his senses, mind and behavior affected, both being “brave and foolish, they have no fear, and are not cowards. They are bold, in case of danger, and during times of distress, little do they care about their lives, but the bravery of the first one comes from the fact that his prudence was overwhelmed and annihilated by wine, while the courage of the second one comes from the domination that certainty and mystical revelation hold over him. The result, for the first one, is his undoing in this world, while in the case of the second one, there is eternal life” (*Ibidem*: 214).

Wine imagery is often found in the metaphysical poems of one of the most important representatives of medieval golden age Persian poetry, Jami: “Oh you, bringer of the wine goblets! Fill my soul from/ The pre-existing cup, that thief of the heart, that watch dog of formal religion. / Fill it with the wine which flows from the Heart and mixes with the Soul, / The wine whose bubbles inebriate the eye that watches, of the Lord Almighty [...] / A drop from this goblet shall transform your masterpiece in/ gold-may my Soul be sacrificed to this goblet of gold!” (*Ibidem*: 210). Mystical poems abound in erotic metaphors that describe the painful experience of love either because the Beloved or Loved one rejects the advances of the lover, or because the one who loves is not capable of total dedication, is selfish, jealous or unfaithful.

The physical attributes of the loved one, the kisses and the caresses described in a way that borders on blasphemy, serve to emphasize the ecstasy of love: “If I were to get drunk and head towards you, I would walk/ Boldly ahead and watch your Face, / Sometimes I drink as if from a jewelry box of Your/ Shiny ruby lips, sometimes counting the rings of your hidden curls” (*Ibidem*: 218).

The tavern, the place where the divine wine of love intoxicates the pilgrim, is the mystical heart, the soul’s nest. The Tavern of Ruin, a gathering place for Sufi symbolists is the opposite of the mosque, is the place where, under the guidance of a master “the ecstasy of intoxication is experienced, through which the practitioner departs from both the egoism of a false self and from the illusion of the world” (*Ibidem*: 12). In the words of Hafez: “Cease to pretend being saints and to humiliating those / who go to the tavern! / The sins of other people are never written / on the tally by you. / Every place is the home of love, whether it is / Singogue or mosque. / My head is left entirely to his will, lying on the / tavern door bricks” (*Ibidem*: 12).

Another symbol which was picked up by mystic poets from profane love poetry and made the transition into the world of love for God is the *scent*. For example, in Al-Hallaj's poems, the description of a mystical union is given extra sensuality when associated with the mixture of two essential oils: "Your spirit melted into my spirit / As amber melts into musk essence / And if something touches you, touches me too / and if you exist I am too, inseparable" (Hallaj, 2008: 152).

As Al-Gazal proves, the veil, is another symbol frequently found in Sufi poetry: "is understood under its connection with the thing it covers. God, according to the prophet, has seventy veils of light and darkness; if It would uncover its veil Its greatness would burn the face of the one looking at him [...]. Considering the type of the veil with which they are covered, people are divided into three groups: those who are covered in darkness, those covered in pure light and those covered by light and darkness at the same time" (Gazal, 2005: 55).

Masters in hiding and unveiling symbols, Sufi mystics have composed odes, ghazals and rubaiyats so complex that can not be reduced to their undeniable aesthetic value, their purpose being to translate into a particular language something that, essentially, remains inaccessible to both language and reason. For, as a famous Sufi mystic said: "through mind, thought and senses no creature can get to know God [...]. Reason will lead you, but only up to the door. His grace is the one who leads the way [...]. If you want to describe it with arguments, speech is a comparison, and silence is an abandonment of duty" (Sanā'ī, 2006: 44–45).

Since ineffability is a general characteristic of the mystical experience, describing this extraordinary event can only have a symbolic or allegorical value. Between the verbal expressions used and the reality lived by the mystic, the distance is quite long.

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## Seneca's *Medea*. A Performance of the Macabre

Antuza Genescu\*

### **Abstract:**

From a stoical perspective, the Senecan tragedies are the field on which man confronts his destiny in a battle between *ira* and *furor*, on the one hand, and reason on the other. Seneca's plays focus on extreme circumstances and pathological characters. From a visual, macabre viewpoint, Senecan characters belong to the category of the monstrous. They are actors in a lugubrious performance and should be analysed not based on the criteria of sanity, but those of insanity that goes beyond the limits of a troubled human mind. Seneca creates an astounding aesthetic category of diabolical male and female prototypes. His characters gradually give up their human features and culminate in a terrifying demonic representation for which both the playwright and his audience had a peculiar kind of admiration.

The shocking macabre side of Seneca's tragedies intensifies the act of killing, the symbol of revenge and the concepts of *dolor*, *ira*, *furor*, *nefas* and *fatum* with which murder blends naturally and indissolubly and which are embodied in emblematic characters like Medea and Thyestes. The feast of male cruelty follows the fascinating female demonic performance ending with the metamorphosis of the witch. In opposition to the blood that boils in the characters' mind and soul, *sanguis*, the blood that will flow too slowly from Seneca's veins, will become the symbol of death seen not as a tragic end, but moral and spiritual emancipation.

**Keywords:** Senecan tragedies, anger, revenge, good/bad blood

### **The Senecan Tragedies**

A comparison of the interpretations of Seneca's work reveals that the debates concerning his philosophical works prevail over the critical approaches of his tragedies. This does not mean that the philosopher, thus favoured over the centuries, eclipsed the most important dramatist since the ancient Greek tragedy, which he reinterpreted, to the Renaissance playwrights, who took him as their model. Seneca's tragedies borrow enough ideas from his philosophical work to be considered their most adequate, if not necessary, illustration, a modality

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to assert their validity and viability. It is common knowledge that the tragedies, which are based on a solid philosophical system, influenced both the French Neoclassical tragedy that reached its climax with Corneille and Racine, and the Elizabethan drama that Shakespeare brought to excellence. The French dramatists, who preferred the grandiose form and style, adopted Seneca's elevated philosophical language typical of characters tormented by tragic guilt and destined to commit suicide or be killed. The Elizabethan playwrights borrowed Seneca's strong inclination for exteriorised passions, a perfect fit for the taste of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century English audience that loved to watch blood being shed on the stage. The premature denouement is the same both for classical characters like Hercules (the only Senecan hero who dies an apothotic, Stoic death) and those who anticipate the later Romantic tumult, like Medea, Phaedra or Deianira. Only their path to death is different: Stoic characters recite long, moralizing monologues, they die slowly, first spiritually and only then physically, while Renaissance-like heroes scream "Death!" and do not hesitate to draw the sword (Jocasta), choosing a brutal end either for revenge or the purification of the bloody hand that murdered innocent or not so innocent victims.

Seneca is famous for his violent, terrifying scenes that his Greek predecessors avoided on purpose. Medea is among the cruellest heroes in literature, the banquet that Atreus prepares for his twin brother Thyestes is frightening, to say the least, and the ritual that Tiresias and Manto perform in *Oedipus* is nothing less than macabre. The Latin tragedian has a predilection for magic, the supernatural and the macabre. His nine plays have Greek themes, but they follow the canons of Latin tragedies and include Roman realities subtly infiltrated in stoic conceptions. *Agamemnon* is adapted after Aeschylus, *Oedipus* draws inspiration from Sophocles, and the others are modelled on Euripides. Only *Thyestes*, Seneca's masterpiece, does not follow a pattern. All plays are "stained" with blood. *Hercules Oetaeus*, though stoic, is not an exception.

Seneca's tragedies can be classified after the themes they deal with: The Trojan War, its heroes and victims: *Agamemnon*, *Thyestes* and *Troades*; incest: *Phaedra* (stepmother-son), *Thyestes* (father-daughter), *Oedipus* and *Phoenissae* (mother-son), the last two focused on the king of Thebes and his descendants; two dramatic episodes in the life of the hero with twelve lives (*Hercules furens* and *Hercules Oetaeus*); revenge: in all plays, best expressed in *Medea*, in which the woman-mother-wife abandoned by her husband for another woman and glory gives an exceptional performance from beginning to end. Medea and Phaedra represent the female diabolical side (Clytemnestra proves to be

as evil as them), while Atreus and Aegisthus are symbols of the male demonic nature.

No matter whether Seneca wrote his plays to be read, recited or staged, they would definitely lose their dark charm if they had only readers and no audience. The horror-impregnated facts, the macabre episodes are full of tragism and... blood. Medea kills her children on the stage, which is considered a serious breach of the classical rules, especially Horace's direction in *Art of Poetry*, which demands that Medea should not murder her children in front of the audience. Seneca's characters embody psychic maladies that win the battle against virtue. By virtue of the role of catharsis in tragedy, which requires the experience of horror, the viewer becomes aware of the heroes' passions, as well as their moral uprightness. Reading the tragedies means frustrating the viewers who need to see in order to grasp the demonic side and its sense. It is not the very popular Greek myths used by Seneca that attracts an audience. People do not go to the theatre to see how a generally weak conflict ends; they want to watch the evolution of the wild, out-of-control impulses. The purpose of the tragedies is to present "the stages of crisis when the human soul is revealed in its own truth" (Grimal, 1992: 384). In Seneca's plays, there are no characters, but exacerbated feelings. The visual performance, no matter how lugubrious, must be preserved: the tragedies must be performed. They are lessons about how sins should be assumed. The sins are terrible, but they have a moralizing, cathartic effect. If retold or read, the magical ritual is diluted. The Senecan tragedies of cruelty *per se* are genuine masterpieces, a feast of horror, the visceral triumph of the pathological over the rational. It would be a great loss to "hear" a sacrifice instead of seeing it, no matter how rich your imagination may be. Seneca's characters' passion for murder through the torture of the victims and the people who are about to eat them is too strong – as the Elizabethan passion will be centuries later – to be perceived only through hearing, depriving the viewer of unique terrifying sensations. "The paroxystic phases are studied thoroughly, as if filmed in slow motion, right in front of the spectators' or readers' eyes" (Cizek, 1972: 161). Murder, like revenge, should be watched at leisure: "Enjoy a slow revenge" as Medea said.

"Deliberately teratological" (Grimal, 1992: 384), Senecan tragedies deal with extreme situations and pathological heroes who, once they have gone beyond paroxysm, fall into the category of the monstrous. And if the characters engage in endless monologues, they do it only to try to define themselves, to justify themselves, to teach a lesson about morality. Seneca is "a pathologist endowed with the gift of writing"

(Cizek, 1972: 161) who writes reports on psychological and behavioural abnormalities that cause terrible pains in his heroes. He may have intended to turn his plays into *exempla* (Grimal, 1992: 384), but what he actually conveys are examples that should *not* be followed. Only Hercules may be seen as a model, not when he is struck with fury, but when he lies in agony on Mount Oeta. Not even the nurses in *Medea* and *Phaedra* are completely positive characters, as one might expect. They do not fight with the characters to stop them from committing an abominable act, what the Romans called *nefas*; all they do is try to talk them out of it – a weak, useless attempt. Through concealment, they become their accessories.

Critics are concerned mostly with Seneca's deep female characters, *Medea* and *Phaedra*, although all his tragedies defy the classical tradition and not just because of their bloody episodes. But if one is to judge the plays strictly after the criterion of blood as the symbol of cruelty and revenge, of the nine titles mentioned above, four contain the most horrifying "live" scenes that are described in detail for a maximum terrifying effect: *Medeea*, *Thyestes*, *Oedipus* and *Hercules furens*. Medeea and Hercules kill their own children, while Thyestes eats his own sons, killed and cooked by his own twin brother. In *Oedipus*, Manto performs a ghastly sacrifice and towards the end of the play, the main hero tears out his eyes with his own hand. In *Agamemnon*, the king of Argos is killed by his wife and her lover, and in *Phaedra*, a stepmother takes her own life after causing an innocent young man's death. *Troades*, *Phoenissae* and *Hercules Oetaeus* are less "brutal" plays in which the bloody episodes do not occur in front of the audience.

### **When *Sanguis* Becomes *Cruor***

Essentially, stoicism means to bear one's misfortunes bravely, to live a moderate, reasonable life and to control one's impulses to annihilation. One has two possibilities: to resign oneself to fate – a reprehensible act – or to face its inevitable blows without complaining. Destiny, *fatum*, cannot be changed (this is the message that *Oedipus* conveys): no matter how hard the king of Thebes tried to fight against fate, he still ended up killing his father and marrying his mother. Nevertheless, fate can be defeated by fighting against oneself. To lose one's temper means to surrender to destiny, to give in to hardships and fatal events. When staged, such an event that causes unbearable spiritual torment is named tragedy, with all its accessories: anger, insanity, hate, torture, premeditated murder, suicide – all covered in *sanguis*, the sacred fluid that once flowing from the body becomes *cruor*, the sign of death.



From a stoical perspective, the Senecan tragedies are the field on which man confronts his destiny in a battle between *ira* and *furor*, on the one hand (“Gird thyself with *wrath*, and prepare thee for deadly deeds with the full force of *madness*” [emphasis added]) and reason, *mens bona* (“Ah, mad rage, say not so! Far, even from me, be that unheard-of deed, that accursed guilt!” [emphasis added]) on the other.

*Ira*, anger, is the crime committed by a *mens vitiata*. At first just a state, it is prolonged and becomes an attitude contrary to human nature. It is the second phase of the metamorphosis of the character into a “monstrous creature” (Cizek, 1994: 463), following *dolor*, the pain that is present at the beginning of the play. Dominated by *dolor*, man either surrenders to his merciless fate or chooses the path of anger.

What can be crueller than anger? wonders Seneca the philosopher. Should man’s desire to punish as a result of anger find a place in his heart is against his own nature (Seneca, *On Anger*, Book I, V, VII). Other passions take possession of the mind gradually. Anger conquers it suddenly and completely and will inhibit the pain that makes people weak. All the other feelings are subordinated to anger. And after *ira sanguinis* becomes manifest, follows *furor*, madness, the third phase of the metamorphosis that makes stronger only those individuals who, when calm, are also cowards. Therefore *ira* is a malady of the blood boiling in the veins. It culminates, through *furor*, in an atrocious, bloody crime, a deed forbidden by gods, committed by characters who, once they have killed, should be weighed not after the criteria of normality, but those of a madness that goes beyond any human limits: let their *passions* know no bounds, no shame; let *blind fury* prick on their souls [emphasis added], says the Fury in Thyestes.

Seneca matches the four classical elements – air, water, earth and fire – with what he calls the four “powers”: dry, moist, cold and hot. Geographically, these “powers” characterise various climate types on earth. Anatomically, they identify man’s chief temperamental attributes. Man will be influenced by that element that prevails in him. A hot-tempered individual is always prone to anger, as fire generates energy and dynamism, while a cold-natured person is a coward, for cold causes lethargy. Stoics believe that anger is stirred in man’s breast by the blood that boils in the heart, since the heart is the warmest place in the body, the perfect nest for anger to make. Moist temperaments grow angry progressively, while women’s anger bites and is easy to provoke. In dry natures, i.e. the sick or the elderly, anger is aggressive but constant, because heat is consumed due to disease or loss of blood (Seneca, *On Anger*, Book II, XIX). In other words, when *sanguis*, the sign of life, leaves the body, it becomes *cruor*, the sign of death.

### ***Cruor, Not Sanguis!***

This Senecan tragedy focuses on the mythological episode in which Medea the witch and her husband Jason, leader of the Argonauts, both fugitives from Iolcos, where they were left without the Golden Fleece and the throne Jason coveted, have taken refuge in Corinth. Here Jason decides to leave Medea and marry Creusa, King Creon's daughter. In the day she is given before her forced exile, Medea kills Creusa and her father with poisoned gifts and puts fire to the fortress. In the end, to punish her husband even more, she also kills their children and seeks refuge in the skies.

By virtue of the above-mentioned connections established between the primordial elements and the categories of human nature, Medea was born under the sign of heat, the fire that makes blood boil, as wine does to the mind. In her, anger bursts with an inhuman thirst of blood that must be shed in order to cool the too-hot blood boiling in her own veins. The cruel daughter of the Phasis does not care that she hurts herself as long as Jason suffers. A true paranoid nature, when anger strikes her she experiences hallucinations. She believes she sees her dead brother Absyrtus: "the wicked girl's little comrade hewn in pieces with the sword". As a gesture of symbolic compensation, Medea tells Jason that of all the gifts he may receive at his wedding with Creusa, all she wants back is her brother's limbs, which she scattered on an island (in other myth variants, into the sea) after killing him with her own hands, for Jason's sake.

Medea admits she is struck with insanity: "Perplexed, witless, with mind scarce sane, I am tossed to every side". Moreover, she is the victim of "mad grief" that tells her it's time she struck again, as she did when she committed the "impious crime" against Pelias or planned other abominable acts to help and protect Jason. The King of Corinth calls her a "contriver of wickedness, who combinest woman's wanton recklessness and man's strength" and employs "deadly herbs". Medea warns him that it is hard "to turn away from wrath the spirit when once aroused". She knows very well that anger knows no compromise and once you have taken its path, there is no way back. Medea can't put an end to her hate, as she could not put an end to her love. When she learns that her husband is going to leave her and steal her children and the king intends to force her into exile, both hate and love will have the same purpose, because "Anger puts love to flight, and love, anger".

Before committing the murders, Medea proclaims her "bloody" identity with great pride: "Now I am Medea; my wit has grown through suffering". Consequently, she is ready to go on with her killings. As her rival Creusa does not have children, she imagines that her own children

are the offsprings of Jason and Creusa, the soon to be married couple, so that she can kill them without remorse. They should be the ones to pay for their father's crime of abandoning her. Just as she called her first murders "too trivial", so she denies her children, only to take revenge as she pleases: "Let them die, they are none of mine".

Medeea feels betrayed. It is her blood that talks and urges her to avenge herself on the betrayer. She declares she is happy that she killed her brother and chopped up his body, that she fooled Pelias's daughters into cutting their father into pieces and throwing his remains in boiling water, in the hope of making him younger. Although she hesitates before taking the life of her children, her hesitations are short-lived and push her into carrying out her cruel plans: "Can I shed my children's, my own offspring's blood?" "My grief grows again and my hate burns hot". Medeea oscillates throughout the play. Sometimes her murders are unimportant, other times she seems to count them ("crime not done once alone in one act of crime") and mourns her murders and "impious" blood she shed with the same hand that makes the wreaths for Phoebus when she poisons the garment for her rival.

"Whose shade comes there dimly seen, its limbs all scattered? It is my brother, and 'tis punishment he seeks. We'll pay, yes, all the debt" – this is how one of the most violent Senecan scenes starts. A victim of hallucinations caused by her anger, Medeea will sacrifice her first son to pay for the sin of killing Absyrtus. Her children, she says, are without guilt, as her brother was. Blood washes the stage. Medeea goes into the house dragging her first victim after her and pushing her second son from behind. "The crime is accomplished; but vengeance is not yet complete", she announces, and then she kills her second son, this time with even greater satisfaction, because Jason, a cold temperament guilty of violating the sacred laws of nature, is also present. Jason is a cold temperament, an example of latent wrath. Medeea is still not satisfied. She would have liked to have fourteen children, like Tantalus's daughter, so that she could make fourteen victims. She would kill even what would have been hers. Can a mother have more terrifying thoughts? Yes, answers Medeea, who would have thrust the sword into her womb, had she been carrying another child by Jason. She wants to remove Jason from her mind, so she will wash his life in blood: his father-in-law and his bride already lie dead under the ruins of the burning fortress and he has to prepare his sons' funeral pyre. She throws him the little bodies down from the roof and then runs in the sky, in a snake-drawn chariot. It is the end of her revenge, as there is no more dear blood to shed. It is the end of the tragedy, the triumph of *cruor*.

### The Aesthetics of the Diabolical

In the first two scenes of Act IV, Medea keeps the promises she makes at the beginning of Act I, when she invokes the gods, asking them to kill Jason's soon-to-be bride and father-in-law. "let Corinth... be consumed by flames and bring the two seas together". What she wants to do is to "slay victims on consecrated altars", because the path to revenge is revealed in their entrails. She demands a punishment crueller than death for Jason: he shall never sit on the long-coveted throne, he shall be hated and homeless. (According to the myth, her wish will come true.)

Seneca warns us that right before killing her first son, Medea has a weird glint in her eyes and after murdering the second her face undergoes a strange metamorphosis. This exterior transformation must be overwhelming, as Medea herself asks her husband if he recognizes her. However, Seneca chose not to give any other visual details. The viewers, already shocked with so much blood flowing from the house roof, have the opportunity to add whatever gory details they may like to the picture.

Thanks to his fascination for demonic characters, Seneca creates an astonishing aesthetics of the diabolical in women. If in Phaedra the diabolical is particularly an inward attribute, Medea undergoes physical changes that cannot be ignored. King Creon sees her as an "abominable presence, dire, horrible". The murders she committed leave awful scars on her face, betraying her evil nature. In time, Helios's granddaughter becomes uglier and uglier and Jason's feelings for her start to dissipate, although not necessarily because she is disfigured. What they had was neither true love, nor wild passion, since for Jason Medea was only a killing tool, the agent who killed so that he can fulfil his desire for revenge and inherit a throne, no matter whose throne.

Seneca was interested in the physiognomy changes that occur after spiritual mutations. His interest becomes obvious after one reads *On Anger*, his dialogue on anger, addressed to Novatus. The human face reflects the moral and spiritual features. No other passion has a more terrifying exterior manifestation than anger. As expected, Medea's "cheeks blaze red, pallor puts red to flight; no colour in her changing aspect does she keep long".

Seneca the philosopher insists on the physical aspect of the mentally disturbed and describes their clinical picture. Insane individuals show clear symptoms of their disease, such as:

a bold and threatening mien, a gloomy brow, a fierce expression, a hurried step, restless hands, an altered colour, a quick and more violent

breathing – so likewise are the marks of the angry man; his eyes blaze and sparkle, his whole face is crimson with the blood that surges from the lowest depths of the heart, his lips quiver, his teeth are clenched, his hair bristles and stands on end, his breathing is forced and harsh, his joints crack from writhing, he groans and bellows, bursts out into speech with scarcely intelligible words, strikes his hands together continually, and stamps the ground with his feet; his whole body is excited...; it is an ugly and horrible picture of distorted and swollen frenzy – you cannot tell whether this vice is more execrable or more hideous (Seneca, *On Anger*, Book I, I).

The above passage anticipates Medea's portrait that her nurse describes in detail and to which the chorus, Jason and Creon add their own views:

- facial expression: “marks of distracted passion in her face” “she starts up, bursts into a passion, displays her hate; all her anguish is in her face”; “Her distraught face is hard set in anger”;
- cheeks: „her cheeks aflame”;
- breathing: „she pants with deep sobs for breath”;
- oral manifestations: “shouts aloud”;
- gait: “As a maenad uncertainly directs her frenzied steps”; “Hither and thither she wanders, as a tigress, robbed of her cubs, ranges in mad course through the jungles of Ganges”;
- sudden change from one extreme to another: “weeps floods of tears, beams with joy; she assumes the proof of every passion”; “Whither the weight of her wrath inclines, where it aims its threats, hangs still in doubt; she threatens, seethes with rage, complains, groans aloud”; “Why do anger and love now hither, now thither draw my changeful heart? A double tide tosses me, uncertain of my course; as when rushing winds wage mad warfare, and from both sides conflicting floods lash the seas and the fluctuating waters boil, even so is my heart tossed.”

The sorceress bears the traits that Seneca presented in great detail in *On Anger* and illustrated in his tragedies. She is as mad as Mars, the god of war “thirsting for fresh-flowing blood”, as the chorus in *Thyestes* sings.

*Medeea* is the reverse female variant of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The witch does not make a pact with the devil, but she invokes what in those times was equivalent of the devil, namely “the throng of the silent”, the “funereal gods, murky Chaos and shadowy Dis' dark dwelling-place, the abysses of dismal Death, girt by the banks of Tartarus.” She does not ask for eternal youth and beauty, which Wilde's hero seeks as the only things that matter in life. She does not

even want to win Jason's love back, though she curses him to grow so desperate as to beg for her affection. All she wants is the cruellest revenge possible. She is not the female correspondent of Dorian Gray, who never ages and remains beautiful; she is the picture itself that records and displays all the ugly visual manifestations of her wicked nature. In the end, when her appearance undergoes a fearsome metamorphosis, both her physiognomy and her soul become, indeed, ugly as sin.

Medea is the facial composite of the murderer of all times. She is what today is called a serial killer and, like Jack the Ripper (if one takes for granted all that has been written about him), manages to escape punishment every time she takes a life. Both assassins take extreme pleasure in what they do. Blood never fails to fascinate them. They have turned it into a cult, with a minor distinction in their *modus operandi*: Jack the Ripper likes the act of killing, Medea enjoys the preparation of the act. The major difference between them is that the former kills strictly out of pleasure, while the latter does it for revenge and believes that her murders are perfectly justified.

### **Good Blood, Bad Blood: A Performance of the Macabre**

The cause of Medea's monstrous mutation is precisely the too great satisfaction she derives from shedding good blood — that of her brother and her two sons. Highly skilled in the act of murder, she kills consciously, thoroughly, with passion and premeditation. At first, as she confesses, when she was only a girl, she was just practising and her "prentice hands" had little power. In time, she became knowledgeable and experienced: "with bared breast will I as a maenad smite my arms with the sacrificial knife. Let my blood flow upon the altars; accustom thyself, my hand, to draw the sword and endure the sight of beloved blood [...] Self-smitten have I poured forth the sacred stream".

The altar is the place that Medea chooses for the sacrificial ritual she is about to complete. A sacrifice, even if performed for a malefic purpose, is a solemn act and requires a gloomy, sinister environment. It is at the sanctuary of the "three-formed Hecate", her protector, that she learnt how to hold the blade, to suppress her feelings towards her victims, so that she can see them strictly as necessary sacrifices, recipients of the good blood that must be shed to soothe the bad blood. Consequently, she will choose the same altar to perform, in Act IV, the thing that is even more frightening than the promised confrontation with the gods: the magical ritual of revenge materialised in poisoning the robe for Creusa and burning the city of Corinth.

Seneca dedicates a whole act to this ritual. The first part is described in Scene I by Medea's very worried nurse. To start with, the witch touches the altar with her left hand. A justified gesture, as for the Romans the left hand symbolised the dark gods of the underworld (Terentiu. Seneca, 1966: 259). The left hand is probably the "bloody hand" that Seneca mentions so often in his plays. It is "insolent", "accursed", "impious", "miscreant" or "mocking" (in *Agamemnon*), "arrogant", "savage", "baleful", "deep-stained in blood" and "plague-dealing" (in *Hercules furens*) and is opposed to the right hand that is supposed to be "pure" and taught "to refrain from the blood of the loved ones" (in *Phoenissae*).

In the beginning, Medea calls earthly monsters to her aid: "scaly brood leave their lairs and come to her. Here a savage serpent drags its huge length along, darts out its forked tongue, and seeks against whom it is to come death-dealing". However, she is not pleased with them, so she summons the evil creatures from the sky, who spit *sanies*, the killing snake venom: "let Python come, who dared to attack the twin divinities. Let Hydra return and every serpent cut off by the hand of Hercules, restoring itself by its own destruction. Thou, too, ever-watchful dragon, quitting the Colchians, come thou to my aid". Then the witch touches her, probably with her left hand again, her collection of fragile plants that the sickle has "killed" and roots that produce deadly juices collected from several different parts like the Caucasus, "spattered with Prometheus' gore".

Wicked Medea prefers natural fluid poisons that impregnate easily in the robe that is to become the hidden agent of death, as she wants to deceive Creusa by sending her a treacherous wedding gift. The fact that she uses the gore streaming out of the titan's liver is very interesting, even though some may find it striking. Prometheus embodies the idea of the individual sacrifice made for the collective good: he stole the seeds of fire from the gods and gave it to the humble people, so his blood should never be allowed to cause the death of a human. Nevertheless, Medea takes his gore, *cruor*, and mixes it with herbal juices and *sanies*. Good blood becomes bad blood. This may be part of the titan's punishment, as Medea is the granddaughter of Helios, the god of sun, himself a child of two titans. Eventually, her lethal potion will consist of three types of non-human fluid, of bad blood: Titan blood, plant juice and animal poison, but not good blood, not *sanguis*. To this she adds bird entrails and the most powerful poison on earth, her words, her incantation that makes all nature shudder.

The second part of the ritual is a "live event". Medea describes the offer she has prepared for the Hecate: the wreath she made herself, the



limbs of Typhoeus the giant, the bad blood of Nessus, the centaur that Hercules killed, feathers left by the Harpy in its nest and quills of the Stympthalian birds, also killed by Hercules. The witch then asks Hecate to help her and slashes her arm. The “sacred stream” that flows on the altar completes the solemn, macabre ritual. Hecate answers her prayers: the robe for Creusa is impregnated with poison and the golden casket Medea received from Prometheus contains the seeds of fire that will destroy Corinth. Indirectly, the titan becomes the agent of death once again.

“Now all my power is marshalled”, announces Medea happily. She calls her sons, who are supposed to carry the lethal gifts to their future stepmother. In this way, her innocent offsprings are also touched by guilt. Nothing can escape the blood Medea is determined to shed: the earth, the herbs, the animals, even the fields that are “drenched with my brother’s blood” – a metaphor for Colchis, her place of birth.

### **The Triumph of Anger**

*Medea* does not end in the death of the hero, as the canons of tragedy require. It ends only when and how the terrifying female character decides. She is convinced that her only fault is that she loved Jason, therefore the murders she commits are nothing but reasonable punishments: “Whatever horror Pontus has beheld, or Phasis, Isthmus shall behold. Wild deeds, unheard-of, horrible, calamities at which heaven and earth alike shall tremble, my heart deep within is planning – wounds, slaughter, death, creeping from limb to limb”. The killings of her youth, which she considers trivial, were done only to serve another. But the pain she feels now, as an abandoned wife and mother, must “rise to more deadly strength; greater crimes become me, now that I am a mother. Gird thyself with wrath, and prepare thee for deadly deeds with the full force of madness”. Medea has reached the ultimate stage of anger, the last before spiritual dissolution.

*Dolor*, the terrible pain she can neither face, nor control, will evolve steadily in her. Eventually, when her mind is troubled enough, she will grow to believe that shedding blood is, in her case, legitimate homicide justified by self-defence. Consequently, she kills **to revenge** the harm done to her in the past and *to protect* herself from future misfortunes.

Yet what she calls justifiable murder is not *fas*, the opposite of *nefas*. *Fas* means morally or legally allowed. What she does is permitted neither by the human, nor by the divine law. It is quite intriguing that the witch escapes gods’ punishment so many times, since gods are usually determined and very skilled in sentencing sinful mortals. But she is the granddaughter of Helios, who provides her with the means to escape.



Consequently, despite her despicable acts, Medea finds refuge in the sky, her grandfather's kingdom. It is the end of the tragedy, but not of Medea. Legends give different variants of her life after fleeing from Corinth. She goes to Thebes to remove the curse Juno put on Hercules. In Athens, she married king Aegeus, whom she tries to convince that his son Theseus is a threat to the throne and should be killed. She fails in her attempt and returns to Colchis, her birthplace, where she kills her uncle and has her father back on the throne. In Book VII of the History by Herodotus, she is mentioned as living among the Arians, who changed their name after her and became the Medes.

In legends, Medea remains an unfinished character, an itinerant serial killer who defiles every place she visits. Her victims' blood has a double symbol, that of unjust revenge and the triumph of the evil.

"This blood-stained maenad borne headlong by mad passion", as the Chorus calls her, refuses to accept that life is predetermined to follow a certain course. She always wins through abominable murders and sacrilege, through *nefas*, which she employs to defy *fatum*, destiny. What makes her even more hideous is that she not only takes so many lives, but also watches the sacred crimson fluid leaving the body drop by drop, while the victim's soul starts its journey towards Hades or the legendary Greek paradise, the Champs-Élysées.

*Sanguis*, life, is defeated gradually and painfully by *cruor*, death. It is the same fate that Seneca himself had to face. He was forced to commit suicide, but he anticipated it. He never felt defeated, although he knew his life on earth was ending too soon. He died a very slow death, one that Medea would have enjoyed watching. He cut his veins, but death was cruel and took its time, in the same way the Stoics chose to live. He asked for poison, which he drank in vain. He sank into heated water, where the steams finally killed him. He was buried according to his wish, without funeral rites. The blood that flew so slowly from Seneca's veins became the symbol of death seen not as a tragic end, but moral and spiritual emancipation.

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LINGUISTICS, STYLISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

JESS

## Subculture *versus* Macro Culture: Hipster Language\*

Voica Radu\*\*

### **Abstract:**

New words are the carriers of new realities that circumscribe as many worlds, universes or realities. The word *hipster* (i.e. a relatively popular, familiar youth worldwide), opens a number of issues related to addressing the phenomenon from a linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and economic perspective. Thus, we are faced with a phenomenon, a product of subculture, which makes its presence felt through the macro culture by aspects of lexis, mentalities, attitudes and behaviour. In terms of linguistics, *hipster language* itself may present interest (because it generates a certain mentality), and so do the terms designating *hipster speak*, i.e. loans from English, entering the Romanian language, and other languages, their adaptation to the language system, their productivity and any stylistic values. This *linguistic fashion* indicates a social pattern that requires an analysis of the phenomenon from a cultural, linguistic and, last but not least, an economic point of view.

**Keywords:** langue, parole, lexical borrowing, mentalities, social code, language code

In the Romanian language, *hipster* indicates a person who admires and adopts the latest trends in fashion, technology and style etc. ♦ a superficial person – From Engl. *Hipster*; Source: *dexonline*.

The word *hipster*, Anglicism or rather, recent Americanism, is not recorded in academic dictionaries of the Romanian language. The above definition was found only in *dexonline*, which updates the database with recent records. In English, the situation is different. The *Urban Dictionary* states:

*Hipsters are a subculture of men and women typically in their 20s and 30s that value independent thinking, counter-culture, progressive politics, an appreciation of art and indie-rock, creativity, intelligence, and witty bante [...].*

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Also, *Webster Dictionary* states about it: a person who is unusually aware of and interested in new and unconventional patterns (as in jazz or fashion). It is significant for us to know the first mention of the word in English: *Webster Dictionary* indicates: *First Known Use: 1940*.

*Oxford Dictionary* brings the same specifications – i.e. a person who follows the latest trends and fashions, especially those regarded as being outside the cultural mainstream – along with an indication of its origin: 1940s (used originally as an equivalent term to *hepcat*): from *hip* + *-ster* and of the series of derivates: *hipsterish*, *hipsterism*.

*Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2010: Douglas Harper (1941) explains the origin of *hipster* as: “one who is hip”; from *hip* (adj.) + *-ster*. Meaning “low-rise” in reference to pants or skirt is from 1962; so called because they ride on the hips rather than the waist (cf. *hiphuggers*).

The term *hipster* was first used in the late '40s, with reference to a member of the African-American community. A decade later, *hipster* was white, but still fascinated by everything related to “colour”: from the exotic and otherness of the black culture (sexuality, violence and so on), to the jazz created by Afro-Americans. In both cases, knowledge was the point of resistance. By information obtained beforehand, a *hipster* distanced himself from the majority, and he was able to oppose a culture of racial problems (on <http://muzica.metropotam.ro/articole-despre-muzica/Ce-e-hipsterul-de-ce-folosim-termenul-la-tot-pasul-si-de-ce-ne-e-frica-de-el-art6071091996/>).

Turning to the Romanian language, although unregistered in dictionaries (not even in *Marele Dicționar de Neologisme – Great Dictionary of Neologisms*, 2006), the word *hipster* is part of the active vocabulary of the young (teenagers, students) from the urban environment and it is used in the audiovisual and written media. That is why it may be viewed as a phenomenon that cannot be neglected, taking into account at least the economic impact of *hipster fashion*. We can find the term in the Romanian written press, in a series of derivates, like: *hipsterism*, *hipstereală*, *hipsteriță*, *hipsteresc*, three of them formed with the help of Romanian suffixes (*-eală*, *-esc* and *-iță*), the other one created by derivation from an English word formation pattern, with the suffix *-ism*. As it is also mentioned in dictionaries of the English language, the term *hipster* belongs to a subculture, indicating a form of resistance, of opposition to all that represents the mainstream or macro culture. Yet, paradoxically, the *hipster social pattern* that defies all rules, has conspicuously established itself in the urban areas and, therefore, in the vocabulary of urban environment, including the press. The written as well as the audiovisual press carry the word towards the

literary language, *hipster* tending to leave the level of *parole*, as it is shown by our various press articles:

**Hipster? Hipstereală? Hipsteresc?** *Trânțește o talpă groasă cu colanți colorați și o fustă de tul și gata, ești hipster! Ascultă câteva piese hipsterești, de genul Nouvelle Vague – și ești de-al lor! Barbă, fular, păr vâlvoi și privire pierdută semn că te dor ochii de la citit prin ochelarii model wayfarer (obligatoriu!) și ești fix în peisaj... dacă mai și menționezi că umbli în locuri cu nume ca “tricycle”, “tutungeria” sau “percheziție”...ești pe val.<sup>1</sup> (<http://metropotam.ro/La-zi/Ce-e-hipsterul-in-viziunea-bucurestenilor-art3283708855/>)*

Or:

*Ca să revin la începutul articolului, ideea că atitudinea hipsterească ar însemna o lipsă de implicare socială e absurdă.<sup>2</sup> (<http://muzica.metropotam.ro/articole-despre-muzica/Ce-e-hipsterul-de-ce-folosim-termenul-la-tot-pasul-si-de-ce-ne-e-frica-de-el-art6071091996/>)*

In Romanian, *hipster* is a most-recent word; in fact, it is the word of 2014, just as *selfie* was decreed that of 2013. Although it appeared in the America of the 40s, *hipster* has resurfaced in the past decade not only in America, but it was hence borrowed not only by the Romanian language, but also by other Romance languages, as well as by German.

Conversely, the *Denglish* trend, i.e. the penetration of words from German into English, surprised linguists and English-language press observers. Heine comments an excerpt from the *New York Times* (*Uber-cool Hipsters Embrace the German Language* on <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/culture-vulture.html>), where German words are used:

*In Blended Adam Sandler once again proclaims himself both uber-doofus and ultimate mensch.*

The sentence contains three words from German. According to Heine, the *hipsters*, who are native speakers of English, use borrowings

<sup>1</sup> Here is a translation of an excerpt from the Romanian press, where we identified new words created by derivation from the Engl. *Hipster* + Romania suffixes like: *-er*, *-eală*, *-esc*: **Hipster? Hipstereală? Hipsteresc?** *Slam on thick-soled pumps and colored tights and a skirt of tulle and, there, you are a hipster! Listen to a few hipsterești tunes, like Nouvelle Vague – and you are one of them! Beard, scarf, dishevelled hair and lost look, signal that your eyes hurt from reading through glasses model WAYFARER (a prerequisite!). And you are straight in the landscape; and if you also mention that you frequent places with names like “tricycle”, “tobacconist” or “raid”... you’re on the roll. In Romanian, the underlined terms get stylistic values and pejorative connotations.*

<sup>2</sup> *To return to the beginning of the article, it is absurd to imagine that a hipsterească attitude would mean a lack of social involvement.*

from German. Some argue that the phenomenon is transient and that it is due to the Germans in the *World Cup 2014* victory.

The new generation, which is struggling with a deep identity crisis, imposes its new vocabulary, giving itself individuality even on the level of language:

...in Romania, the word *hipster* has made its presence in the last year within demonstrations against RMGC, but it is often used in a pejorative sense, Teodor Tita, content manager of digi24.ro., states in an interview (<http://www.digi24.ro/Stiri/Digi24/>).

Thus, *hipsters speak*, or *hipster language*, represents not only a language, but a matter of attitude and a state of spirit. This attitude, like the term itself, proves to be difficult to define, because the essence of the *hipster phenomenon* is not to be caught in patterns, nor to accept the rigidity of any intellectual pre-established frame. Being a *hipster* means to be fluid, not to be captive to any form of social or spiritual, or even artistic pattern.

An elitist spirit, an *anti-kitsch* attitude, aesthetics along one's entire behaviour, peculiar tastes in music, in fashion, an attention for details, for everything they consume, would probably direct our attention towards the *dandy* typology. Still, the *hipster* typology assumes a sort of social activism and an implication in everything that means damage or alteration of nature. Beyond the alleged snobbery, a *hipster* shows contempt for material values, defying a consumer society that transforms individuals into slaves of objects or of material goods. The *hipster* makes no effort to integrate into society. The *present-day hipster* is accused of a lack of ideology, but in truth he carries a mix of anarchism, of punk and anti-capitalism, of environmentalism and, sometimes, a post-racial attitude (<http://muzica.metropotam.ro/articole-despre-muzica/Ce-e-hipsterul-de-ce-folosim-termenul-la-tot-pasul-si-de-ce-ne-e-frica-de-el-art6071091996/>).

He is also accused of creating nothing. In fact, the only thing he can do in a consumerist society is to embrace a *hipster attitude*.

A history of the *hipster typology* is configured: it begins with the American *hipster of 40s*, then *the hipster of 90s* and *the hipster of 2000*. In Romania, only the last one is present, because *the hipster of 2000* was born in the middle of contemporary society struggles.

According to this typology, *hipster speak* is designed as a language of generalities, focused basically on expressing emotional states, not rational ideas. *Hipster vocabulary* includes English words or terms with changeable meaning, depending on intonation. The meaning of the same words, like *freak* or *cool*, depends on the context. So, *hipster language* is mainly an emotional language, a sort of code of emotions or of



nanced perceptions. Among the well-known *hipster words*, *cool-uncool* are already considered a *cliché*. Like most social groups, *hipsters* have their own specific way of communication. They converse using certain terms and being abreast with the latest news in *slang* is a basic condition of being a *hipster*:

*Obsedați de cool, am putea adăuga. Cumpără ce e cool, ascultă ce e cool, citești ce e cool și apoi dezaprobă tot ce a fost până atunci cool. (Ghidul hipsterițelor on <http://www.gq.ro/radar/10268086-ghidul-hipsteritelor>)<sup>3</sup>.*

The new concept of *eco*, meaning “clean” (“organic”), is familiar to *hipsters* and it is a source of new terms, like *eco-friendly* or *eco-chic*. *Eco living* means being in harmony with nature but, more than that, it means a healthy lifestyle.

A *hipster* is purchasing clothes, good music (on old vinyl), books etc. as a way to secure his social and cultural status. He is always *trendy*; he is a *biker* because it is much cooler to ride a bike than drive an expensive car; that, apart from being a factor of pollution, it is also a sign of material arrogance. If the *hipster* is male, he will probably wear a beard and an old wool jacket; if she is a female, she may wear vintage clothes, and grandmother’s old broche. They drink green tea and eat organic food, they pretend they listen to good music and are interested in Literature or Art.

On the linguistic level, concerning Romanian vocabulary, words that are part of a *hipster*’s universe (*biker, cool, clean, eco, eco-friendly, eco-chic, fake, freak, fresh, trendy, uncool* etc.) strengthen the English element by a high rate of frequency; they can be new borrowings or lexical creations.

So, *hipster language*, just like the term itself, proves to be prolific both in English and in other languages that borrow from it. In the Romanian language, it shows its productivity and it also gets stylistic values present in the audiovisual and the print media. On the lexical level, it is obvious that Romanian gains a word which will prove its vitality in time, even though it is used especially by students and teenagers from the urban environment; in a way, its vitality is partially proved by the process of morphological adaptation it undergoes (we have mentioned the forms articulated with the definite article, *hipsterul*, and the feminine noun form obtained with the Romanian suffix *-iță*: *hipsteriță*, that has diminutive value). It creates a social pattern and a

<sup>3</sup> *Obsessed by cool, we may ad. They buy what is cool, they listen to what is cool, they read what is cool and after that they disapprove everything was cool until then. (Hipsterițelor' Guide on <http://www.gq.ro/radar/10268086-ghidul-hipsteritelor>).*

phenomenon that implies fashion, food, entertainment, music, literature, all of them triggering a terminological stock that generates a specific language. And, as any language creates a way of thinking, a representation of reality, *hipster language* means a certain affectivity, a certain emotion and vision of the world.

On the social level, the *hipster attitude* and the *hipster language* indicate a form of opposition, of resistance against the Western world that is in free fall because of the rush for riches. The *hipster* option is for what could remain authentic in such a world, where even the concept of *hipster* may represent a source of money in itself.

The contemporary world crisis means reconsidering the system of values. It is a world seeking a new identity. The features of a subculture will always influence the macro culture; in this sense, we should pay attention to the *hipster phenomenon* both on the social and the linguistic level, considering it a symptom of a sick world where spiritual roots and authenticity are in danger due to the failure of the concept of *material paradise*.

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# The Infinitive Built Prepositionally\*

Cristina Corla (Hant)\*\*

## Abstract:

This paper aims at analyzing the role of the preposition when it is used together with non-finite forms of the verb. We will examine the following aspects: the mixed features of the infinitive (substantival and verbal), the types of prepositions which can be combined with the non-finite forms of the verb (lexical, semi-lexical and functional), the ability of the preposition to generate a prepositional syntactic group, the setting/non-setting of a thematic role, the syntactic positions held by the infinitive with preposition. If the rule says that the preposition has a case government, we ask ourselves what happens to it in the presence of non-finite forms of the verb. Therefore, one of the discussed topics is the obstruction of the case government/practising it under the substantival features of the non-finite forms.

**Keywords:** preposition, case, infinitive, prepositional group, thematic role

## Introduction

According to today's grammar, the infinitive, the supine, the gerund and the participle are not viewed as "moods" any more, but as non-finite forms of the verb. It is also accepted that they reveal mixed features – characteristics which belong to several word classes. We will examine them one at the time.

The infinitive has two forms in the Romanian language – the so-called long infinitive, which was inherited from Latin and which is used as a noun (*auzire, mâncare, vedere* etc. – *hearing, eating, seeing*, etc.), and the short infinitive, a late form, which was created on the field of the Romanian language and was built from the free morpheme "a" ("to" – a preposition without meaning), the root of the verb and conjugation morphemes (-a, ea, -e, -i, -î). Due to the fact that it lost its verbal value, the long infinitive is not of interest for our study. Next, we will examine the features of the short infinitive. The first interesting aspect is the fact that this verbal form has the functional, abstract preposition "a" ("to") in

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its structure. In the traditional grammar it is recognised as preposition and, as a result, the structures in which it is combined with other connectors are considered compound prepositions: *pentru a*, *de a*, *fără a*, *prin a*, *la a* (*to*, *without*, *by*, *about*). There are papers in which “a” (“to”) has different interpretations: “dividing morpheme of prepositional origin” (Constantinescu-Dobridor, 1974: 197), preposition with value of modal prefix (Jordan and Robu, 1978: 475), mark or morpheme of the infinitive (Bejan, 1995: 201). The association between the non-finite form and the preposition is one of the symptoms of placing it in the noun class, although the conversion has not been fully realised. In contrast, the finite forms of the verbs cannot be associated with prepositions.

In today’s grammar, “a” (“to”) is seen as a mark of the infinitive, “a free proclitic morpheme (not blended)” (GBLR, 2010: 290). Still of a substantival nature is the capacity of the infinitive to hold syntactic positions that are particular to this class of words: **A citi e important – To read is important.** (subject), **Dorința lui era de a cunoaște – His desire was to know.** (predicative), **Are a spus multe despre aceasta. – He has a lot to say about this.** (direct object), **Se gândește la a păstra locuința. – He is thinking about keeping the place.** (prepositional object), **A plecat fără a anunța. – He left without saying a word.** (adverbial of manner), **Luptă pentru a ajunge la mal. – He is fighting to get to the shore.** (adverbial of purpose), **A început prin a se prezenta. – He started by introducing himself.** (instrumental adverbial), etc. We can easily notice that, in most of the previous statements, the infinitival group is connected to the external centre through a preposition. The following morpho-syntactic features are of verbal nature: the grammatical category of time (*a merge – to go*: present infinitive, *a fi mers – to have gone*: perfect infinitive), the association with pronominal clitics (*a-și aminti*, *a vă spune*, *a te depăși – to remember*, *to tell*, *to outrun*), the capacity of having an identical or different subject to the centre-predicate of the statement (*Înainte de a sosi la Arad, trenul a oprit în cinci stații. – Before getting to Arad, the train stopped in five stations. Pentru a învinge ai noștri, ai tăi trebuie să piardă. – In order for ours to win, yours have to lose.*). Furthermore, this verbal form can be regent for syntactic positions: direct object (*Pentru a citi cartea, am depus efort. – To read the book, I made an effort.*), indirect object (*To give presents to three of the children seemed a nice gesture to me. – To give presents to three of the children seemed a nice gesture to me.*), prepositional object (*Începeau a se pregăti de drum. – They started getting ready for the road.*), adverbials (*A sosi duminică aceasta e indicat. – To arrive on Sunday is advisable.*, *Fără a se îndrepta spre*

*noi, ne-a salutat. – Without looking at us, he said “hello”.*, *A fugi mai repede înseamnă a face efort. – Running faster means making an effort.*). Very rarely, the infinitive has autonomy in communication, materializing as predicate: *A nu se arunca nimic pe fereastră! – No throwing things out of the window. A nu se face gălăgie în timpul examenului. – No making noise during the exam.*

From the previous information, it is revealed that the infinitive is situated at the border between noun and verb, showing characteristics that belong to both classes of words.

### **Types of Prepositions That Can Be Associated with the Infinitive**

In the generative grammar it is suggested a taxonomy of the preposition, which is different of the classical one. Viewed as belonging to the major grammatical categories (together with the verb, the noun and the adjective), the class of preposition is characterized by disparity, due to the fact that in its paradigm there are both items with lexical value (prepositions with meaning, capable of setting a thematic role, creators of proper prepositional groups) and elements of functional nature (prepositions that help expressing the idea of case and building the syntactic function of direct object, morpheme prepositions, markers of non-finite forms of the verb). The semi-lexical prepositions are situated among these major subcategories and are requested by the syntactic-semantic matrix of a centre of an external group. Some prepositions are always lexical (for example *datorită, mulțumită, grație* – *through, thanks to, due to*), others can have a double value (*asupra* – *on, about*) or even triple value (*de, la, a* – *of, by, at, to*).

The number of prepositions/prepositional phrases that can be associated with the infinitive is limited to only a few: *de, în, pentru, fără, la, până, prin, spre, în afară de, în loc de, fără de* – *of, by, in, for, without, at, until, through, towards, beside, instead of, without*.

**Note:** according to recent theories, the following groups of words *înainte de, departe de, aproape de, dincoace de, dincolo de, alături de* (*before, away from, close to, beyond, across, alongside*) do not represent prepositional phrases, but adverbs which dominate prepositional groups (*GALR, GBLR*). This means that, in a statement like *Înainte de a răsări soarele, apărură câteva raze roșiatice.* (*Before the rising of the sun, a few red rays had appeared.*), the term *înainte de* (*before*) represents an adverb that forms an adverbial group, subordinated to the verb *apărură* (*had appeared*), while the infinitive, that fulfils the function of adverbial of time, has the adverb as external centre ([<sub>GAdv</sub>*Înainte* <sub>GPrep</sub>[*de a răsări*]] *soarele, apărură câteva raze roșiatice.* – [<sub>AdvG</sub>*Before* <sub>PrepG</sub> [*the rising of*]] *the sun, a few red rays had appeared.*).

### The Prepositional Group Made up of Preposition + an Infinitive as Dominated Term

Prototypical, the prepositional group is made up of a lexical preposition, followed by a nominal, to which it imposes grammatical constraints – of case (accusative, genitive, dative), of articulation and thematic role. There are contexts in which the preposition (lexical/semi-lexical/functional) directs an infinitive. The structure deserves a detailed analysis – the problems raised by it are the following: what kind of constraints does the preposition impose upon the non-finite verb form? What happens to the case government of the preposition if the verb belongs to a non-case class of words? What is the role of the preposition in such structures? Does it always generate a prepositional syntactic group or the construction has a different nature? Does the preposition impose or not a thematic role upon the infinitive (taking into account the fact that this has specific noun features)?

The prepositional group is “an component of the statement made up of a preposition with a group centre status and another element that depends on it (usually belonging to the level of the preposition.)” (GALR II, 2005: 124). The grammatical restrictions that it enforces on the non-finite verb are few. We can talk about restrictions in terms of word order – the position occupied by the infinitive in relation to the preposition with a group centre status is always the same: *Pentru a vedea adevărul nu ai nevoie de ochelari.* (*To see the truth you do not need glasses.*), \**A vedea pentru adevărul nu ai nevoie de ochelari* (\**See to the truth you do not need glasses.*). In Romanian, the preposition does not change its place in questions, as it happens, for example, in English. The questions keep the following word order - preposition + infinitive: *Pentru a vedea adevărul ai nevoie de ochelari?* (*To see the truth you need glasses?*). Another defining feature of the prepositional group, which is applicable to the analysed situation, is the fact that, in Romanian, the prepositional group forms a syntactic island, protected from different syntactic operations. In other words, this type of prepositional group does not allow the insertion of other terms between the two elements – the group centre and the dominated term: *Încercarea de a bate recordul a eșuat.* (*The attempt to beat the record was not successful.*), *A participat fără a fi fost chemat.* (*He participated without being invited.*), *Pentru a reuși este nevoie de efort.* (*To succeed you need to make an effort.*). Through this tight cohesion, the prepositional group with an infinitive as dominated term is totally different from the prepositional structures with a nominal, which allow the insertion of terms between the centre preposition and the dominated term. We will refer to the same sentences: *De multă vreme n-a mai călătorit.* (*He has not travelled for a*

long *time.*), Vine *fără* elegantul său *partener*. (He is coming *without* his elegant *partner.*), *Pentru* toți acești *jucători*, victoria este un stimulent. (For all these *players* victory is an incentive.). The preposition can be associated with both the present infinitive and the perfect infinitive: *Încercarea de a fi bătut* recordul a eșuat. (The attempt to have beaten the record failed.), *Încercarea de a bate* recordul eșuează, (The attempt to beat the record is failing.).

The problem concerning the case government of the preposition in constructions with the infinitive is, in general, overlooked by the Romanian grammars. There are a few grammarians who talk about obstructing the prepositional government (Drașoveanu, 1997; Neamțu, 2006–2007). On the other hand, some authors claim that when they accompany the infinitive form of the verb, the elements seen traditionally as prepositions are actually conjunctions and, implicitly, the non-finite verb forms act as predicates (Dimitriu, 1969).

The thematic role applies only to the nominal: considering the noun features of the non-finite form does the preposition impose such a role in the presence of the infinitive? It is obvious that the meaning of the preposition/prepositional phrase extends to the group which determines the differentiation of certain syntactic positions: the preposition can show the purpose (*Alergă pentru a ajunge la destinație.* – He is running to get to the destination.), the lack of something (*Mănâncă fără a mesteca.* – He eats without chewing), the opposition (*În loc de a citi, doarme.* – Instead of reading, he is sleeping.), the limit (*Până a crește cât tine, mai durează!* – To get as tall as you are takes time.).

### Types of Prepositional Groups with the Infinitive

The classification we want to make has the type of preposition – group centre – as criterion. We will therefore distinguish between prepositional groups with a lexical centre, groups with a semi-lexical centre and groups with a functional centre.

Most of the analysed structures have as centre a lexical preposition or a prepositional phrase, a fact which is revealed by the meaning imposed on the dominated infinitive by the connector, thus deciding the syntactic function of the group: the preposition *pentru* (*for*) indicates the purpose and together with the non-finite verb makes up an adverbial of purpose (*Participă la concurs pentru a se impune în fața celorlalți.* – He is participating in the contest to outrun the others.); the preposition *fără* (*without*) has a negative meaning and it can only dominate an adverbial of manner or an adverbial of concession: *Fără a lupta, tot a câștigat. A câștigat fără a lupta.* (*Without a fight, he still won. He won without a fight.*). More restrictive are the phrases which, due to the



powerful semantics, dominate the terms that can fulfil only one syntactic function: *în loc de* (*instead of*) – oppositional adverbial (*În loc de a citi, a hotărât să facă o plimbare.* – *Instead of reading, he has decided to take a walk*), *în afară de* (*besides*) – cumulative adverbial (*În afară de a juca tenis, mai face și alte sporturi.* – *Besides playing tennis, he also practises other sports.*).

Subcategorized prepositional groups (the group centre is represented by a semi-lexical preposition) have mandatory status. They can be subordinated to the verb (*Activitatea lui **constă** în a analiza dosarele candidaților.* – *His activity **consists** of analysing the candidates' files.* *Valoarea unui artist **rezidă** în a crea ceva inedit.* – *An artist's value **lies** in creating something new.*), to the adjective (*Este **capabil** de a pricepe.* – *He is **capable** of understanding.* *Criteriul este **util** pentru a face diferența dintre categorii.* – *The criterion is **useful** to make a difference between categories.*), to the adverb (***Înainte** de a porni aparatul, citește instrucțiunile!* – ***Before** turning on the machine, read the instructions.*).

### Syntactic Functions Held by the Infinitive with Preposition

When it comes to syntactic functions of the infinitive built with a preposition, we notice that generally these are owed to the substantival characteristics of this non-finite form. Thus, the infinitive has the functions of: subject – only with the morpheme/functional preposition “a” (*to*) – *A **munci** înseamnă reușită.* (***To work** means success.*). The linguistic standards do not allow the proper prepositional construction – *E bine de a vedea...* (*It is good to see...*), predicative – *Încercarea lui era **de a urca** pe Everest.* (*His attempt **to climb** the Everest...*), verbal attribute – *Mișcarea **fără a face** zgomot a determinat succesul operațiunii.* (*The movement **without making** any noise has determined the success of the operation.*), object complement – *Îl credeau **a fi** integru.* (*He was thought **to be** honest.*), direct object – *Știe a analiza **textul**.* (only after certain verbs – *He knows to analyse the text.*), prepositional object – *Nu sunteți **capabili de a vă afirma**.* (*You are not capable **of imposing** yourselves.*), adverbial of time – *Spală-te pe mâini înainte **de a mânca**.* (*Wash your hand **before eating**.*), adverbial of manner – *Nu pleca **fără a spune** adevărul!* (*Don't leave **without telling** the truth!*), instrumental adverbial – *Expunerea lui a început **prin a preciza** limitele experimentului.* (*His presentation started **by specifying** the limits of the experiment.*), adverbial of relation – *Părea pricepută **în a-i încurca** pe ceilalți.* (*She seemed skilled **in confusing** the others.*), cumulative adverbial – ***În afară de a scrie** povești, creează și poezii.* (***Besides writing** stories, he also creates poems.*), oppositional adverbial – ***Depart** de a o susține, ei au combătut-o continuu.* (***Far from***



*supporting her, they were always against her.*), adverbial of concession – *Chiar fără a privi spre ei, tot a știut că este invidiată (Even without looking in their direction, she still knew she was envied.)*.

### Some Final Reflections

In Romanian, the infinitive, which is a non-finite form of the verb, is generally built with a preposition. On the one hand, there is a functional preposition with a grammatical role, which has become a mark-morpheme of the infinitive *a (to)*; this preposition has a fixed position – it always comes before the verb and it can establish connections with other prepositions of different nature (lexical, semi-lexical), making up a prepositional group together. Regardless of the type of the group-centre preposition, the infinitive obstructs the case government of the dominating term, due to the fact that the verb is a word class without the grammatical category of the case. In the present study we have distinguished between prepositional groups with a lexical centre and groups dominated by semi-lexical items in order to show the difference in their syntactic behavior. In terms of syntactic functions fulfilled by the infinitive with preposition, we have noticed that they reveal nominal features of this non finite form.

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JESS

## Categoriile gramaticale ale intensității și comparației în gramaticile tradiționale ale limbii române\*

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### The Categories of Comparison and Intensity in Traditional and Contemporary Romanian Grammar

#### Abstract:

The article approaches a current issue of great interest for both the theoretical and the applied linguistics. It is about the report between the properties expressed by an adjective or adverb during the act of comparison, which report has been seen as unified by traditional grammar and presented therefore undifferentiated. They were called the grammatical category of comparative or simply as comparative degree. Lately, the linguists have added the concept of intensity parallel with the comparative degree. This has led to the identification of two grammatical categories: the comparative degree and the intensity without a clear delineation to be made between them.

My article reflects the current situation in Romanian grammar. The firsts to talk about intensity and in a Romanian grammar were Vladimir Robu and Iorgu Iordan in their *Contemporary Romanian Language*, (Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978). The idea was taken up in other grammar books, such as the first and second volume of the *Romanian Grammar, The Word and The statement*, (Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005) and *The Basic Romanian Grammar*, (Encyclopedic Universe Publishing, Bucharest, 2010). Both books led to a different solution than the one proposed by Vladimir Robu.

The information contained in this article is intended as a database for a wide analysis of an interesting issue in Romanian grammar today.

**Keywords:** grammatical category of intensity, adjective, adverb, contemporary Romanian grammar, traditional Romanian grammar, comparative degree, intensity degree, theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics

Prima lucrare în care se face o distincție clară între categoriile gramaticale de *intensitate* și de *comparație* o datorăm lui Iorgu Iordan și Vladimir Robu, *Limba română contemporană*, Editura Didactică și

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\* Acest articol constituie prima parte a studiului categoriei gramaticale a intensității și comparației până la apariția GALR și GBLR, urmând ca un articol viitor să trateze categoria gramaticală a intensității din perspectiva gramaticii actuale a limbii române.

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Pedagogică, București, 1978. Cum concepția de bază, funcționalistă, a demersului teoretic îi aparține lui Vladimir Robu, în cuprinsul articolului nostru ne vom referi cu precădere la el<sup>1</sup>.

Chiar dacă noțiunea (și termenul *intensitate*) apare și în alte gramatici anterioare celei a lui Iorgu Iordan și Vladimir Robu, ea nu a primit statutul de categorie gramaticală aparte. Astfel, Iorgu Iordan vorbește, la adjectiv, despre „însușirile” care „nu au la toate obiectele același aspect cantitativ, aceeași *intensitate* [subl. n.], etc.”<sup>2</sup>.

Deși viziunea din lucrarea colectivă *Structura morfologică a limbii române*<sup>3</sup> părea să conducă la o nouă interpretare, anume cea care vizează intensitatea însușirii adjectivului, ea rămâne, în opinia noastră, doar la nivel declarativ, într-o formulare singulară în contextul întregii analize: „categoria comparativ indică *intensitatea* [subl. n.] unei însușiri. Dacă intensitatea exprimată comparativ este *relativă*, există o intensitate *absolută*, fără termen de comparație, în care orice apreciere cantitativă este absentă” (p. 112). În rest, distincția dintre intensitate și comparație nu există.

Observații apropiate de noțiunea de *intensitate* face Valeria Guțu Romalo<sup>4</sup>. Deși vorbește despre „categoria *comparației*” și inventariază cele trei „grade de comparație” clasice: *pozitiv*, *comparativ* și *superlativ*, cu subclassele lor, comparativul de *superioritate*, de *inferioritate*, de *egalitate*, și superlativul *relativ* (de *superioritate* și de *inferioritate*), încheind cu superlativul *absolut*, ea face constatarea că „se subsumează aceleiași categorii situații eterogene ca structură de expresie și de conținut” și că această categorie „privește *semantic* [subl. n.] adjectivul” (p. 179).

Astfel, din punct de vedere *semantic*, „*totalitatea* [subl. n.] „gradelor de comparație” implică informații privind *i n t e n s i t a t e a* și *c o m p a r a ț i a*, fără ca fiecare din situațiile enumerate să comporte ambele componente

<sup>1</sup> Având în vedere economia lucrării, ne vom referi aici numai la clasa adjectivului.

<sup>2</sup> *Limba română contemporană*, Editura Ministerului Învățământului, 1956, p. 349. Pe de altă parte, ar fi urmat să ne referim, cronologic, la GA. O vom ignora în cele de față, pentru că abordarea comparației este strict clasicistă. Față de gramaticile tradiționale apare, în plus, accentul pus pe *forma* gradelor de comparație. Este vorba despre o structură corelativă, ce se manifestă unitar, compusă din ceea ce numim acum morfemele intensității (*mai, foarte* etc.) și cele ale comparației (*decât, dintre* etc.). Chiar abordând *formal* comparația, GA nu poate depăși descrierea comparației din gramaticile tradiționale.

<sup>3</sup> Iorgu Iordan, Valeria Guțu Romalo, Alexandru Niculescu, *Structura morfologică a limbii române*, Editura Științifică, București, 1967 (Secțiunea dedicată comparației adjectivului se află la p. 111–115).

<sup>4</sup> În Ion Coteanu, (coord.), *Limba română contemporană*. Vol. I, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1974, p. 179–180.

[...]” (*Ibidem*). Ca exemplu se dă *superlativul absolut* care conține „aprecierea intensității calității (*foarte frumos*), dar rămâne în afara comparației” (*Ibidem*). *Pozitivul*, pe de altă parte, nu dă nicio informație despre intensitate, dar admite comparația: *alb ca zăpada*. În ce privește *comparativul* și *superlativul relativ*, ele conțin „precizarea intensității pe baza unei comparații” (*Ibidem*).

Referitor la *comparație* ca atare, ea se compune dintr-un „t e r m e n de comparație, reprezentat printr-un substantiv (sau pronume) și introdus printr-un element de relație” (*Ibidem*). Aceste elemente de relație sunt:

**a)** la comparația de *egalitate*: **ca**: *negru ca noaptea*; **la fel** (*tot așa, tot atât de negru ca noaptea (ca ciorile etc.)*), cu precizarea că gradele care admit comparația de egalitate sunt *pozitivul* și *comparativul* de egalitate.

**b)** la comparația de *inegalitate*: **decât**, atunci când comparația se produce în raport cu unul sau mai multe obiecte, „de obicei aparținând la clase diferite, dar prezentând aceeași calitate în *intensități* [subl. n.] diferite [...]” (*Ibidem*). El este în variație liberă cu **ca**: *mai alb ca zăpada, mai alb decât zăpada*. Comparația de inegalitate se mai realizează prin **dintre** când se are în vedere „o clasă de obiecte considerată în *totalitatea* ei, clasă căreia îi aparține și obiectul calificat prin adjectiv (*cel mai talentat dintre scriitori*)” (p. 180).

Valeria Guțu Romalo mai precizează că, de regulă, „Categorii *comparației*“ [subl. n.] se realizează numai prin elemente de expresie care, raportate la flexiune, au statutul afixelor mobile: are poziție totdeauna proclitică față de radical și nu fuzionează cu acesta – *o casă mai veche, casa cea mai veche*” (*Ibidem*)<sup>5</sup>.

De observat că autoarea vorbește de *comparație*, dar ilustrarea se face cu „afixul mobil” **mai**, care este, de fapt, morfem al intensității. Deducem de aici, și din cele de mai sus, că noțiunea „comparație” include *solidar* și comparația, și intensitatea<sup>6</sup>.

Mioara Avram în *Gramatica pentru toți* vorbește de „grade de intensitate” și de „intensitatea unei însușiri” la începutul analizei sale

<sup>5</sup> Valeria Guțu Romalo mai precizează că **mai** din „combinații sintagmatice” ca: *mai poet, mai filozof, mai pușlama* etc. reprezintă rezultatul „adjectivizării” substantivului (p. 179, n.1).

<sup>6</sup> Cronologic, imediat după apariția gramaticii lui Iorgu Iordan și Vladimir Robu, a apărut *Gramatica de bază a limbii române*, a lui Ion Coteanu (ed. I, 1982, ed. a doua la Editura Garamond, București, f.a.). Chiar dacă autorul aduce unele inovații referitoare la unele grade de comparație, *comparativul de egalitate prescurtat*, *superlativul ascuns*, ele nu vizează categoria intensității. În ansamblu, gramatica lui Ion Coteanu este, în bună măsură, clasicistă.

dedicate *Gradelor de comparație*. „După cum pot exprima sau nu – în anumite îmbinări – *gradele de intensitate* [subl. n.] în care există aceeași însușire la două sau mai multe obiecte, o însușire a aceluiași obiect în împrejurări diferite sau două însușiri ale aceluiași obiect, adjectivele sunt de două feluri: comparabile și necomparabile, căci, deși comparația este o categorie morfologică specifică părților de vorbire care exprimă însușiri ale obiectelor (adjectivul) sau ale acțiunilor (adverbul), nu toate adjectivele au grade de comparație” (p. 120–121). După ce arată că „în mod tradițional, se admit trei grade de comparație, pozitivul, comparativul și superlativul, se precizează că nu toate aceste grade „exprimă *intensitatea unei însușiri* [subl. n.] prin comparație, dar au, într-un fel sau altul, legătură cu ea” (p. 121).

Mioara Avram mai identifică un *comparativ intensiv*, realizat „cu adăugarea adverbelor, accentuate, *mult* sau *și*: *mult mai (puțin) frumos* și *mai (puțin) interesant*”, cu precizarea că „construcția intensivă cu *mult* e singura posibilă și la comparativele etimologice de tipul *anterior...*, *inferior...*: *mult inferior*” (p. 122).

În continuarea expunerii se revine însă la terminologia și perspectiva clasică, chiar dacă, uneori, formulările lasă impresia că se face distincția, formală și de conținut, între *intensitate* și *comparație*. Așa, de exemplu, „Comparativul de *superioritate* se formează cu adverbul *mai* (+ adjectivul cu forma gradului pozitiv): *mai înalt*, iar comparativul de *inferioritate* cu ajutorul lui *mai puțin*: *mai puțin înalt*. La amândouă aceste specii ale comparativului de *inegalitate* termenul al doilea este introdus prin *decât* sau *ca* (la fel de corect) [...]” (*Ibidem*).

Faptul că, între altele, termenului întâi nu i se precizează apartenența, ne întărește convingerea că toate construcțiile comparative (mai puțin pozitivul și superlativul absolut) sunt interpretate ca unități bazate, formal, pe morfeme discontinue (deși autoarea nu folosește acest termen):

*El este mai înalt decât ea.*

*El este mai puțin înalt decât ea.*

sau, la comparativul de egalitate:

*El este*  $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{la fel de} \\ \text{tot așa de} \\ \text{tot atât de} \\ \text{deopotrivă de} \end{array} \right\}$   $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{înalt } ca(\text{și}) \text{ ea.} \\ \text{cât } (\text{și}) \end{array} \right\}$

Sau, pentru a indica mai clar discontinuitatea: *la fel de... ca (și), tot așa de... cât (și)* etc.

Corneliu Dimitriu<sup>7</sup>, deși discută pe larg problema *intensității caracteristicilor*, consideră că „din punctul nostru de vedere la *categoria gramaticală a comparației de la adjectivul românesc este convenabilă schema clasică*, la care se pot aduce unele *nuanțări* în funcție de evoluția limbii și de cercetările recente în această privință” (p. 201).

O „concesie făcută „cercetărilor recente” constă în a admite că „*intensitatea* caracteristicilor existente în entități” constituie „conținutul categoriei gramaticale a comparației” (*Ibidem*).

Pentru a obține *structurile gramaticalizate ale categoriei comparației*, Corneliu Dimitriu procedează la asocierea *conținutului categorial* cu *forma categorială* și ajunge la concluzia că, la adjectivele comparabile, „categoria gramaticală a comparației are opt aspecte opozabile ce sun grupabile în trei grade: pozitivul, comparativul și superlativul” (p. 205). Urmează descrierea „clasică”, cu mici excepții, a acestor opt aspecte opozabile, autorul admițând în final, că viziunea lui este una de „*factură clasică*” (p. 209).

Revenind la lucrarea lui Iorgu Iordan și Vladimir Robu [v. *supra*], la care ne vom referi în continuare, cum am arătat, prin trimitere doar la Vladimir Robu, acesta arată de la bun început că a avut în vedere, în discursul său inovativ, cartea lui Georges Gougenheim, *Système grammaticale de la langue française*<sup>8</sup>.

În descrierea generală a *Gradelor de intensitate și de comparație*, ce precedă analiza lor amănunțită, Vladimir Robu definește *intensitatea* ca fiind „categoria gramaticală care reglementează comportamentul *formal* [subl. n.] al adjectivelor și al unor adverbe, marcând, prin anumite morfeme, gradul în care se realizează proprietățile cantitative și calitative ale semnificatului” (p. 341). El precizează că gramaticile românești menționează numai gradele de intensitate comparată, sub denumirea de *grade de comparație*.

Termenul prin care este denumită această categorie gramaticală nu este cel mai potrivit, „deoarece faptele paradigmatică și sintagmatică de referință nu sunt numai de domeniul comparației, ci multe din ele arată numai intensitatea cu care se manifestă o calitate, o manieră, un proces, o cantitate, nesupusă vreunei comparații” (p. 342). Așa se întâmplă în

<sup>7</sup> *Tratat de gramatică a limbii române*. 1. *Morfologia*, Institutul European, Iași, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> În lucrarea amintită, Vladimir Robu indică, la p. 342, n.13, că distribuția *grad de intensitate/... grad de comparație* este teoretizată de Gougenheim, 1958, p. 243–257, fără ca această siglă să fie detaliată în *Bibliografia selectivă*. Am mai avut la dispoziție ediția din 1962, menționată și în *Bibliografia generală* din GALR, anume Georges Gougenheim, *Système grammaticale de la langue française*. Nouveau tirage. Bibliothèque du «français moderne». Editions, D'Artrey, Paris, 1962.

enunțuri ca: *noaptea este foarte întunecoasă*; propunerea este *cu totul inacceptabilă*, teoria aceasta *este arhicunoscută*; avea o *înfățișare tristă-tristă*; sunt *obosit în ultimul grad*; *ce frumoasă este astăzi marea!*; *umbă încetișor*. El consideră că este mult mai potrivit a se folosi termenul *grad* (sau *grade*) *de intensitate și de comparație*, „care ar corespunde caracterului fenomenelor de limbă pe care le înțelegem, de obicei, sub denumirea tradițională a *gradului de comparație*” (p. 342).

Referindu-se la faptul că termenul *intensitate* este pus, de regulă, în legătură cu valorile *cantitative* conținute de formații adverbiali ai gradelor de intensitate și comparată și noncomparată, Vladimir Robu vine cu precizarea că, de fapt, „cantitatea este strâns legată de *calitate*, întrucât formații de marcă nu sunt valori *numerice*, discontinui, ci implică o *apreciere* sau o *aproximare* [...]”. Așa stând lucrurile, se va considera, în realizarea gradelor de intensitate și de comparație, că „valorile semantice cantitative degajate de formații adverbiali ori de altă natură au zone de interferență cu valori semantice calitative, implicând emfaza” (p. 404).

*Valorile de intensitate* se realizează *noncomparativ* sau *comparativ*. De aici două categorii de grade:

- *de intensitate noncomparativă* sau, simplu, *de intensitate*
- *de intensitate comparativă* sau, cum avut numite de obicei, *grade de comparație*.

Vladimir Robu subliniază o caracteristică esențială a fiecărei grupe: exprimarea prin sintagme închise sau deschise.

Gradele de intensitate se realizează prin *sintagme închise*, ceea ce presupune o singură relație sintactică. Astfel, în *bătea un vânt din ce în ce mai puternic*, sintagma *din ce în ce mai puternic* este comparabilă cu o singură relație cu termenul regent (*un*) *vânt*. În acest caz „întreaga cantitate de informație privind valoarea intensității crescânde [...] se consumă, prin *incluziune*, în interiorul acestei relații deplin închise din punct de vedere sintactic, adică este explicabilă imediat” (p. 404).

Gradele de comparație, în schimb, se exprimă prin *sintagme deschise*, întrucât ele, pe lângă relația cu termenul regent, „implică structural și o relație imediată cu un al doilea termen de referință comparativă [...]” (*Ibidem*). Această relație „imediată” se produce indiferent dacă termenul al doilea este prezent sau nu în enunț. Se poate deci vorbi de o relație comparativă *in praesentia* sau *in absentia*.

O realizare *in praesentia* există în anunțuri precum *pomul (este) mai înalt decât casa*, unde sintagma *mai înalt* este „disponibilă” pentru două raporturi sintactice: unul spre stânga, cu *pomul*, altul spre dreapta, „cu termenul de referință comparativă” *decât casa*. În acest fel, „o parte din cantitatea de informație privind valoarea intensității superioare rămâne



disponibilă pentru a se valorifica semantic prin comparație cu al doilea termen de referință [...]” (*Ibidem*). În aceste cazuri, „conectivul relațional” *decât* actualizează un raport de nonegalitate, ce derivă din nonidentitatea referințelor.

Realizarea *in absentia* apare în enunțuri ca *balena este mamiferul cel mai mare*, în care sintagma *cel mai mare* epuizează relația spre stânga, cu *balena*, rămânând disponibilă relația spre dreapta, unde termenul de referință nu este exprimat. Acesta, numit „termenul subiacent de referință” trebuie presupus, în cazul nostru (*dintre*) *mamifere*, pentru a se putea realiza „funcția izolantă a adverbului cantitativ *cel mai...*” (*Ibidem*).

Cele două tipuri de grade formează subsisteme specifice: *subsistemul gradelor de intensitate* și *subsistemul gradelor de comparație*.

În legătură cu „baza tematică” a acestor subsisteme, Vladimir Robu face o precizare importantă privind denumirea conceptuală a ei. El presupune să se accepte „conceptul de *grad pozitiv* ca temă primară pentru realizarea diferitelor grade” (p. 404–405). El atribuie „obiectului de referință o însușire neutră față de intensitate”, neimplicând deci modificarea „constantei semantice”. Pe de altă parte, luând în considerare că celelalte grade sunt „marcate” cu formanți „care implică și adaosuri de seme ale intensității, gradul pozitiv apare nemarcat, situație care, în mod obișnuit, se consideră că are marca *zero* în sistemul de opoziție dat” (p. 405).

În cazul *pozitivului* trebuie scoase în evidență câteva situații aparte care ar putea crea dificultăți de interpretare. Este vorba de adjectivele care prezintă chiar în forma de bază morfeme de intensitate. Este cazul adjectivelor formate prin prefixare sau sufixare în perioada veche a limbii, sau mai ales în cea recentă.

Se încadrează aici adjective ca: *străvechi*, *răscopt*, *supraaglomerat*, *arhiplin*, *ultraelegat*, *ultraschimbist*, *hipersensibil* care, prin prefixare, exprimă „intensitatea maximă sau depășită” și deci nu mai pot avea grade. Tot aici se încadrează și neologismele *major*, *minor*, *inferior*, *superior*, *exterior*, *interior*, *ulterior*, *posterior*, *optim*, *ultim*, *suprem*, *proxim* care posedă încă din latină „forme de grad”. Există însă tendința „de a le reincluce în opoziția de grad”, ceea ce creează premisele „refacerii normei”. Fenomenul se produce în circumstanțele în care „semele de comparație sau de intensitate pe care le conțin au slăbit ori s-au neutralizat prin uzură” (*Ibidem*).

O altă categorie de adjective prezintă „semnificații incomparabile cu variațiile de intensitate” și, ca atare, nu pot avea decât gradul pozitiv: *adevărat*, *complet*, *desăvârșit*, *fructifer*, *general*, *întreg*, *lateral*, *mort*,

*oral, perfect, rotund, scris, terminat, unic, veșnic, zilnic* etc. Ele apar totuși la unele forme de comparație sau de intensitate, „datorită unor sensuri secundare ale lor”: *nu-i prea întreg la minte; cel mai desăvârșit prieten* etc.

Toate aceste precizări apar, cum ușor se poate constata, și în gramaticile tradiționale descriptive și normative, fără a se face însă legătura cu intensitatea și cu variațiile de intensitate.

**Gradele de intensitate** realizează „o scală de valori semantice emfatică care se întinde de la gradul *zero* – baza de plecare – până la intensitatea maximă depășită [...]” (p. 407). Virtual, numărul valorilor intensității este, spune Vladimir Robu, infinit, dar, din punctul de vedere al „expresiei lingvistice, adică actualizarea și fixarea prin formule de marcă”, pot fi identificate „circa șase grade de intensitate: *minimă, scăzută, suficientă, mobilă, maximă și maximă depășită (excesivă)*” (*Ibidem*).

*Gradul intensității minime* reprezintă prima treaptă marcată, în raport cu baza zero, prin formații adverbiali *foarte puțin..., foarte slab..., extrem de puțin...* etc., în structura cărora *foarte, extrem (de), grozav (de), uluitor (de)* etc. au statut de „adverbe cantitativ-calitative ale limitei ultime”. De altfel, multe dintre ele participă și la realizarea gradului intensității maxime, „aflat la polul opus”.

*Gradul intensității minime* este supus unor restricții semantice, ceea ce-i limitează aria la acele adjective care semnifică „dimensiuni spațiale” și la „participiile obiectiv-tranzitive”: *foarte puțin dispus..., foarte slab orientat, extrem de puțin orientat* etc.

În ce-l privește pe *deloc*, acest adverb „neagă total calitatea, echivalând-o cu antonimul adjectivului respectiv: *nu e deloc frumos = e urât; un om deloc dispus la concesi (să facă concesi)*” (*Ibidem*).

*Gradul intensității scăzute, insuficiente* are ca mărci „adverbialele cantitative” *puțin, slab, insuficient, nesatisfăcător: puțin cunoscător, slab pregătit, insuficient orientat, ședință slab organizată*.

*Gradul intensității suficiente*, cu formații adverbiali *destul de, de-ajuns de, suficient de: o floare destul de frumoasă, un tânăr de-ajuns de dezvoltat, o părere destul de bună*.

*Gradul intensității mobile* se poate „actualiza” *progresiv* sau *regresiv*. Realizarea *progresivă* se face cu adverbialele *tot mai..., din ce în ce mai..., mereu mai..., tot mai..., și mai:* „*Umbra morții se întinde tot mai mare și mai mare*” (Eminescu).

Realizarea *regresivă* sau *descrescândă* apelează la aceleași adverbiale, la care se adaugă „cantitativul” *puțin: tot mai puțin..., din ce în ce mai puțin: amicul este din ce în ce mai puțin vesel* (p. 407–408).

*Gradul intensității maxime* implică mult mai multe situații decât la cele amintite până aici, datorită și valorii sale puternic emfatică.

Înainte de toate, se specifică faptul că un număr redus de adjective se marchează cu sufixul *-ism*: *clarisim, rarisim*.

Alte mărci sunt adverbele *foarte, extrem de..., atât de...!, cât de...!, ce...!, ... de-a binelea, ...cu vârf și-ndesat, ... fără tăgadă*.

La acestea se adaugă o seamă de procedee stilistice „bogate în nuanțe emfatică”. Se aduce în discuție fenomenul pierderii semantismului negativ, ca semnificație de bază, la unele adverbe și locuțiuni adverbiale și folosirea lor, pentru marcarea intensității maxime, cu un sens pozitiv: *amarnic de dulce, strașnic de frumoasă, îngrozitor de plăcut, teribil de frumoasă* etc.

Cu oarecare frecvență apare „comparația cu obiecte de referință considerate modele ale calității date: *alb ca varul* (= foarte alb); *negru ca pana corbului* (= foarte negru); *rece ca gheața*; *dulce ca mierea* etc.”, cu precizarea că, aici, „formula comparativă [...] este un formant al unei sintagme noncomparative” (p. 408).

Sunt amintite, în context, și metafore care redau intensitatea maximă: *adormit buștean, singur cuc*.

Unele enunțuri emfatică sunt marcate și suprasedgmental, ca exclamații: *Ce frumos e!; Frumoasă ești, patria mea!; Vai, ce frumos!*

Alte procedee de redare a intensității maxime sunt următoarele:

- prin regenta consecutivă: **era frumoasă de-ți lua ochii**;
- prin subordonata concesivă cu **cât**: **cât era de obosit, și tot venea până la mine**;
- prin atribuirea consecutivă: **era un om, care nu se mai află**;
- prin repetarea adjectivului: *bătrână-bătrână, leit-poleit, singură-singurică*;
- prin locuțiuni adjectivale: **era om să-l pui la rană** (= foarte bun); **zilele de aur**;
- prin locuțiuni adverbiale: **nervos la culme**.
- prin locuțiuni verbale: **copilului îi râdea inima de bucurie**;
- prin locuțiuni substantivale: **era un pui de zgârie-brânză** (= foarte zgârcit).
- prin repetarea la genitiv: **voinicul voinicilor**.
- prin diferite expresii: *frumoasă rău, frumoasă foc, frumoasă nevoie mare, putred de bogat, blând din cale-afară, sărac lipit pământului*;
- prin adjective sau adverbe „care sunt expresii ale intensității maxime”: *profesor eminent, zgomot infernal, femeie irezistibilă, efort suprem; așa de bună!*; *când e somnul mai adânc* etc.;
- prin diminutive și augmentative: *mâncău, tinerel*;

- prin adverbul *foarte*: *frumoasă foarte*.

„Se vorbește, mai precizează Vladimir Robu, și de intensitatea maximă emfatică a umorului, a ironiei, a tinereții, a voiniciei, a iubirii“ (*Ibidem*).

*Gradul intensității depășite (excesive)* prezintă două tipuri de mărci:

- prefixe și prefixoide (superlative): *arhi-*, *extra*, *prea-*, *răs-*, *stră-*, *supra-*, *super-*, *ultra-*: *arhiplin*, *extraordinar*, *preafrumoasă*, *răscopt*, *străvechi*, *supradimensionat*, *ultrademagog*;

- adverbe cantitative: *peste măsură (de)*, *peste orice limită (de)*, *peste poate (de)*: *peste măsură de obraznic*, *îndrăzneț peste orice limită*, *peste poate de atent (Ibidem)*.

În finalul secțiunii consacrate gradelor de intensitate, Vladimir Robu mai menționează că „marea majoritate a formelor de actualizare a gradelor de intensitate sunt și formule emfatică, valoarea lor afectivă fiind marcată și suprasegmental printr-o mare varietate de nuanțări ale intonației” (*Ibidem*).

**Gradele de comparație** reprezintă un sistem care cuprinde „patru modele de forme marcate cu formanți specifici, fiecare intrând în opoziție binară cu forma de bază nemarcată” (p. 406). Aceste patru modele sunt: *comparativul de egalitate*, *comparativul de superioritate*, *comparativul de inferioritate* și *comparativul superlativ*.

*Comparativul de egalitate* se construiește cu locuțiunile adverbiale *la fel de*, *tot așa de*, *tot atât de*, „prefixate la forma gradului pozitiv”. Al doilea termen al „relației comparative” este un complement comparativ de egalitate și se introduce prin „conectivul” *ca* (*cerul e la fel de albastru ca...*) sau prin „compusul” *ca și*. Există posibilitatea înlocuirii lui *ca* cu *precum*, dar ea este „livrescă și emfatică”; *tot atât de galben precum ceara*.

Apare și posibilitatea plasării formantului adverbial *așa*, *la fel*, *întocmai* în stânga celui de al doilea termen al comparației, ajungându-se astfel la o altă structură sintagmatică: *harnic așa ca tine*, *galben întocmai ca ceara*.

În situația în care semantica adjectivului este una cantitativă, apare posibilitatea a două structuri sintagmatică: prima cu plasarea adjectivului în dreapta elementului regent, a doua cu plasarea adjectivului în dreapta termenului comparat. În ambele situații, al doilea termen se introduce prin **cât**: *doi drugi înalți cât casa*, față de *doi drugi cât casa* (de) înalți.

Dacă realizarea celui de al doilea termen al comparației este de natură propozițională, adică „o propoziție comparativă”, aceasta se introduce prin conectivele *cum* sau *precât* (arhaizant): *ești tot atât de neînțeleș, cum ai fost mereu*.

*Comparativul de superioritate* „se marchează cu adverbul *mai*, semnificând o intensitate de un grad superior în comparație cu alt obiect (sau alte obiecte) ori față de același obiect, în alt moment ori altă situație decât cea dată” (*Ibidem*).

Al doilea termen, care poate fi un complement comparativ sau o propoziție comparativă, se introduce prin **decât** și **ca**: *Cât de mare-i pământu, / Ce-i mai rău ca urātu*. Folosirea prepoziției **de** este învechită și evitată în româna contemporană.

Al doilea termen al comparației poate fi *in absentia*, „dar presupus în structura primară”: *azi ai ochii mai odihniți (ca ieri)*.

*Comparativul de inferioritate* este marcat prin adverbul *puțin* la gradul comparativ: *mai puțin: terenul acesta este mai puțin întins decât al tău; călăuzul nostru este mai puțin curios decât mine*.

Fiind rar folosit, el poate fi înlocuit cu comparativul de superioritate al unui adjectiv antonim: *el e mai puțin frumos decât tine = el e mai urât decât tine*.

Acest comparativ *mai* poate fi înlocuit cu forma negativă a comparativului de egalitate: *el nu e tot atât de (la fel de) frumos ca tine*.

Și comparativul de inferioritate poate fi *in absentia*.

*Comparativul superlativ* are ca marcă formantul *cel mai*: *tânărul cel mai tânăr din oamenii de la 1835 este mai bătrân decât cel mai bătrân din bătrâni*.

Al doilea termen al comparației se introduce prin „conectivalele” **dintre**, **din**, urmate de un substantiv colectiv sau un substitut la plural: *cel mai isteț din grupă; cel mai isteț dintre voi*. Mai apare și prepoziția **între**: *Dar pentru ce orașul atât de strălucit / Acum între orașe e cel mai umilit?*

Termenul al doilea poate fi *in absentia*: *moșul cel mai puțin bătrân a dat fuga cu pași scurți*.

Se poate observa că comparativul superlativ cu **cel mai** este, de fapt, comparativul de superioritate al adjectivului (*mai destoinic*) sau comparativul de inferioritate (*mai puțin destoinic*), precedat de „substitutul” **cel**... În fond, adică, este „un comparativ de superioritate sau unul de inferioritate precedat de *izolantul categoric* [subl. n.] **cel**”, acesta, ca articol adjectival putând lipsi dacă adjectivul este articulat enclitic: *cel mai mare = mai marele* (p. 407).

Ca atare, comparativul superlativ are două aspecte: *de superioritate* și *de inferioritate*.

Din analiza întreprinsă de Vladimir Robu observăm, în primul rând, absența dintre gradele de comparație a *pozitivului* și a *superlativului absolut* [v. *supra*]. În al doilea rând, dacă în secțiunea dedicată *gradelor de intensitate* suntem în fața unor constatări, în bună parte, inovative, nu

aceiași lucru apare în secțiunea gradelor de comparație, unde apropierea de gramaticile tradiționale este vizibilă. Persistă astfel impresia că, aidoma acelor gramatici, comparația este văzută ca realizându-se prin sintagme omogene, fără diferențierea funcțională a mărcilor care compun aceste sintagme.

Pe de altă parte, și terminologia apare uneori confuză prin lipsa perspectivei funcționale. Avem în vedere atât unii termeni precum **formant**, cât și prezentarea lor doar din perspectiva „conținutului“ clasei căreia îi aparțin: adverbe, prepoziții, eludându-se *funcția* lor, deși în economia cărții există o secțiune amplă referitoare la *Clasele de morfeme* (p. 350–355).

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# Persuasion in English Philosophy Texts (*CEPhiT*)\*

Begoña Crespo\*\*, Isabel Moskowich\*\*\*

## Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to offer a description of the *Corpus of English Philosophy Texts (CEPhiT)* as well as to present a pilot study on persuasion strategies. Although this corpus contains samples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, only eighteenth-century texts have been selected for this study. Methodologically speaking, some specific linguistic features indicating persuasion and argumentation (Biber, 1988) have been searched for: predictive modals, necessity modals, conditional subordinators and verbs with a suasive meaning. The interpretation of our findings will provide an overview of the author-reader relationship in late Modern English Philosophy writings, especially focusing on variables such as sex or genre.

**Keywords:** scientific English, corpus linguistics, persuasion strategies, late Modern period, philosophy writing, authorial presence

## 1. Introduction

Since every scientific field has its own writing traditions and restrictions, we have decided to compile different sub-corpora forming the *Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing (CC)*. Each of them contains samples of texts published between 1700 and 1900 which correspond to a different scientific discipline. Overlapping of disciplines constitutes a basic difficulty in the selection of representative samples of scientific language, mainly when it is not present-day science we are dealing with. Instead of designing our own taxonomy of disciplines when compiling the *CC*, we resorted to the one published by UNESCO (1988) as a starting point. The first sub-corpus compiled was *CETA, Corpus of English Texts on Astronomy*. The second is the one we present here, *CEPhiT, the Corpus of English Philosophy Texts*.

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## 2. Compilation Principles of *CEPhiT*

The compilation principles applied to *CEPhiT* are those applied to the whole *CC*. Therefore, we have tried to compile two 10,000 words text files per decade, so that each of the centuries represented contains approximately 200,000 words. Some pilot studies with our corpus have shown that 1,000-word samples are not really enough for the study of variation within the scientific register (Biber 1993) mainly because the scientific register was not as standardised at that time as it is nowadays. This corpus shares the structure and mark-up conventions used for the whole project which have proved to be extremely useful and valid for research since the sampling methods avoid idiosyncrasies and interference caused by translation.

We have been also careful to keep the principles of representativeness and balance (McEnery and Wilson 1996; Biber et al. 1998: 251–253). We have included only edited and printed prose texts. As with the other sub-corpora, first editions have been used whenever possible. When not, and assuming that language change can be observed within 30-year periods (Kytö et al. 2000: 92), those published within less than thirty years from the date the work was first published were chosen.

In order to have a complete representation of stylistic and pragmatic devices, we have collected extracts from different parts of the works sampled so that introductions, central chapters and conclusions are more or less equally represented. In *CEPhiT*, prefaces or dedications which are not scientific in their content have been excluded. With all this, we have obtained the word counts shown in Table 1.

<u>Eighteenth century</u>	<u>200,022</u>
<u>Nineteenth century</u>	<u>201,107</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>401,129</u>

Some extra-linguistic factors such as age, sex, place of education and genre/text-type of each author and text are part of the information in the metadata files accompanying text files (Crespo and Moskowich 2010).

The general principles of compilation applied to the *CC* can be consulted in Moskowich and Crespo 2007; Moskowich and Parapar 2008; and Crespo and Moskowich 2010.



### 3. Time-Span Represented

Extra-linguistic considerations also determine the time-span of the *Coruña Corpus* and, therefore, of *CEPhiT*. We have used landmarks in scientific thought rather than those in language change to set the time limits of our selection. Let us not forget that changes in scientific thought imply changes in scientific discourse (Moskowich 2011). *CEPhiT* has been compiled to cover the Modern English period.

The time-span chosen begins with the outburst of the scientific revolution, the foundation of the Royal Society and with the publication of the basic guidelines on how to present scientific works to its members with the ideas of clarity and simplicity behind it all. *CEPhiT* earliest texts date back to 1700 (Mary Astell) and 1705 (George Cheyne), a moment at which the old epistemological patterns of Scholasticism are suffering a radical transformation (Taavitsainen and Pahta 1997) and, therefore, a moment we considered ideal to start our compilation. This starting point coincides also with the new inductive method that John Stuart Mill (included in *CEPhiT*) systematised in 1845.

Several events which were really important for the History of Science occurred around 1900, the last year of the period covered by *CEPhiT*. Some of these events were the discovery of the electron by J.J. Thompson in 1896, the crisis of the grounds of mechanical physics announced in this same year, Planck's proposal of quantum mechanics, or Einstein's publication of the Special Theory of Relativity in 1905 (Moskowich and Crespo 2010; Moskowich 2011). All these discoveries, as in the seventeenth century, were also accompanied by the need to change the discursive patterns of science announced by Thomas Huxley at the 1897 International Congress of Mathematics.

In the following paragraphs, all the extra-linguistic variables in the corpus will be presented.

### 4. Genres/Text Types

Contrary to what one may think, variation can be found within academic writing subject, among other things, to text type (the internal characteristics of texts) and to genre (as a way of socialising and, therefore, with certain external functions) (García-Izquierdo and Montalt 2002).

The classification we have used in the *CC* is based on Görlach (2004). All the categories proposed by this author were already used during the Modern Period. However, not all sub-corpora in the *CC* have the same genres or texts-types represented. In fact, in *CEPhiT* we have a lesser number of genres than in other disciplines. Table 2 below represents the number of samples compiled belonging to each genre:

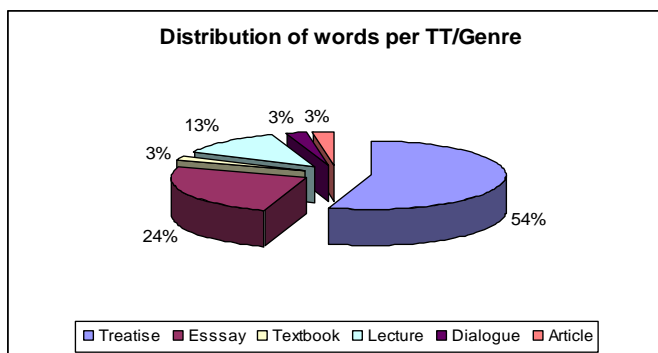
Table 2. *Genres in Philosophy Texts*

Genres in <i>CEPhiT</i> Samples	
Treatise	22
Essay	10
Textbook	1
Lecture	5
Dialogue	1
Article	1

The ascription of texts to genres may be arguable (Fowler 1982), but we have examined very carefully both the whole texts from which samples had been extracted and their prefaces. This allowed us to conclude that *CEPhiT* contains samples of the six genres/text-types in the table above. In turn, this may be due to restrictions imposed by subject-matter: certain disciplines or domains seem to prefer just a few types of texts whereas others manifest themselves in a more varied way (Moskovich, 2011).

Modern authors writing about Philosophy seem to prefer treatise by large (we only have an example of text-book) as table 2 above shows. Essays come next, which points to a real liking for more formal genres. Other categories are also represented: the informative function is the most common one, but the instructive and entertaining functions are found here too in the shape of Lecture, Dialogue and Article.

Figure 1 displays the different genres gathered in all *CEPhiT* samples where 54% corresponds to treatise.

Figure 1. *Proportion of words per genre*

However, such distribution is not identical in the two centuries compiled. The graphs below show these differences reflecting the external reality which influenced text production in the field.

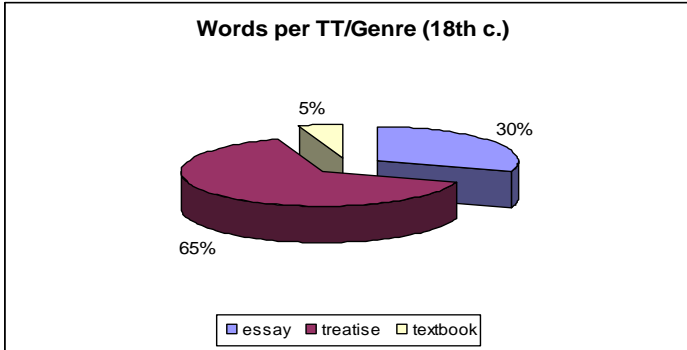


Figure 2. *Words per genre in 18<sup>th</sup> c. Philosophy texts*

Both Figures 2 and 3 illustrate a wider variety of genres used in the nineteenth century as compared with those used by authors in the preceding century. The fact that Philosophy was considered to deserve dissemination at different social and cultural levels may have caused this.

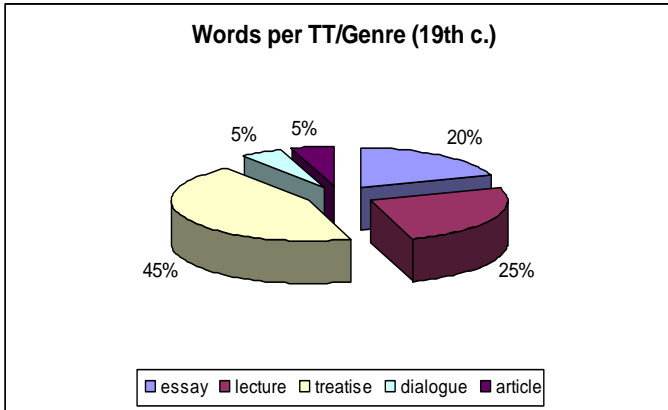


Figure 3. *Proportion of words per genre in 19<sup>th</sup> c. Philosophy texts.*

The information contained in *CEPhiT* metadata files suggests that Philosophy opens itself to a larger readership from 1800 and does so by resorting to a wider range of genres.

## 5. Sex

Not many works written by women can be regarded as philosophical texts in the period under survey. *CEPhiT* contains only three samples of female writing representing 8% of all the words in it (see Figure 4). These women are Mary Astell (1700), Catharine Macaulay (1783) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1792).

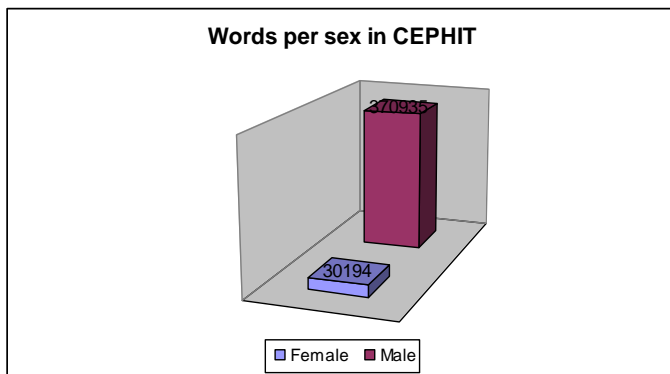


Figure 4. *Words written by male and female authors*

*CEPhiT* reflects this scarcity of overt female activity. In fact, no women writing philosophy in the nineteenth century have been included in it; therefore the 30,194 words of female writing were produced in the period prior to the beginning of the suffragist movement.

## 6. Mapping *CEPhiT*

It has been already mentioned that the corpus is valid not only for the diachronic study of English scientific writing but also for that of variation depending on other variables such as geographical origin. This is why we have resorted to texts by authors whose linguistic habits could be traced.

In compliance with the *CC* principles, we have selected English-speaking authors writing in English, avoiding any sort of translation. When referring to “geographical distribution of authors” we are not considering the places where they were born but, instead, those where they received formal education, and where they acquired the linguistic habits to be found in their writings.

No American authors have been included in this sub-corpus though they abound in other parts of *CC*. It was Europe that was producing most works on philosophy, whereas North America had lived a convulsive eighteenth century and was, in the nineteenth, more worried about the practical application of scientific advances than about

metaphysical ones. In this sense, *CEPhiT* is a small-scale mirror of reality.

An overview of the different places where the authors contained in *CEPhiT* learned to write is offered in Figure 5.

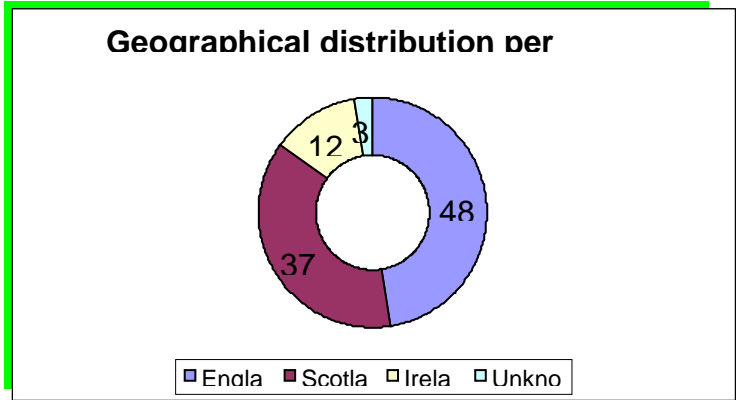


Figure 5. *The provenance of authors in CEPhiT*

Figures 6 and 7 below reflect the way in which the distribution per centuries is not exactly the same as the overall one:

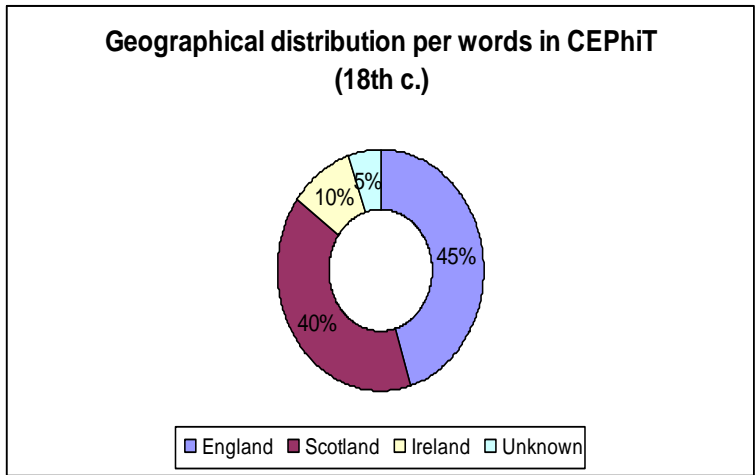


Figure 6. *Geographical distribution in the eighteenth century*

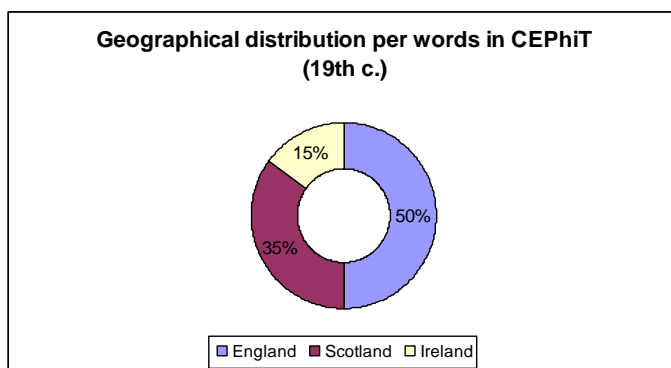


Figure 7. *Geographical distribution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

The outstanding presence of Scottish authors in both centuries should be noted in contrast to the low presence of Irish authors. Social and political changes have a deep impact on the development of language. The way in which *CEPhiT* has been sampled reflects such social and political shifts. For instance, the fact that during the eighteenth century, Ireland lived the Protestant Ascendancy implied that the native Irish population was excluded from power and public life (Claydon and McBride 1999).

In the following pages we will explore to what an extent some of these authors use persuasive strategies in their writings.

### 7. A Study on Persuasion Strategies

In scientific register authors had to argue in defense of their opinions, findings and positions, and although no overt manifestation of authorial presence was permitted by the dominant canon of Bacon and Boyle's style, they could resort to other subtle means to persuade their readership. Texts that seek to encourage a certain attitude in the reader are not only audience-focused but also well-structured writings, using rhetorical mechanisms of persuasion and argumentation in a more or less explicit way. This coincides with the concept and characteristics of authorial self mentioned by Ivanić (1998) and Hyland (2002) and which is analyzed for the description of present-day academic writing.

The discourse of scientific authors was one of tentative power with regard to their target audience: other authors and learners. Logic and deduction constituted the grounds of the scientific method as well as determined the manifestation of persuasion. According to Crespo (2011: 202):

Logic implies to appeal to a person's sense of reason because the speaker or writer coaches an opinion in such a way that it, rather than someone else's, seems to be

the most rational solution. Deduction implies the use of a logical, well-justified method which clearly demonstrates how elements in nature, or claims about nature, are built up. It runs from the most general to the most specific, highlighting principles, shared assumptions, values and beliefs [...] What the author wants to accomplish in his/her use of language, then, is a change in the perspectives of the audience.

The interpretation of a bundle of linguistic features as markers of persuasion and argumentation was first considered by Biber in his 1988 work. These features were later analyzed by other authors in their studies on genres and registers (Atkinson 1999; Mischke 2006; Nesi 2009; Włodarczyk 2010, etc).

Atkinson (1999: 123–125), for instance, considers some of the features Biber (1988) claims to index the expression of persuasion: suasive verbs such as *suggest* or *promise*, prediction modals (*will, shall, would*), necessity modals (*ought to, should, must*), conditional subordination (*if, unless*) and split auxiliaries (They *are* objectively known). He reveals that in the articles of the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society between 1675 and 1775 there is an increasing tendency towards the use of non-persuasive markers. This trend may be viewed in connection with the change from author-centered to object-centered kind of prose and to the increasingly more abstract nature of texts as they approach the last quarter of the twentieth century.

### 7.1. Describing Methodology and Corpus of Data

To examine persuasion strategies in 18th-century Philosophy texts we have resorted to some of the linguistic features included in Biber's Dimension 4 "Overt expression of persuasion" (1988): conditional subordinators, persuasive verbs, predictive and necessity modals. In Biber (1995: 161), he argues that in present-day English professional letters and editorials show many more persuasive elements than press reviews or broadcasts. However, official documents and academic prose occupy an intermediate position between the two aforementioned registers. This "neutrality" in the presence of persuasive strategies may be explained in opposition to the degree of abstractness and the high objectivity of late twentieth century academic writing (Biber 1995: 165). Biber's conclusions raise another issue: the type of genre employed by the author might be reckoned as an interesting variable to examine the persuasive style of eighteenth century men of science.

We have carried out a quantitative study of these features for which both absolute as well as normalized figures to 10,000, when necessary, will be offered. After the general findings, we will consider the sex

variable: female persuasive strategies will be compared with overall figures and figures corresponding to male writings.

Figure 8 below shows the number of words corresponding to the sex variable.

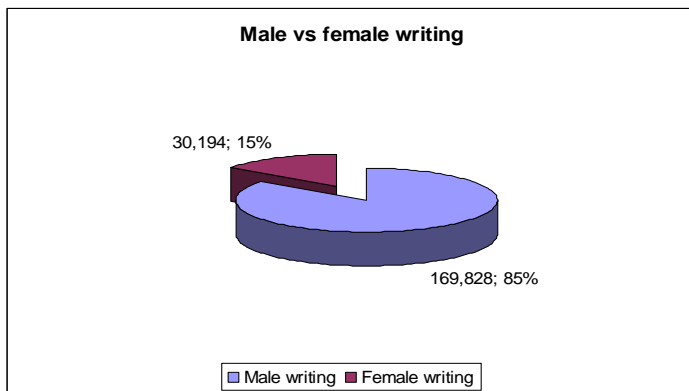


Figure 8. *Male vs. female writing*

In what follows all the data retrieved will be studied in detail.

7.2. *Analysis of data*

In a total of 200,022 words we have found 3,553 tokens (1.77%) with persuasive implications, which are distributed as shown in Figure 9:

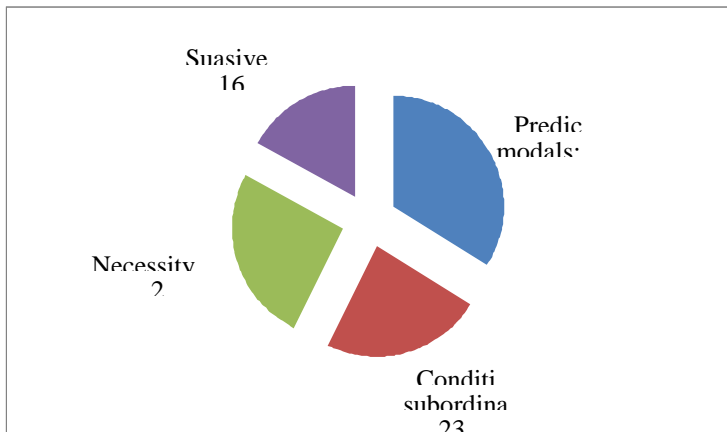


Figure 9. *Linguistic parameters: general figures*

Predictive modals exhibit the highest proportion of tokens indicating persuasion or argumentation. This is a content-based strategy to transmit



information from the writer's point of view and to make the reading public process that information in the same way. It is the author's deliberate evaluation of the topics that is perceived by the reader, and this is done to reassure the truthfulness of the author's opinions. It can be seen clearly in example (1):

(1) one judgment on evident propositions it will follow that men **will** be fo far irrational and by consequence imperfekt agents as... (Collins, 1717: 63)

The same strategy of trying to influence the reader's perception of the message applies also to the remaining set of modals, those indicating necessity, which occupy the second position as in (2):

(2) depend on circumstances peculiar to any age or nation but **muft** be the reult of human nature or the fuggeltion of... (Ferguson, 1769: 123)

Conditional subordination, with the emphasis on argumentation, illustrates how some structural elements of a complex syntax play a role in the expository prose in which principles and ideas are rightly and overtly expressed. It is the third linguistic feature in order of frequency:

(3) that the agent himself is the caufe is saying nothing **unlefs** it can be proved that he choofes one action rather... (Crombie, 1793: 18)

The last feature refers to suasive verbs, which might be seen as the most obvious linguistic manifestation of persuasion. Nevertheless, they represent only 16.85% of all the features which have been taken into consideration, as in (4):

(4) ... his defires and appetites were well rul'd and did not **move** themselves but by the comandment of reafon and this reafon... (Dunton, 1710: 331).

It appears, therefore, that persuasion was not as overtly or frequently present in 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophy texts as might have been thought. Rather, a more covert persuasion, one which favours a rhetorical form of argumentation, seems to emerge.

In the following sections we will present the analysis of the variable 'sex'.

*7.2.1. The sex variable.* From a total of 200,022 words under survey, only 30,194 belong to female authors. Although we are conscious of the fact that the findings obtained from these data cannot be generalized due to the low number of words, this scarcity of female production as

contained in our corpus reflects the social reality of the period. Only 15.09% of the material included in the eighteenth century section of *CEPhiT*, then, was written by women (see Section 5). The female authors included are the following:

Table 3. *Number of words per female writer*

Author	Date	Words
Astell	1700	10,077
Macaulay	1783	10,059
Wollstonecraft	1792	10,058
Total		30,194

From these 30,194 words we have found 396 tokens (1.31%) which are indicative of persuasion, as seen in Figure 10:

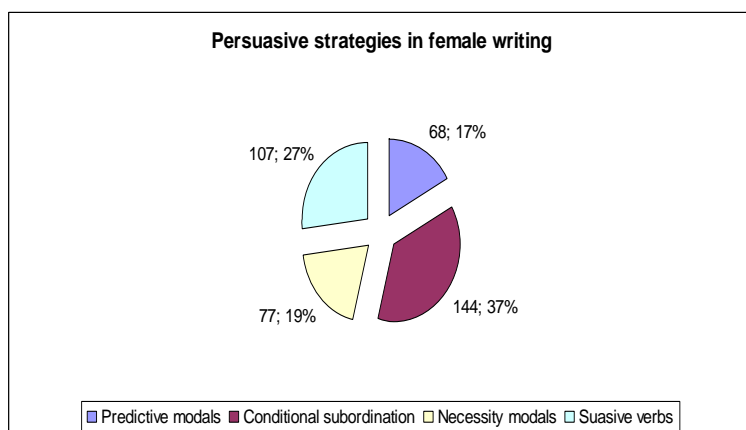


Figure 10. *Strategies of persuasion in female works*

If we compare these results with the findings from works written by men, amounting to 169,828 words, we find 3,157 tokens, that is, 18.58 instances per 10,000 words. Normalized figures (see Table 4) also demonstrate that the occurrences of persuasive strategies in female writing amount to 13.11 per 10,000 words.

Table 4. *Male vs. female persuasive strategies*

	Words	Tokens	nf/10,000
Male	169,828	3,157	18.58
Female	30,194	396	13.11

This overall presentation of the data extracted from *CEPhiT* confirms the tendency for the use of more persuasive strategies on the part of male authors than on the part of female ones in relation to raw numbers. Normalized figures confirm this male tendency to persuasion in scientific writing which surpasses the female actual usage of these strategies. Still, we can go into further detail and compare each individual feature so as to ascertain whether any more specific tendencies in the use of these strategies are present:

Table 5. *Comparison of each linguistic strategy*

Features	Male strategies	nf/10,000	Female strategies	nf/10,000
Predictive modals	1,140	67.12	68	22.52
Conditional subordination	678	39.92	144	47.69
Necessity modals	847	49.87	77	25.50
Suasive verbs	492	28.97	107	35.43

As can be seen from Table 5, female writers are more likely to include complex syntax of the subordinating kind, that is, conditional subordination with contingent and hypothetical clauses as well as a higher number of suasive verbs, which brings about the overt manifestation of authorial presence. In contrast, male preferences revolve around modality devices, mainly strong modality, which seems to modulate the writer’s presence in their works.

### 8. Conclusions

From a general standpoint, the predominant persuasive or argumentative strategies are predictive and necessity modals. This suggests that modality dominates scientific discourse in eighteenth century Philosophy texts. Less frequently used are conditional subordination devices and, even less, suasive forms.

In this respect, and in contrast to what might generally be expected, suasive verbs are the least represented linguistic feature, which may corroborate the assumption that persuasion or argumentation, if any, is not as overtly represented as we might anticipate. This could lead us to think that the tendency is to present any kind of persuasive mechanism in a more subtle and covert manner.

It is also noticeable that the study of the sex variable sheds some light on the different linguistic uses of men and women in the eighteenth century. More strategies of persuasion have been recorded in male (18.58/10,000) than female (13.11/10,000) writing in relation to the overall number of words analyzed. Moreover, female writing has been attested to employ more conditional subordination and suasive verbs that male writing where modality of both predictive and necessity meanings are the prominent linguistic devices.

In sum, we can say that eighteenth century scientific discourse, as attested in the discipline of Philosophy, makes a moderate use of persuasive strategies, especially of visible strategies. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it is altogether uniform. There are gender differences which seem to point to opposite views on how to treat and convey scientific information.

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JESS

# The Pragmatics of General Ibrahim Babangida's Independence Day Broadcasts, 1985–1993

Kazeem K. Olaniyan\*

## **Abstract:**

This article examines the pragmatics of General Ibrahim Babangida's Independence Day Broadcasts with particular attention to the speech acts that the speeches are used to perform. It is motivated by the paucity of work on Independence Day speeches most especially in Nigeria and the need to identify the categories of illocutionary acts performed with the broadcasts in order to enhance a better understanding of the broadcasts. Data were collected via the Nigerian national archives and newspaper publications. The data collected were analysed, using insights from the theory of speech acts. Considering the context in which the broadcasts were given and the communicative intention of the speaker, five categories of illocutionary acts namely; representatives, directives, commissives, expressive and declaratives were found to characterize the data. Among these, only the representative and commissive acts were found to be predominant. These could be described as institutional acts associated with Independence Day broadcasts as a genre of political discourse.

The article concludes that reading Independence Day broadcasts from the speech acts lenses has potency of enhancing a better understanding of the broadcasts.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Context, Illocutionary Acts, Independence Day Broadcasts, Ibrahim Babangida

## **Introduction**

Studies on political speeches of some past and/or present presidents or Heads of States at the global level reveal that scholars have largely concentrated on (i) presidential inaugural addresses (e.g; Slagell 1991; Cap 2002; Adetunji 2005a, Zhang 2009, Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere, 2012, Batluk, 2012 etc.); (ii) presidential address to the legislative arm of government-National Assembly (e.g. Ayoola 2005 etc.); (iii) presidential address to Party Congress (e.g; Chilton and Schaffner 1997 etc.); (iv) presidential speeches motivated by political crisis (e.g.; Oha 1994; Ayodabo,2003; Adegaju, 2005 etc.) and finally, general political talks or speeches of some past and/or present presidents or Heads of

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States (e.g; Wilson 1990; Seidel 1995; Teittinen 2000; Yusuf 2003; Miller 2004; Rudd 2004; Adetunji 2005b; Ayeomoni 2005, Letts, 2008; Li, 2008; Wang 2010 etc.). Independence Day Broadcast as a genre of political discourse is scarcely studied in the literature. The little works that have examined presidential Independence Day broadcasts are Maiyanga (1990), Olaniyan (2008, 2012, 2014). These works have explored the broadcasts using semantic-pragmatic, socio-stylistic, systemic functional linguistic and ethnographic perspectives respectively. The present study, which differs from the previous ones, is motivated by the little attention hitherto paid to independence day broadcasts as a genre of political discourse. This study therefore examines the pragmatics of General Ibrahim Babangida's Independence Day Broadcasts (henceforth, IDB) using the speech act theoretic approach. Within the purview of the speech act, we shall limit ourselves to only the illocutionary acts that the broadcasts are used to perform. With this, we hope to fill the existing vacuum and, simultaneously, complement existing studies on presidential broadcasts or speeches generally.

Besides, a study of IDB using speech act lenses has the value to throw more insight into the significant role that pragmatic context plays in the interpretation of the speech event.

It will equally aid a better understanding of IDB as a genre of political discourse. For data, all the Independence Day broadcasts delivered by General Ibrahim Babangida during his regime as the military president (August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1985 – August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1993) were collected from archival sources and photocopied. These were analysed using insights from the pragmatic theory of speech act. Our choice of Gen. Babangida's speeches is informed, among other things, by the fact that his regime marked a significant period of transition to democracy in Nigeria coupled with the eventful nature of his regime.

### **The Genre of Independence Day Broadcasts in Nigeria**

Nigeria became an independent and sovereign nation on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960. Since then, October 1<sup>st</sup> of every year has been set apart for commemorating the historic event. Besides, as part of his statutory functions, the president or Head of State is expected to give a broadcast reflecting on the state of the nation and congratulating the entire Nigerian citizens on the country's attainment of self governing status. The maiden edition of this broadcast – the Independence Day broadcast was given on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1961 by the then prime minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Since then, it has become a recurrent annual event for



the incumbent president to broadcast to Nigerians on October 1<sup>st</sup> of every year.

This broadcast is being used, among other things, to send congratulatory messages to the people of the nation, review the country's progress, problems and prospects. Through this broadcast, government keeps the populace informed of its programmes and aspiration for the country. For example, in the famous October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1970 broadcast, the then Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Yakubu Gowon (in Babatope, 1978: 13ff) said, among others:

The Supreme Military Council has decided on a *programme of the major tasks which it must accomplish* before the government of the country can be handed over with a full sense of responsibility. *The nine point programme* which is to guarantee peace, stability and progress in the country covers... (Emphasis mine).

As informative as the above extract is, it has some declarative forces that are intended to prepare Nigerians for what the government has in stock for them. Apart from this, considering the italicized portions, the choice of language there has some linguistic implications.

It is particularly important to note that since the first Independence Day broadcast was given, its subject matters have become precedents which each successive administration adheres to with some peculiar variations and innovations to meet the contemporary challenges of the government in power. This is perhaps, due to the fact that irrespective of who is the president at a particular period, the process of governance remains the same. It is the style of administration that may be different from one individual to another.

Besides, it is equally observed that whenever this broadcast is given, it is intended to influence certain kinds of behaviour in the hearers. These might be to encourage the hearers into accepting a change of behaviour, thought pattern, action, accept a suggestion, an opinion or a decision. Therefore, these speeches are characterized by a kind of deliberate persuasive discourse peculiar to our politicians. This persuasive nature of discourse is what Lyons (1977: 725) has in mind when he says:

When we communicate some propositions to another person, we do so, normally, because we wish to influence in some ways his beliefs, his attitudes, or his behaviour.

Thus, whenever the hearer(s) act in compliance with any of the behaviour, he has secured "an uptake" (J.L. Austin, 1962: 15). For

Austin (*op. cit.*), securing an uptake means that the hearer has fully understood the speaker's message and its illocutionary force. This understanding, at times, is indicated in form of responses, reactions or criticisms in line with the message coded by the speaker. No wonder that every Independence Day broadcast in this country is followed by reactions, responses or criticisms by members of the listening public. These form a kind of public opinion indicating the acceptance or rejection of some of the vital issues raised in the broadcast. For instance, the famous incessant hike in prices of petroleum products and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) etc. made public by the government through special broadcasts like these are typical examples.

Finally, because this annual presidential Independence Day broadcast has become a permanent speech event in Nigeria, we deem it appropriate to analyze its speech acts. By so doing, the communicative intention of the speaker and the significant role that pragmatic context plays in the interpretation of the speech event will be realised. The study therefore, promises a better understanding of the broadcasts.

### **Speech Act Theory and Independence Day Broadcasts**

Speech Act Theory was first formulated by a famous language philosopher, J.L. Austin (1962) in his posthumously published epochal book, *How to do things with words*. Austin's idea of speech act is based on the idea that utterances by the speaker(s) are not made in a vacuum but they are used to perform various kinds of actions such as stating, directing, promising etc. i.e. to do something (c.f. Adegbija 1987: 4). In other words, language is not only used in saying things, but in performing actions. Actions that are performed through speakers' utterances are called speech acts (Yule 1996: 47). Speech acts are the language functions that we perform with our words.

Quite a number of utterances can be used to perform various kinds of actions such as apology, command, compliment, invitation, complaint, promise, threat and a host of others. To Austin (1962), in every utterance, a person performs an act such as stating a fact, stating an opinion, confirming or denying something, making a prediction or a request, asking a question, issuing an order, making a promise, thanking or condoling somebody. All these are speech acts. For instance, utterances such as: 'Go out of this office'; 'Stop disturbing us; 'Don't touch that; etc. are used to perform actions of command while utterances such as: 'you are welcome' 'We shall expect you' etc. are intended to perform the action of invitation.

Within Austin's (1962) postulation, the different kinds of speech acts that can be performed with utterances are largely dependent on the

speaker's communicative intention in producing an utterance and the circumstances surrounding the utterance. These circumstances, together with other utterances have been tagged the speech events (cf. Yule 1996: 47). As noted by Yule (*op. cit.*), it is the nature of the speech event that determines the interpretation of an utterance as performing a particular speech act.

The most attractive portion of Austin's work, as noted by Odeunmi (2006a: 13), is the distinction he makes between the utterance of a speaker and its illocutionary force. This distinction is said to be anchored on the three-tier division of locution, illocution and perlocution. Locution refers to the exact utterance, that is "the locutionary act is the act of (i) uttering certain noises (ii) uttering certain words (of a certain grammar) (iii) using these words with a more-or-less definite "meaning" (Yusuf 1996: 42). Illocution is the intention behind the utterance and perlocution is the effect the utterance has on the hearer (Odeunmi 2006a: 13). We shall limit ourselves to only the illocutionary acts in this study because our intention is to examine both the Independence Day speeches and the communicative intention behind them. We therefore attempt a more detailed discussion of this below.

### **Illocutionary Acts**

An illocutionary act is the act performed in saying something. It refers to the intended meaning of a speaker. A speaker performs an illocutionary act when his communicative intention (the intention of saying what is said) is communicated to the hearer and the hearer understands such an intention correctly (cf. Odeunmi, 2003: 44). The speaker's intention might be to command, apologize, campaign against something, promise or threaten etc. depending on the context. Before effective communication can be said to have taken place therefore, the speaker has to get his intention expressed to the hearer and the latter has to understand such appropriately. Therefore, for the hearer to understand the speaker's communicative intention correctly, he (the hearer) needs to interpret what the speaker says beyond the propositional content of the sentence. For example, the sentence such as: "I will buy a dog tomorrow." could be (a) a promise (b) a prediction or (c) a threat depending on the context and intention of the speaker (Odeunmi, *op. cit.*). The attitude of the speaker towards the propositional content has also been identified as a strong determining factor in differentiating between one speech act and another. Four attitudes such as belief, desire, commitment and evaluation have been identified in the literature (see Frazer 1986: 36). Frazer (*Ibidem*: 37) contends that "we succeed in linguistically communicating when we get the hearer to recognize what

we have said and what attitude we hold towards the propositional content of our utterance”.

### **Classification of Illocutionary Acts**

Illocutionary acts are the central concern of study in speech acts. An illocutionary act is the complete speech act while a perlocutionary act is the effect of illocutionary act on the hearers. Thus, Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) have separately classified illocutionary acts into five general classes identified by their illocutionary forces. Austin’s classification identifies five groups such as: Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Behabitives and Expositives. It has been argued that Austin’s classification is defective in some respect because he (Austin) assumed that English Language verbs correspond accurately with speech act categories – a claim that is not necessarily so (see Leech (1983), Levinson (1983); Thomas (1995)).

In his own case, Searle (*op. cit.*) identified five types of illocutionary act, namely: Assertives/Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declarations. These shall be explained in turn.

**Representatives:** These are utterances which describe situations through information, claims, assertions, conclusions, descriptions etc. In representatives, the speaker presents the world as he or she believes it is (Yule, 1996: 53).

**Directives:** These are those kinds of utterance that speakers use to get someone else to do something. They (utterances) express what the speaker wants through ordering, commanding, instructing, begging, requesting, suggesting etc. Yule (*op. cit.*) observes that directives can be positive or negative.

**Commissives:** These are utterances that speakers use to commit themselves to some future action. They are used to express what the speaker intends. These are promising, threatening, vowing, refusals, pledging one’s allegiance etc. They can be performed by the speaker alone, or by the speaker as a member of a group.

**Expressives:** These are utterances or acts that state what the speaker feels. In other words, they express the psychological state or feelings and can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow. Examples are thinking, apologizing, congratulating, condoling etc.

**Declarations:** These are those utterances or acts that change the world through their utterance. In order to perform a declaration appropriately, Yule (1996b: 53) argues that the speaker has to have a special institutional role in specific context, for example, naming a baby or an object, declaring a workshop opened, etc. A speech act such as: ‘I now pronounce you husband and wife.’ is a declaration. It is pertinent to

note that before speech act like, ‘I now pronounce you husband and wife’, can be performed, certain conditions have to be met. Some of these are: The speaker has to be a priest saddled with such a responsibility, the act must take place in a particular place (either a church or mosque) with some people in attendance, the two people to be joined together as husband and wife must have agreed to live together as husband and wife etc. These are known as felicity conditions.

Finally, Odeunmi (2003: 47) observes that some of the acts stated, e.g. declarations have already been incorporated in Austin’s performatives. He notes further that Searle’s classification of illocutionary acts has been observed to have some positive effects in cross-cultural pragmatics, developmental pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics. For the purpose of the present study, we shall embrace Searle’s classification of illocutionary acts as our guide.

### **Illocutionary Acts in Gen. Ibrahim Babangida’s Independence Day Broadcasts**

In this section, we shall attempt to analyze the illocutionary forces of the utterances or speeches observed in the data. As noted by Yule (1996b: 47), the illocutionary forces of utterances are the intended illocutionary effects that the speaker wants his utterances to have on the hearer(s). This shall be discussed in relation to the different kinds of illocutionary acts performed by the speaker’s utterances. As our findings revealed, Gen. Babangida’s Independence Day speeches are used to perform different kinds of illocutionary acts namely, representatives, directives, commissives, expressive and declarations. About 660 utterances are considered for illocutionary acts analysis in our data. The table below shows the percentage distribution of the illocutionary acts performed with the speeches considered.

**Table 1: Distribution of Illocutionary Acts performed in Gen. Babangida’s Independence Day Broadcasts**

S/N	Features	Distribution	Examples
1.	Representatives	59.2%	Ex. 1: What really lies at the bottom of our past dilemma is the absence of a viable political arrangement. (1985 IDB)
2.	Directives	9.1%	Ex. 2: ...the state governments are hereby directed to hands off all items of functions which are specified in section 1 of the fourth schedule. (1988 IDB)

3.	Commissives	16.2%	Ex. 3: ...with this in mind, we shall in the course of 1986, announce a political programme for the country (1985 IDB)
4.	Expressive	15%	Ex. 4: I thank you all and wish you a happy twenty-sixth anniversary. (1986 IDB)
5.	Declaration	0.45%	Ex. 5: Thus, in order to fully realize this goal, ensure their integrity as an autonomous level of government, the ministries of local government in all states are hereby abolished with immediate effect (1988 IDB)

Table 1 above clearly shows that representative acts constitute about 391 (59.2%) of the illocutionary acts performed with the speeches considered. This is followed by commissive acts which constitute about 107 (16.2%) of the speech acts performed. Our findings further reveal that expressive acts take about 99 (15%) while directive acts constitute about 60 (9.1%) of the illocutionary acts performed with the speeches or utterances. Declaration has the lowest percentage in the data. It could therefore be claimed that Gen. Babangida’s Independence Day broadcasts or speeches are generally characterized by a lot of representative acts and commissive acts. As our data revealed, Gen. Babangida used his speeches to perform some other sub-acts of representatives. Prominent among these, as our findings showed, are sub-acts of informing, stating, asserting, assessing and reviewing etc. These shall be discussed in turn based on the context of the utterances or speeches, the communicative intention and/or illocutionary force of uttering the said speeches.

Our findings show that informing is the most common sub-speech act of representative performed by the speaker (Gen. Babangida) in the broadcast/speeches. This might not be unconnected with the fact that the process of governance requires, among others, the president to constantly inform the governed about his administration’s programmes, political ideologies, policies and aspirations. This sub-act of informing the populace is frequently performed by Gen. Babangida in some contexts. Examples below can be considered.

Ex. 6: The fundamental objectives of this administration are ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND SELF RELIANCE. (1985 IDB)

Ex. 7: We came back with a determination to grapple with the problems of gross mismanagement of the economy, social indiscipline, corruption, greed and the loss of a common national sense of direction. (1986 IDB)

The obvious communicative intention of Gen. Babangida's utterances in examples (6) and (7) above are first, to inform Nigerians of the objectives of his government and second, to state categorically the determination of his administration. In actual fact, the illocutionary forces of informing Nigerians as reflected in the above extracts are two. First, it is intended by the speaker to influence Nigerians to support the government and also, to arouse in some sections of Nigerians the sense of confidence in the ability of Gen. Babangida's administration or government to find solutions to the country's retinue of problems.

It is observed that in some contexts where the speaker performs the action of informing Nigerians with his utterances, other sub-acts of reviewing, assessing and stating are also simultaneously performed with his utterances. Extract below substantiates this claim.

Ex. 8: Since our independence in 1960, we have experimented with the parliamentary and presidential systems of government. It seems that neither system has been able to deal adequately with some of our more thorny political problems. (1986 IDB)

In the above example, the speaker has not only implied that Nigeria has political problems. He has equally reviewed, assessed and evaluated the political systems of the period before 1983 to 1993. The illocutionary force of the above utterance is to let the hearers prepare their minds for the introduction and acceptance of an alternative system of government that would guarantee stability in the country. Considering the context of the utterance, the speaker believes that the introduction of an alternative political system is imperative so that the country could achieve its 'goals in the economic and social spheres'.

Sometimes, informing involves clarifying. The example below clearly explains how the speaker clarifies issues while informing his audience.

Ex. 9: We have assumed the reigns of government to serve not to be masters of our own people. (1985 IDB)

In the above extract, the speaker informs his audience the purpose of his assumption of power and simultaneously clearly states his ultimate objective which is to serve the people. The illocutionary force of the above utterance is that Gen. Babangida wanted his audience (Nigerians) to support his government. This is confirmed by the fact that 1985

Independence Day broadcast was given barely three months after he assumed the power.

Our data also reveal that representative act of informing could involve warning. We can consider the example below:

Ex. 10: Let me warn that this new political order at the local level is no license for political and administrative recklessness (1988 IDB).

With the above utterance, the speaker informs the populace about the 'new order' and warn those at the helms of affair at the local government level to desist from all acts of administrative recklessness or misconduct that are capable of jeopardizing the government's intention. The illocutionary force of the speech act of warning here is to let the public office holders at the local government level have the correct perspective and/or value of being called to serve which, according to Gen. Babangida, is not synonymous with involvement in administrative misconduct and perhaps, financial improprieties.

Table 1 above also shows that commissive acts record about 107 (16.2%) of the speech acts performed with Gen. Babangida's speeches. Sub-acts of commissive generally include promising, threatening, vowing, refusal, pledging one's allegiance, predicting etc. Commissives in our data manifest largely in promises, predictions and a few instances of threats. As our data reveal, Gen. Babangida largely performed the speech act of promising at the very early period of his administration most especially between 1985 and 1988. The reason for this relative preponderance of the speech act of promising is not far fetched. Considering the social reality of the time, it is apparent that the former military president, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida was perhaps personally conscious of the fact that Nigerians had no hope in military rulership coupled with the widely held belief that military government is an aberration. He had to enumerate a lot of promises, programmes etc. with a view to proving the capability of his government to deliver. The following instances of utterances that perform the speech act of promising can be considered.

Ex. 11: With this in mind, we shall in the course of 1986, announce a political programme for the country. (1985 IDB)

Ex. 12: We shall continue to address the inherent structural imbalances by a combination of demand management, aggregate supply expansion and export promotion. (1988 IDB)



Ex. 13: Government will also seek to provide opportunities for greater employment in order to boost aggregate labour real income and reduce excessive inequalities of income. (1985 IDB)

The illocutionary force of promising in example (11) is to get members of the political class informed that Gen. Babangida's government would hold on to power for a while and to encourage them to start warming up for the political transition programmes that would follow. The communicative intention behind uttering (12) above is to inform Nigerian industrialists of the government's plans for them and the attendant illocutionary force is to rekindle their hope of getting constant source(s) of raw materials for their industrial products. Promise in example (13) above is intended to give relief or succour to the unemployed Nigerians and that when they are eventually employed, they would engage themselves meaningfully, stay out of trouble and this would in turn reduce 'excessive inequalities of income'.

Another sub-act of commissive observed in our data is predicting. As part of his government programmes, Gen. Babangida made quite a number of predictions in his speeches. We can consider the following utterances.

Ex. 14: (a) There may be an initial rise in the prices of imported – based goods.  
(b) Imported consumer goods will cost more. (1986 IDB)  
(c) The era of inefficient performance and easy profit will be over. (1986 IDB)

The intention behind uttering (a) and (b) above is to get the hearers (Nigerians) to change their consumption pattern in favour of locally produced goods whereas that of (c) above is to encourage Nigerians to be more hardworking and committed to the task of economic reconstruction and sustainable development which, according to Gen. Babangida, might involve some sweat and pain.

Sub-act of threatening in our data is performed with the speaker's utterances in order to put sanity into some operations or national occurrences and also to gain people's commitment to and cooperation with government programmes.

Ex. 15: ... at the same time, we shall not hesitate to deal firmly with all those who may attempt to frustrate the new political process. (1987 IDB)

The speaker's intention here is to threaten those seemingly unco-operative members of the populace in order to encourage them to see seriousness of the government's effort at entrenching a new democratic ideal.

The illocutionary act of expressive in our data constitutes about 99 (15%) of the utterances considered. Expressives are utterances that state what the speaker feels. They, in other words, reveal the psychological states or feelings of the speaker and can be statement of pleasure, pain, likes, dislike, joy or sorrow (cf. Odebunmi 2003: 46). Sub-acts of expressive are thinking, apologizing, condoling, congratulating, assuring, empathizing, sympathizing, complaining, thanking, appealing, appreciating, etc. Sub-acts of expressive that are observed to be common in our data are appealing, assuring, congratulating, expressing belief, wish, like and happiness. Among these, appealing and assuring are found to be the most common expressive acts performed by Gen. Babangida's speeches. Let us consider the following examples.

Ex. 16: I appeal to you individually and collectively to rebuild our image abroad. (1986 IDB)

In example (16) above, the speaker appeals to the psychological working of his audience or hearers. Appeal in the above extract is a sort of begging. The illocutionary force (intention) of appealing in example (16) is to cause the listeners (Nigerians abroad inclusive) to be good ambassadors of their country whenever they travel abroad. In a bid to canvass for Nigerians' support for the political transition programme of his government, Gen. Babangida appeals further thus.

Ex. 17: I still want to appeal to those of you in this category wherever you may be to give the political programme the respectability it deserves. (1988 IDB)

The expressive act of assuring is performed in the extract below.

Ex. 18: I wish to assure you that we are determined to do all that is necessary to bring and keep the situation under control. (1986IDB)

Considering the relevant circumstances surrounding the above utterance, assuring in the extract could be interpreted as having two illocutionary forces. First, it is intended to let Nigerians know government's plan and determination for them and second, to cause or urge Nigerians to have confidence in the ability of Gen. Babangida's government to alleviate their (Nigerians) sufferings.

As our data reveal, congratulating as a sub-act of expressive is performed as part of greeting. As a form of greeting Nigerians on the occasion of the Independence Day celebration, Gen. Babangida said:

Ex. 19: I salute and congratulate you all on the twenty-eight anniversary of our country's political independence (1988 IDB).

In another context, Gen. Babangida expressed his appreciation for the support he enjoyed from Nigerians and also extended his best wishes. We can consider the extract below.

Ex. 20: I thank you all and wish you a happy twenty-sixth anniversary. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1986 IDB)

The illocutionary force of appreciating in the above example is to encourage the hearers (Nigerians) to do more in their efforts at building a virile nation.

Expressive act is also used to show or express the psychological feelings of the speaker. Example below substantiates this further.

Ex. 21: ... I am glad to announce that the economic recovery fund deductions which have already been made over the past year from the wages and salaries of employees earning N300 and below will be refunded to them in full before the end of the year. (1986 IDB)

Just as the speaker (Gen. Babangida) expressed his happiness, he has also influenced the psychological working of the minds of his audience (hearers) most especially those employees concerned. The illocutionary force of the utterance is to cause the affected people to be happy and to cause the entire Nigerians to have hope of a better living condition. Besides, despite the status differential between the former president and other Nigerians, it is observed that the following expressions such as:

Ex. 22: Fellow countrymen and women  
Fellow Nigerians  
Fellow Compatriots etc.

are used to perform illocutionary act of expressive. With these expressions, the speaker expresses solidarity and sense of oneness and equality between himself and other Nigerians. The expressions or utterances are also intended to arouse the sense of comradeship in Nigerians.

About 60 (9.1%) of the utterances sampled are used by Gen. Babangida to perform the illocutionary act of directives. Directives are utterances that are intended to produce some effects through action by the hearer. Sub-acts of directive act are ordering, commanding, requesting, recommending, advising, instructing, begging, suggesting, giving or seeking consent etc. As our data reveal, Gen. Babangida employed a fraction of his utterances to direct Nigerians in some ways.

As observed by Jones and Wareing (1999: 32), “directives are inherent part of governance”. In our own view, certain directive utterances are found in our data perhaps because political office holders are often imbued with directive power that always enables them to achieve their desired objective(s) of being in control. After all, politics is concerned with power: the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people’s behaviour and often to control their values (Jones and Wareing, *op. cit.*). Let us consider the following utterances that perform directive act.

- Ex. 23: (a) Nigerians must learn to fit into the two- party system. (1991 IDB).  
 (b) I therefore call for your co-operation to enable the commission perform its duties faithfully and with integrity. (1987 IDB)

The directive in example (23a) involves ordering which has element of compulsion whereas that of (23b) entails an appeal to Nigerians to co-operate with the said National Electoral Commission, an agency of the government saddled with the responsibility of organising election in Nigeria during Gen. Babangida’s regime. The illocutionary force of the above utterances is to influence the hearers to act in accordance with the speaker’s expectations. No wonder that Hayakawa (1974: 89) points out that statesman give speeches with a view to influencing our conduct sometimes for our good, or at times for their own good.

It is also observed that in some contexts, Gen. Babangida employed his directive utterances to direct, enjoin and at the same time, exercise his authority over the people he governed. Below is an example.

- Ex. 24: ... government accordingly *directs* sense of pride and that all employers of labour are *enjoined* and *authorized* to encourage and assist workers cooperative societies... (1986IDB) (Our Emphasis)

Gen. Babangida’s directive utterances also involve some threats, all with a view to effect some changes or improvement in the hearers’ behaviour.

- Ex.25: ... we must also be prepared for some less pleasant side effects that may result from the introduction of the second-tier market. (1986 IDB)

The illocutionary force of the above utterance is to get the hearers prepared for what was to happen and to cause them to change their behaviour.

Finally, utterances that perform illocutionary act of declaration record the lowest percentage of about 0.45% in the speeches considered. Declarations, as noted by Odebunmi (2003:47), go, to a large extent, with institutionalized situations. They therefore, have the potency of causing a change to be in such situations. The extract below is an example of declaration.

Ex. 26: Thus in order to fully realize this goal, ensure their integrity as an autonomous level of government, *the ministries of local government in all states are hereby abolished with immediate effect.* (1988 IDB) (Emphasis Mine)

The abolition of the ministries of local government in all the states of the federation would cause a change in situation of things. One likely effect of such a change is perhaps, the redeployment of workers in those ministries and/or a termination of appointment of some of them. Yule (1996b: 50) has however, argued that for a performative utterance such as declaration above to be successful (i.e. felicitous), it must satisfy certain expected or appropriate circumstances known as felicity conditions. Considering the above example, before the declaration could be effective, the speaker must occupy a particular position of authority that gives him or her power to abolish and that the act performed by the utterance has to be performed in a particular context. Therefore, it could be said that the illocutionary act of declaration performed in the above example has been successful for some reasons. Firstly, at the time of giving the speech, Gen. Babangida (the speaker) was the president and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces – a position that gave him the power to perform the act. Second, the declaration is also made in the context of public address – Independence Day broadcast. The speech act performed with the declaration is an institutional act which could only be performed by the president or his delegate or any political office holder who possesses the same power. The extract below is another copious example of declaration.

Ex. 27: In view of the magnitude of our economic problems from today. *I declare a state of Economic Emergency for the next 15 months.* (1985 IDB) (Emphasis mine)

Our data reveal that as soon as the above declaration was made, certain stringent economic measures such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) etc. were introduced as part of the economic emergency declared. Invariably therefore, the illocutionary force of the utterance is that it caused a change in situations of things at that time.

### Conclusion

The foregoing has extensively examined the pragmatics of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida's Independence Day Broadcasts (IDB). Our analysis has focused on the speech acts in the broadcasts with specific attention to the illocutionary acts that the broadcasts are used to perform. Our findings reveal that the speaker used his Independence Day speeches to perform different kinds of illocutionary acts but the most common among them are representative and commissive acts. These could be described as institutional acts associated with political discourse and/or that can be found in speeches of political office holders. Besides, the illocutionary acts performed by the speeches are also found to be largely dependent on the context of the speeches and the communicative intention of the speaker. The article concludes that reading Independence Day broadcasts from the speech acts lenses has potency of enhancing a better understanding of the broadcasts as a genre of political discourse in Nigeria. It also illuminates the discourse value of illocution and provides additional material for political communication.

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**SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL STUDIES**

JESS

# The Inadequacy of Communist Memory: Censorship, Captivity and Confiscation

Viorella Manolache\*

## **Abstract:**

The present study recommends itself as an endeavor focusing upon Ricœur's assertions regarding three approaches towards the uses and abuses of memory: *the hindered memory – the manipulated memory – the abusively commended memory*. These three particular attributes, defining the memory of communism, are reinvested with specific inflections which are already found within the division of concepts – *censorship, captivity and confiscation*.

The focus of this study is upon of *communist memory*, which stands in need of being examined by recourse to the above-mentioned analytic approach, which consists in *looking beyond its defensive wall*. We will certainly not avoid *the triple occurrence of the letter "C"*: *captivity*, with reference to *captive [thought]* (C. Milosz); *censorship [of memory/recollection]* (Revel) or *confiscation [of a particular, personal destiny]*.

Our novel contribution, with an acutely subjective-affective tone, can be seen most clearly in the last registry of our research, where it analyzes, clarifies and resonates, with a Ricœurian – Freudian mixture, the fragile balance of *too much vs. too little memory*, by establishing an appropriate frame for the reception of *passive experiences* in relation to the *active exercise of memory*.

**Keywords:** Memory of Communism, Recollections of Communism, Censorship, Captivity, Confiscation

## **Introductory Notes about the Inadequacy of Communist Memory**

Placing to the fore of our initial analysis, not by chance, certain assertions put forward by Pierre Nora and Paul Ricœur (2001), and considering them to be essential guidelines for the present study, we intend to emphasize the essential veridicality of the statement: *the correct use of memory legitimates the imperative of moral duty*.

If Pierre Nova denounces the era of commemoration with its obsession with festivity and the strangeness of often – ignored dark corners of memory, which in fact affirm its *over-filling*, by maintaining

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that the memorial mode overtakes the historical mode, and suggests other uses – arbitrary, unpredictable, bulimic – for the past (Nora, 2001: 113–114), one can affirm that *the memory- moment, or the synchronicity bare reality – memorial consignment represents a solid alloy (and not just an affective one) which individualizes an epoch.*

In Ricœur’s opinion, the act of recall demands a triple responsibility from the part of (imperatively accented) memory: memory’s duty is to see that justice is done; memory pays its dues and draws up a balance sheet of the inheritance; moral duty states that priority has to be given to victims.

In fact, this type of approach pleads for the consolidation of a memory already undermined by fragility – which, assaulted by *too much memory on one side and too little memory on the other*, generates an imbalance reinvigorated by the dual perspectives of repetitive compulsion and submittance to the travails of recollection.

As certitude, the proofs in memory’s archive are altered by the intervention of the ideological, which is used to effect manipulations within the distortion of reality, validating, no matter what the cost, the system of power and integrating the everyday world into symbolic systems.

An adept of such interpretations, the analytical pattern already established in the present study will appeal to certain particular inflections in order to prove the assertion that the memory of communism has to be re- valued by banking upon the *penetrating capacity of a look beyond its defensive wall*, without avoiding in this sense the three potential valences of *the letter C: captivity (with a reference to captive [thought] – C. Milosz), censorship [of memory/recollection (Revel)] or confiscation [of particular, personal destiny]*.

We should note a triple approach validated from the start by our initial draft: in Pierre Nora’s acceptance, this study does not aim to prioritize its connection to the symbolic economy (even though this would represent a fertile direction) of memory (within the correspondence of re-inhumations, via C. Verdery – L. Boia); the already-traced directing line is based upon the Revel – Milosz conceptual confluence, banking upon the operant filter of political philosophy, a focus exclusively dependent upon the persistence of a *critical excedent*, seen as an alternative solution for any deficiency which Ricœur mentioned when theorizing the *too much and too little memory*; the *active exercise of memory* implies [especially here] an *absolutely familial other*, coupled to the formulation launched by Tzvetan Todorov (1999) and advocating a preference for *the good* rather

than *the true*, illustrating the theory of exemplary values which *turns memory into a project*.

### **Censorship and the Captivity of Memory**

From the position of an anti-communist intellectual (in the line of Raymond Aron, Alain Besançon, Stéphane Courtois, André Glucksmann or François Furet), Jean-François Revel assumes the mission of exposing the falsified *game between politics and history*, a [game] in which he finds, in a critically – informing way, both *the left's parade* placed inside the “empyrean of intentions” (parade – an action with double function – both to avoid a direct hit and to show off ornaments in order to attract attention) and its *prevarication* (a tendency to reload old propaganda sophisms) or *retaliation* (a reaction confirming the irreversible character of communism, with the possibility of its being overthrown).

Warning about the *reversibility of communism* (in its double quality – *sociological reversibility* – *strategic reversibility*) Revel reveals the interference of opposed tendencies: on the one hand, the new rallying to the old; and on the other, its obsession with identifying the new where there is nothing to be seen except the old reloaded in a new form: in other words, *even if the form is new, the background stays identical*.

*The reversibility of communism* extracts its substance from *irreversibility* seen as an integral trait of socialism, banking upon structurally-ideological discrepancies (and not just degrees) between its own political system and fluctuations – successes or failures, ascensions or falls, evolutions and revolutions/involutions – tracing the dynamics of a political occurrence as recorded by other types of political systems (Revel, 1995: 404).

Preoccupied by the pseudo- rationality of *totalitarian sophistries*, with no immunity to/from the effects of *ideological perfidiousness*, Revel notes that, being placed in a position of impossibility of accommodating reality, communism *cannot belong to this world*, thus accepting those defining properties already traced: *a hiatus of history, an evolutionary syncopation, a product of erroneous thinking, an intellectual invention with no historical determinism, a serious accident, a systematic delirium, a practical failure* (Revel, 1995).

Viewed in this light, the memory of communism is labeled as censorship – discriminated, both on *the fundamental* basis of results obtained by courting Marxist – Leninist ideologies, and through *the form* of perpetuating political mores and using Stalinist-Leninist procedures as ordinary currency (Revel, 2002).

Denouncing the persistent refusal to equivocate Nazism and communism (despite system similarities, similar ways of acting and the pathetically-practiced anti-individual politics characteristic of both first-rate communist societies and their satellite branches – the latter ones faithfully mimicking their prototypes) Revel *condemns past communists' right to forget*, but also *blames the present communists' past*, while disapproving of ideological cosmeticizing formulations labeled as unfortunate, unhappy, ultimately failed additions, impossible to bring back to attention except by a technique of *persevering scrutiny focused beyond communism's defense wall*. This endeavor accepts a strictly analytical orientation centering upon *communist amnesia*, insisting upon reappraisal and indication of the correctly established sense of the syntagm “*memory debt*” – an operation finished, in fact, by transcending the univocal sense of the syntagm “*memory of/ recollection of*”.

In the same accusatory note of resuscitated “communist hypotheses”, Romanian *intelligentsia* (Patapievici, 2014: 48–49) offers the pressing need to expose political theories already cloistered between *captivity* and *denial* fanaticisms as an argument for overtaking, at any price, the philosophical asymmetry established between fascism/Nazism and communism, by admitting that *theses which already define an uncontested reality cannot be avoided*: fascism has socialist structural features, and communism accepts fascist inflexions, a contamination demanding a transfer of that legitimate repulsion one might feel against fascism, to communism too; selective memory blocks knowledge, on one side, that communism is oriented towards modernity, while on the other side denying fascism this quality – a morally repugnant, factually impossible-to-maintain assertion; communism preserves a positive prejudgment, phagocytously drawing nourishment from the moral impossibility of accepting its own facts. These dysfunctions, saturated by *the inadequacy of communist recollection* i.e., [*a mind- turning idea* (Pleșu, Patapievici, Liiceanu, 2014)] divide European memory and sensitivity, preserving them in/through disassociation.

In a similar vision, Czeslaw Milosz (2008) places such an insufficiency within the realm of *the natural*, thus proving that the targeted attribute can be applied to any known world. The Eastern citizen thinks in ready- made sociologically- historical patterns/clichés – an observation which, based upon the analogy between Islamic Ketman and Western European 20<sup>th</sup> century (Milosz, 2008: 98–99), Ketman [in this sense we refer to the implications/ramifications of the Ketman category, in its instance as social custom, or way of practicing auto- actualization ion of the self, compared to “anything else”], allows us to examine the concept

of *captive thinking*, with its status of acrobatic procedure invested with varied contextual significances; auctorial play, automated reflex, way of identifying – by means of decreased vigilance – with an imposed role, continuous masking, inner self-control, blockage-obstacle, total control and ideological conditioning.

### **The Active Exercise of Memory: Destiny Forfeiture**

Under the sign of particular/ personal destiny appreciated as both *active memory exercise and direct grip recollection*, the volume dedicated to *The History of a Confiscated Destiny. Viorel Baci*, *unknown martyr* [the volume belongs to Miorița Baci Got, with a foreword by Vladimir Tismăneanu, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013], configures – within a structural analysis model launched by/ in the present study – a complete parity between the concept of *inadequate memory* and the term *forfeiture*, seen here as synonymous to *imperfect knowledge*.

In the insert belonging to the aforementioned book we state – as a recourse to the memory/recollection of a destiny – Viorel Baci – that, in a Ricœurian sense, projecting a phenomenological blueprint upon memory will always start from the premise that the act of recollection constitutes an actual process of memory occurrence, with all the perceived recharging of the *mnēmē* – recollection as affectation, an Aristotelian way of presenting the being in multiple ways by using descriptive – narrative techniques. Referencing the recollection – memory relationship, Ricœur again, this time connected to Edward Casey’s opinions, states that simple recollection is a neutral, objective, detached, impersonal process of *displaying presence- in -absence*.

In T. Todorov’s offered note, memory cannot be identified with elementary accumulations of brute information, but is an interaction medium for both *the semantic side* and *the personal perspective*, in a vivified connection which becomes an intimate, inter-connected predisposition.

If *literal recollection* preserves the intransitive unicity of the being/event, *exemplary memory* is able to establish a possible analogy between the integrated elements of a series, a way of producing therapeutic effects or even of triggering and maintaining curiosity as a preamble to knowledge.

Now is the time for an imperatively – necessary note: the category of the *absolutely- familial other* empowers the personal imprint and enables it to respond to that immediate-order memory which searches for *the good* rather than *the true*, in the sense in which the latter *cannot be confiscated* by any assaulting formulation: “thoughts and many

attempts [...] reflections torn from the depths of the being”, about what “totally represents just the Truth”.

In fact, *the confiscated profile* becomes a pretext for counterbalancing *counter*-qualities found in the category of *ethical Ketman* (2008: 94–98). It extracts its philosophy from the *Ethics of the New Faith* (communist “*biblistm*”) based upon the rudimentary principle stating that *all good things must serve the principles of the revolution*. The false and perfidious morality of building *the new man* by a model of education demands a new type of ascetic endeavor, which in turn prepares (by *counter*-formatting) the *tool – the individual*, dedicated to a single cause, tolerant, obedient, snug.

If the ethical ideal of the *New Belief* preserves puritanical principles and if the individual benefits from some concessions (being let out of his cell for political meetings and for work), *the new man* practices denunciation as a basic virtue, banks upon fear, insistently cultivates and abuses it, and reconfirms his negative qualities, focused upon self – knowledge, omnipresence and vigilance. Such *counter- landmarks* recharge a one-track portrait, simulating relaxation and arrogantly flaunting carelessness, sometimes expressing compassion or fury, inside a changed-direction ethical system which has been repositioned from improving one’s own destiny towards a politics of the war of all against all.

True to the slogan “general good is a poison” the chemical formulation of the *ethical Ketman* conveys the feeling that an ethics of loyalty towards the many represents the weak side, a deficiency *counter-* attacked by offensive cruelty, and the intensified revolutionary spirit to the disadvantage of the intellectual spirit, ensuring and guaranteeing equality: *the ethical Ketman* = a vigorous category with a surprise – element status and *the availability to accept anything and manifest itself towards anyone, at any time and in any way*.

Diametrically opposed to such an artificial construct, the *confiscation* of a mortified destiny, under the permanent surveillance of the *ethical Ketman* (see the letters, notes, speeches of Greek Catholic priest and professor Viorel Baciu, testimonies of people who knew him, the surveillance files – CNSAS) recommend meditation upon themes such as *reflexivity*, seen as an auspicious way of capturing memory in its declarative phase, by belonging to a community of destinies, a way of rethinking history and denying the hard demands of the political. The vertical model of resisting any pressures by which the “inverted historical blueprint” operates (the *counter* – arguments of communism) confirms the sermon – language, the liturgical ensign of “making



history/the history” as a deciding, convincing, absolutely Christian gesture of resisting/forgiving.

### **The Need for a (Continuous) Look beyond Communism’s Defensive Wall**

In the analytically – theoretical score offered by A. Besançon (1999), *communist amnesia and Nazi memory are reciprocally exasperating when the right to recollection has enough arguments (realities) in order to condemn them both*. In fact, it’s the endeavor to perpetuate a reflex opposing physical and moral crime and elude the message (*memory*) of distant, indirectly lived, objects which is at stake here: obviously noted in weakened Western antibodies confronted by virulent communist ideology.

Maintaining and arguing the look beyond communism’s defense wall, the report of the Commission for the European Parliament and the Council (Bruxelles, 22.12.2010, COM (2010) 783), explicitly referring to the recollection of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe invites reconciliation through sharing, tolerance and spiritual solidarity, as a moral reparation institutionally mediated by the E.U. This initiative reveals a certain impact of personal- imprint memory impact (each member state has its own approach towards this type of problem) of exaggeratedly transparent popularization (how promoted can a tragic memory be? our underlining) and of approachability (a recourse to the perspective of a factually – global look upon the methods used by member states when dealing with problems engendered by the crimes of totalitarian regimes).

Thus, European reports corroborated with national ones reassess either the lingering, obstructed pact of change and of confronting the past at any price, or the decision not to open Pandora’s box, deepening in this sense both ambiguity and non – determination (Gallinat, 2009: 183–199) and/or tolerating a disorienting, confused, enigmatically – hermetic reality.

In Habermas and A. Michnik’s (1994) political-philosophical interpretation, reconciliation with the past constrains political morality to initiate an image/ projection of moral society in which recollection imposes a common approach upon both memory and forgetting, as public social activities mediating individual experiences through collective ones<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See in this sense, Cristian Tileagă, *Analiza discursului și reconcilierea cu trecutul recent. Studii de psihologie socială discursivă (Discourse Analysis and the Reconciliation with the Recent Past. Studies of Social Discursive Psychology)*, Oradea, Primus Publishing House, 2012; J. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*,

From the same perspective, the *Prague Declaration about the European moral conscience and communism* (June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008) states that European unity is only feasible with the contribution of all parties involved in historical reconciliation and an acceptance of the fact that Nazism and communism have a common inheritance and possess substantial similarities. The declaration focuses upon communist ideology and its labyrinthine conscience, offering a pan-European, objective way of judging both Nazi and communist regimes. If we insist upon a neutral approach when judging totalitarian regimes, then the initiative will necessarily particularize the role of European conscience – that of impartial and detached judge of communism’s crimes, certifying the need for an equally dosed insight: *crimes committed in the name of communism must be considered crimes against humanity and treated in the same way as Nazi crimes were in the Nuremberg courts.*

In the *martyrion* of totalitarian atrocity crime victims, the date of August 23<sup>rd</sup> (with capital letters!) is redefined, and imbued with the significance of equidistant moment for a correct retrospection of history, in order to allow us to observe (judge) the past in an impartial way (January 27<sup>th</sup> commemorates the Holocaust victims) even if their respective commemorative importance is clearly unbalanced.

### **In Place of Conclusions: from Inadequacy to a Well-Dosed Recollection of Communism**

Under the incidence of a triple symbology of *the letter C* – *communism = censorship – captivity – confiscation*, the present study identifies and deciphers in these terms both the technique of chronically spoiled memory and the practice of maintaining an illusion (of Furetian origins) as a constitutive – restitution way of understanding and evaluating communist history.

When analyzing memory and amnesia, Alain Besançon appeals to the parallels between the public nature of Nazism and that of communism, overtaking the political perspective, and subordinates/subsumes memory (with an interest in any insert deferring to confiscated memory) to the mobilizing tendency of religious conscience.

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Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; K. Murakami, *Positioning in Accounting for Redemption and Reconciliation*, in “Culture & Psychology”, no. 13, 2007; V. Tismăneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, Princeton University Press, 1998 or D. Middleton, S. D. Brown, *Issues in the Socio-Cultural Study of Memory: Making Memory Matter*, in J. Valsiner, A. Rosa (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociocultural Psychology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Transgressing the frame of *inadequacy of communist memory*, Alain Besançon sanctions under the sign of Christian amnesic appraisals of communism, a pious endeavor, extracted either from the soil of sin and evil (as a constant presence, more or less well –dosed, fueled and maintained by the Christian principle stating that the answer to sin should be repentance – forgiveness – forgetting or overtaking) or by an easily – obtainable forgiveness, just by acknowledging the mistake and publicly confessing – repentance acts.

*Censorship – captivity – confiscation* do not act independently, but cannot function separately either; they are able to work within a direct relation and strict determination, annihilating any analytic capacity of communist memory, in the absence of critical reactions and profiler formulations which are seen as normal inside moral – intellectual conscience.

As a conclusion, we consider that an inquisitive look passes beyond communism’s defensive walls and manages to dismount and combat the negative, poisonous exceptionality of totalitarian systems, despite the glaciation period maintained by their long – lived status of self – reclaiming amnesty regimes. With the absolutely essential appending of a warning note stating that the look has to be persevering, perceiving, prudent and resolute.

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# The Evolution of Law

Petru Tărchilă\*

## **Abstract:**

The entire community acted according to rules because their disobedience had an influence on the survival of the entire community, as they had a powerful mystical and religious character. Sanction measures evolved along with the evolution of communities and they were applied to individuals who disobeyed and broke these rules. Thus, the first forms of human community used the death penalty (blood revenge) as means of punishment for serious violation of the rules of coexistence. Later on, death penalty was replaced with the individual's expulsion from the community and as communities evolved, material redemption was used instead of expulsion. The first judicial norms (the germs of law) developed among these social cohabitation, organization and behaviour rules. Judicial norms differed from other rules due to their compulsory character and by appeal to the coercive force of the community when they were broken by certain individuals. The change of social, customized norms into judicial norms and the emergence of law as independent entity took place along with the occurrence of state and public power rooted in the Greek – Roman Antiquity. It has been set that law is a social phenomenon incidental to human society; thus, Romans have expressed this statement through the phrase: *ubi societas, ibi jus*, namely law occurs along with the society. Law, like society is not a static, immutable entity issued once and for all; it is under constant development and social-historical evolution. As social phenomenon, social law experiences a constant historical evolution, bearing the mark of historical periods and cultural, spiritual and religious features of nations.

**Keywords:** custom, social norm, juridical norm, regulation

## **1. The classification of law**

Man is a social and sociable creature whose place is within a community. Thus emerge the needs for organization, order, discipline, all leading to the occurrence of behaviour rules, to sets of norms that would harmonize the individuals' interests to the interests of the community as part of the collective interest. Along with the evolution of human society and its organization in families, races and tribes, we witness the emergence of first behaviour rules embedded in skills,

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habits, customs, etc. Over time there have been several theories on the classification and ordering of the law. Some of them are listed below:

- a theory centred on the basic characteristics of form and content of the law classifies it into law systems or law families. For instance, the Roman-Germanic law system founded on the Roman Law and blended with German, Spanish, French, etc. doctrine; the common-law system founded on the English Law, etc.

- another theory founded on the chronological and historical criterion of the emergence of judicial norms groups the law in types of law. Thus, the Marxist Theory mentions four types of law: slave-owning, feudal, burgher and proletarian (socialist). The following classification of types of law can be taken into consideration:

- incipient law (early law) typical for the primitive society;
- Medieval law typical for the Middle Ages;
- modern law typical for the beginning of Capitalism;
- contemporary law which tends to share common features due to international public and private law but can still be grouped into:
  - the law of democratic societies;
  - socialist law;
  - the law of developing countries;
  - community law, etc.

*The factors which influence the law and its judicial norms*

The analysis of factors which influence the judicial norms of the law involves the identification of causes and metrical forces that generate it and determine a judicial regulation or another. Various concepts and philosophical theories have sought to identify these factors, referring to politics, morality, ideology, economy, etc. Thus, there are the following factors:

a) *geographical, demographic, biological factors where human existence develops*

These factors influence judicial norms to a certain extent.

See the differences between judicial norms of overpopulated countries and those of underpopulated ones, between states placed in arid and dry areas and those placed in wet, green areas.

b) *historical, ethnical, national factors*

These factors take into account historical conditions and the ethnical-national peculiarities of population. See the differences between states with homogenous ethnical structure and those with multi-ethnical population or consisting of several minorities.

c) *social-economic factors*

These factors are determined by the level of economic development, the nature of property forms, the structure of social layers, professional

categories of the society, etc. See the effort made by Romania to create the legal framework for economic reformation after the shift to a market economy. We can notice that there is interdependence and mutual influence between economy and law and the role of law in regulating social relations increases along with the historical development of a society.

d) political factors

These factors play a determining role in the development of judicial norms in a certain society. Changes in the political regime in former socialist states after the fall of totalitarian regimes had an overwhelming consequence on all branches of law, especially on constitutional law.

e) cultural – ideological factors

These factors sum up the artistic, cultural, spiritual creation, ideology and religion which will occur in judicial norms of all branches of law in a society at a certain point. (called the reference point).

f) international factors

These factors refer to the international situation, the relationship with the neighbouring countries, the state's relationship to international institutions, etc., factors with a powerful influence on the judicial norms (international public and private law, diplomatic law, etc.).

The sum of these factors influences to a larger or smaller extent the elaboration and evolution of judicial norms of a society at a certain reference point. But specialists in judicial norms consider that the fundament of law in a society is the human factor in his complexity and dynamics of his features and relationships. Thus, the needs, interests, aspirations and actions in various situations (citizen, owner, public servant) have to be taken into account. This factor along with other factors will bring about the elaboration, transformation and replacement of judicial norms with newer ones and thus determine the evolution of law in a society.

## **2. The functions and finalities of law**

Professor Nicolae Popa defines law as “an aggregate of state-guaranteed rules whose purpose is to organize and discipline human behaviour in the main relationships of a society, in a freedom-governed climate that protects human rights and social justice”. After analysing various definitions of law issued throughout the years, we can list its main characteristics. Thus, law has a:

a. social character because it places the human being in relation and interactivity with another human being.

b. anti-entropic character, namely its ability to oppose to disaggregation, disorder and social conflicts. Law has always been a

regulating and ordination factor in the society because it confers certainty, peace, safety and protection to the people who obey it.

c. normative character because it represents what is and what should be in a society in the form of specific, general and impersonal rules.

d. imperative character, characterized by the provision of judicial norm; the provision must be obeyed by all people and its disobedience will be punished by the coercive force of the state (through its institutions).

e. value character which is generated, structured and directed in relationship with other values of the society, according to historical time it has been issued.

f. educational character which involves its ability to develop a collective but also compelling relationship to those who break the law.

g. architect of social life characterized by its ability to accustom to good discipline and educate the society's behaviour so as to respect and defend social values.

h. historical character which is represented by the influence of spatial-temporal coordinates upon judicial norms and law in general. Thus, law is subjected to historical evolution, judicial norms are specific configurations of one country or another; it is influenced by the historical period it was issued in because of the influence of natural, social, economic, cultural, political and international factors.

The functions and finalities of law are complex, dynamic and contradicting. They sum up several ways, manners and moral, cultural and normative mechanisms through which society imposes the individual (all members of a society) a series of constraint and interdictions. Thus, the individual has to obey norms and basic values promoted and defended by the society.

This process takes place under social control which identifies the main mechanisms and levers by means of which society ensures the social cohesion of its members, the stability and functionality of its institutions.

The term "social control" was introduced into the vocabulary of judicial sociology by the American school of "sociological jurisprudence". It stipulates that law has an important role and it is considered the most perfectible and complex manner of social control. The sociological theory of law considers it highly dependent on the global social system of a society. The functions of law have been defined as fundamental directions or orientations of the judicial mechanism. The whole system (norms, institutions of law) along with institutions authorized by the society are involved in achieving these directions.



The Italian professor V. Ferrari considers that law as three may functions:

- 1) social regulation
- 2) conflict solving
- 3) legitimation of power

Professor N. Popa believes that law fulfils the following four main functions:

- 1) institutionalization and judicial formalization of social-political organization
- 2) preservation, defence and guarantee for the fundamental values of a society
- 3) rule over society
- 4) normative function

Law as part of the social system is perfective. It is subjected to constant changes and its positive effects on the social life and economic, administrative and political activities of a society are visible.

There are also cases when the relationship between the law and the social system is subjected to severe disturbing phenomena. They can generate real legal dysfunctions represented by the law's impossibility to express itself efficiently or by distorting the law. The situations can be the following:

1. when law misses from social relations or from fields where it should be used. The phenomenon was analysed by the French professor J. Carbonnier and called "non-law" phenomenon. It can be have the following characteristics:

-self-limitation of law in time and space, namely judicial activity is not enforced on certain days, holidays or at night.

For example: trials are not held on legal holidays, houses are not searched during the night, etc.

2. lack of validity and efficiency. These causes can be determined by internal or external causes, in situations when laws do not take into consideration the technical legal conditions or certain judicial principles. Here count also laws that face public resistance or have lost their object, thus becoming obsolete.

3. the existence of judicial norms that affect seriously the social values and even the notion of social justice (unjust law).

4. repressive (oppressive) law when the harmful effects of unjust judicial norms are experienced by certain social classes or categories, thus violating the human fundamental rights and freedom.

We need to have a closer look on the finalities of the law in order to be able to establish its role, importance and place in the society. The understanding and analysis of law finalities means presenting its reason of being, goal and ideals as well as its development tendencies.

## Conclusions

With the evolution of human society and its organization in families, races and tribes, we witness the emergence of first behaviour rules embedded in skills, habits, customs, etc. The entire community acted according to these rules because their disobedience had an influence on the survival of the entire community, as they had a powerful mystical and religious character. Sanction measures evolved along with the evolution of communities and they were applied to individuals who disobeyed and broke these rules. Thus, the first forms of human community used the death penalty (blood revenge<sup>12</sup>) as means of punishment for serious violation of the rules of coexistence. Later on, death penalty was replaced by the individual's expulsion from the community and as communities evolved, material redemption was used instead of expulsion. The first judicial norms (the germs of law) developed among these social cohabitation, organization and behaviour rules. Judicial norms differed from other rules due to their compulsory character and by appeal to the coercive force of the community when they were broken by certain individuals. The change of social, customized norms into judicial norms and the emergence of law as independent entity took place along with the occurrence of state and public power rooted in the Greek – Roman Antiquity. It has been set that law is a social phenomenon incidental to human society; thus, Romans have expressed this statement through the phrase: “*ubi societas, ibi jus*”, namely law occurs along with the society. Law, like society is not a static, immutable entity issued once and for all; it is under constant development and social-historical evolution. As social phenomenon, social law experiences a constant historical evolution, bearing the mark of historical periods and cultural, spiritual and religious features of nations.

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# Anecdotal Evidence of Current Cultural Politics in Romania and the Republic of Moldova

Onoriu Colăcel\*

**Abstract:**

Current political science, written in English, provides plenty of anecdotal evidence for a change in the cultural politics of both Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The paradigm shift is apparent and proposed by the avowedly Europhile establishment of both countries. In the name of alignment to the West, the reshuffle of national priorities is plain to see in the assertive language of public narratives about development, geopolitics, or security. Competing narratives of identity negotiate notions of weak-states (Moldova) and post-E.U. enlargement (Romania) by the literary means of public storytelling about the past. The (Post-Soviet) Eurasian community, patterns of national identification, and European transnationalism are the fault lines that structure the debate about 21<sup>st</sup> century Romania and Moldova. Explicitly, they translate into a grand theme of revolution, which is customary in the modern literary culture of Romania. By association, the Romance-speaking indigenous population of Moldova shares in the same tradition. Conclusively, Romanian and Moldovan readers of the ‘revolution’ motif in contemporary history come together on the meaning they assign to maintenance and forcible substitution of social order.

**Keywords:** Memory studies, cultural politics, revolution, Romania, Moldova

## 1. Mapping the Ground

I choose to read literary cultures as records of “how societies remember” (Connerton, 1989: 1). In view of that, the modern Romanian one is an inventory of the struggle to make the country and its people modern. The revolutionary bent of its public storytelling about the past is conspicuous. For the most part, regime overthrow and social change are traditional themes in various narrative instances of the national master story. Romanian patterns of self-identification come together in the language of dramatic social change and political makeover of the country. To a large extent, it is a matter of storytelling that relies on metaphors meant to foreground the notion of Romanian identity.

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Explicitly, history books as well as fiction are obviously committed to circulate and advertise the cultural politics of the nation state. For example, historical fictions were the mouthpiece of official historiography in Greater Romania. Likewise, early 1950s socialist realism made a case for the newly set up ‘popular republic’ and Soviet-style communism. Later on, Eugen Barbu’s fiction sang the praises of Nicolae Ceausescu and his autocratic regime. With the benefits of hindsight, it is fair to say that the novel genre commonly advocates for the use of ideology in aesthetic discourse. In other words, the alignment to the social order of the day seems to have always been high on the agenda of creative writing.

Actually, the skills of fiction writers structure the storytelling done in non-fictional narratives, for instance, in the discourse of political science. What is more, (literary) realism as a touchstone of cultural value in public communication is a buzzword of social sciences too. In the West, the story told by the establishment is that, lately, as a result of “materialist and world-weary realism [...] instead of exploring politics, social scientists began to explore society” (Alexander, 2006: 39). It is no surprise that the way culture and power make sense together as “cultural politics” (O’Sullivan, 2005: 5) comes across vividly in the study of political science as a field of social sciences. Current political science written in English provides plenty of anecdotal evidence for a change in the cultural politics of both Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The paradigm shift is apparent and proposed by the avowedly Europhile establishment of both countries in the name of alignment to the West. The reshuffle of national priorities is plain to see in the assertive language of public narratives about development, geopolitics, or security. Essentially, competing narratives of identity negotiate the ideas of weak-states (Moldova) and post-E.U. enlargement (Romania). Two issues are in the spotlight: the literary means of public storytelling about the past and the likely prospects of Westernization. It turns out that political science explores the way societies remember, not to mention the way they obviously forget (Connerton, 2009: 1). As a result, reading social sciences supplies the so-called memory studies with valuable insights into the workings of national self-identification in the literary culture of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Romania.

The rhetorical commonplaces of social science help native and foreign authors reach obviously dissimilar conclusions. The (Post-Soviet) Eurasian community, various instances of national self-identification, and European transnationalism are the fault lines that structure the debate about the locals in their relation to the East and the West. In not so many words, indigenous and Western readers of the ‘revolution’

motif in Romanian self-identification predictably resort to an organicist fallacy. Their discourse constantly looks for epoch-making events in the past (as well as the present) of the country. However, they reflect differently on the significance culturally attributed to forcible substitution of social order. Although they agree that most revolutions (except for the Communist one) brought Romanian identity closer to Western global society, the mostly celebratory mood of the natives (when it comes to their Europeanism) has no counterpart in the Western reading of the same events.

Ordinarily, nationalism is either acknowledged or implicit in various narrative instances of Romanian literary culture (literature, academic discourses, reporting on social reality, etc.). For instance, in the discourse of social science the rhetoric of self-identification provides evidence of the functional overlap between patriotism and civic engagement. The “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006: 1) of the nation needs the public service performed by cultural storytelling, which is believed to stem from the assumption that “minds work together in society” (Olick, 2011: 18). My choice of current, English-written accounts of local identity sheds light on what is, essentially, the self-serving story told by nationally-minded scholars. Since the very beginnings of the country’s literary culture, the issues of state-building and patriotic fervour have intertwined in academic discourses. Particularly the academics of the Old Kingdom and Greater Romania, “historical scholars – [...] Iorga for Romanians – became fathers of the nation” (Hutchinson, 2005: 51). I intend to prove that the legacy passed on to the present.

Indigenous and Western readings of national self-identification in Romania do not see eye to eye over this grand theme of revolution, i.e., over the ideological meanings assigned to social unrest, uprisings, etc. The natives construe insurrectional moments in their history as examples of systemic transformations, while the West perceives them as mostly an attempt to transform “the natural individual into the cultural individual [...] a task that will never be completed without violence” (Benjamin 1912: 59).

Irina Livezeanu’s 1995 seminal book *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania* delivers a comprehensive picture of Romanian identity narratives and of the way they were used by the nation state in order to achieve its ends. I rely on her work, which, alongside Maria Bucur’s *Eugenics and Modernization in interwar Romania* (2002), defines my take on the cultural politics of interwar Romania. All in all, the views of the above-mentioned authors are inherently sympathetic to the goals of

Romanian self-identification, though they depart from the home-grown nationalism of socialist Romania.

The assessment of the master story promoted by Greater Romania brings into play the same revolutionary rhetoric: “The unification of the Romanian lands in 1918 constituted a national revolution – despite the unquestionable linguistic, historical, and cultural ties existing among the Romanians” (Livezeanu, 1995: 7). At the time, the drive to achieve a sense of “national rebirth” (Bucur, 2002: 19) was the target of the policy carried out by the nation state. Anyway, the actual making of the state under German-born kings is the benchmark against which subsequent narratives of identity are devised in the mainstream of Romanian life. This Romanian “golden age” (Smith, 2009: 36) comes across as a time of turmoil rather than celebration in Irina Livezeanu’s influential reading of interwar “regionalism, nation building and ethnic struggle” (Livezeanu, 1995: 1). Conclusively, Greater Romania is the yardstick of the nation’s political success and underpins the language of self-identification in English-written social science too. These texts elaborate on the theses of Romanian historiography, mostly on ethnic continuity, national unity, and indigenous polities historically contiguous and documented in the literature of neighbouring medieval states. From the current perspective of the pro or anti-EU rhetoric, the 21<sup>st</sup> century discourse of political science considers notions of ‘modernization’ and ‘Europeanism’ that have always been synonymous in the mainstream of Romanian life. The stock theme of allegiance to Western values runs through modern Romanian history and translates into the rhetorical commonplace of revolution. By association, the Romance-speaking indigenous population of Moldova shares in the same tradition.

## **2. The Identity-Building Function of English-Written Social Science**

Since the foundation of the nation state, Romanian cultural politics has negotiated the ethos of revolution in scientific literature (history, sociology, etc.) as well as in the literary genres of the novel, memoir, etc. What it all comes down to is tracking down (an almost Marxist sense of) the continuous struggle to overthrow the existing social order and, implicitly, cultural paradigm. Everything started with the systemic transformation of Romanian society throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, insurrectional moments, popular revolts, feats of diplomatic manoeuvring, or military campaigns marked the becoming of Romanian lands and of their citizens. Once the Phanariot age (1711–1821) ended, the Oriental lifestyle and administration of the Danubian Principalities (the historical Moldova and Wallachia) were gradually Westernized. The 1848 Romanian revolution in the principalities led to their union in

1859 and the former Ottoman-ruled countries achieved formal independence in 1877. Romania gained the status of kingdom and Western recognition in 1881. Everything happened while foreign-educated elites built the nation state in accordance to European models (the French nation state comes to mind) and, for the most part, welcomed the German-born Prince/King, Carol I.

All these states of exception, conventionally known as revolutions, are romantic episodes in the history of the nation. They were won, lost, or betrayed and, reading Moldo-Romanian academic writing in political science, it feels safe to say that they make for the bulk of Romanian self-identification.

### *2.1. The Exceptional Romanian Scenario*

In the last decade of the 20th century, Romanian infatuation with the revolutionary spirit had an unexpected effect. Even if the language of Romanianism (i.e., Romanian nationalism) is largely an internal affair, the 1989 revolution unquestionably made it outside the borders. As far as the Western world is concerned, it seems that Romanians have managed to stamp their authority, better said their ethnonym, on each and every revolutionary action that has particularly bloody outcomes. Incidentally or not, the violent end of totalitarian regimes and, specifically, the death sentence of former leaders/dictators, have come to be known throughout the English-speaking world as the Romanian scenario. As expected, the coined phrase is a reaction to the only blood-soaked revolution in Eastern Europe, at the time of the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. Above all, the “violent overthrow of the Ceausescus in December 1989 and their summary execution on Christmas Day” (Wilson, 2005: 122) are summed up in the ‘Romanian scenario’.

It is safe to say that, once again, the lingering belief in a Romanian “exceptionalism” (Tismaneanu, 1997: 403) takes to the stage of history, this time as told from the Western point of view. The state of exception helps with national self-identification once more and has a habit of popping up at convenient times in Romanian history. If the ‘Romanian scenario’ is rather famous in the Western world, the narrative recollection of similar events is a common occurrence in the country’s literary culture, something deemed worthy of social science books too. The Romanian master story elaborates on the “traditional image” (Scholes, Phelan, Kellog, 2006: 27) of revolution, uprising, and social unrest. It is a common topos to remark that both the average Romanian and iconic national heroes have always worked to establish a new, better, social order. Although allegedly they all succeeded in doing so, it

comes as no surprise that, sooner or later, yet another hero is looking for the same old 'new, better, social order'.

My choice of primary sources should help the public better understand the teleological unfolding of national history in 21<sup>st</sup> century, English-written social science authored by Romanian and Moldovan scholars. Sebastian Vaduva and Petru Filip's "Governmental Administration and the Security of Romania in a Global Context" (2015), Dan Dungaciu's "Geopolitics and Security by the Black Sea: The Strategic Options of Romania and Republic of Moldova" (2015), and Igor Prisac's "Between Russia and the EU: The Sociopolitics of the Republic of Moldova-A Transdisciplinary Approach" (2015) exemplify the use made of classic Romanian historiography's rhetoric in current political science. There is one side effect of academic writing in political sciences: if several articles on the topic of Moldo-Romanian relations are read in sequence the narrative image of the revolution has the "meaning [of] a *motif*; insofar as it refers to the world of disembodied ideas and concepts its meaning is a *theme*" (Scholes, Phelan, Kellog, 2006: 26).

Indigenous self-identification seems to be the cornerstone of a story about impending disaster for the entire world. For now, the all-out conflict is averted but apocalypse looms in the background of an adversarial worldview. Essentially, such a reading of geopolitics shows that "if anything defines narrativity, it is precisely such an attitude: the one adopted when one puts forward information on events that have happened, could happen or should be prevented from happening" (Bal, 2007: 7). I mean that political science definitely retells what happened but mostly dispenses words of advice and warnings. Stripped to its essentials, the plot of Moldo-Romanian political science written in English is patterned on the story of Russian conquests and defeats throughout Eastern Europe. In view of that, the work of the authors above-mentioned provides anecdotal evidence of the way cultural politics is being reconfigured in two Eastern European sister states, Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

The concern with "Moldo-Romanian linguistic identity" (King, 2000:131) corroborates a theory of national designation that acknowledges not only the (virtually) ethnic tradition of historical Moldova but also the modern literary culture of the Romanian nation state. Namely, Moldovan scholars are bound to consider national self-identification as recorded in various narratives of Romanian literary culture, and eventually, as recorded in the master story of the one Orthodox, Romance-speaking East European nation. Besides, awareness of the literariness one language or another displays adds to the self-conscious



narrative of identity always present in nation-building. Narrativity even has a metafictional twist, which insistently points to the medium of the story rather than to the unfolding of the plot. The focus on “sociopolitical system’s self-organizations” (Prisac, 2015: 95) in both countries, as well as on the literal language games of politics in Moldova, discloses the infatuation with the ethos of systemic transformations in Moldo-Romanian political science.

The rhetoric of exceptionalism works on two levels. Firstly, there is a sequence of paradigm shifts in history, structured on the promise of substituting the existing social order. Such instances of social unrest, be they small-scale uprisings or popular revolts, are mostly known as revolutions. Namely, those of 1821 and 1848 are the first to be recorded by Romanian modern history. The first ended the so-called Phanariot age in the Danubian principalities and the latter attempted to pave the way for the union of Wallachia and Moldova. Next in line are the political union itself in 1859, and the year of 1881 when the newly established country was granted the status of kingdom. World War I and the short-lived glory of Greater Romania, the Popular Republic in the aftermath of World War II, and, last but not least, the ‘exceptional’ 1989 revolution are, most of the times, in the background of Romanian self-identification. Secondly, there is the belief that all the above-mentioned are authoritative statements of Romanian achievements, more or less singular in world history. The very idea of two contiguous Romance-speaking countries, alone among their neighbours in South-Eastern Europe, validates the contention that the nation is worthy of notice. However, it is also a bone of contention, which becomes apparent in the exchange between my primary sources too. Speaking one’s native tongue stands for political allegiance, and the events of early 1990s in the Republic of Moldova prove that “at that stage the Moldovan society becomes divided into several groups: the ones who opt for Romania, the ones who opt for Russia, [...], and the ones who want to maintain the *status quo*.” (Prisac, 2015: 85–86). Anyway, both the language and the message of reporting on Moldova come to show the divisive nature of current cultural politics pursued by various Russian and Romanian institutions in the country. For instance, former president Traian Basescu’s take on removing the Black Sea “from the sole influence of the Russian Federation” (Dungaciu, 2015: 45) was aimed at Moldova too. One way or another, Eastern Moldova has everything to do with the former Danubian principalities and the very notion of ‘security by the Black Sea’ seems to entail the present day Republic of Moldova.

The deep-seated mistrust of Russian imperialism that permeates Romanian cultural history is conspicuous in the nation’s current political

science. Explicitly, I feel that English-written, 21<sup>st</sup>-century Moldo-Romanian political science gives evidence concerning the Russian menace, as perceived by the indigenous elite even prior to the 1812 annexation of Eastern Moldova. Ever since, the desire of exposing Russian empire-building for what it really is makes instant sense in the mainstream of Romanian life: “my father made it clear to my young mind what Bessarabia was and how the Russians had taken it from us, as they were much more powerful than we were”<sup>1</sup> (Rosetti, 1920; 1921: 10). The memoirs and fiction of Radu Rosetti, one of the “pioneers of Romanian societal history” (Kellogg, 1990: 25) look back on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and make this very point. Although according to some Western scholars “Russian occupation [...] modernized Romania” (Barkey, 1997: 111), the native literary culture remembers the Russian troops stationed in the principalities for entirely different reasons. Storytelling about Russian military presence on the territory of contemporary Romania dwells on what is, essentially, the colonial intent of Moscow. This is also acknowledged by the entry for ‘Romania’ in the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, which says that the Danubian principalities, prior to their union, were nothing less than “Russian protectorates”.

Moldo-Romanian political science quotes such anecdotal evidence that Romanian literary culture has provided the average Romanian with, ever since late 19<sup>th</sup> century, if not earlier. The way the local society remembers the past is obvious in the choice over the subject matter to be translated into English versus the topics never touched upon with the English-speaking world. For instance, today’s political science shares with early 20<sup>th</sup>-century, English-written, documentary literature about the kingdom of Romania (also authored by natives for the Anglo-American public) the same identity-building function that hinges upon the topos of revolution. Essentially, Romanian self-identification is steeped in the tradition of ‘resentment’ nationalism. Much like Liah Greenfeld’s reading of French and English cross-cultural exchange in history, Romanian and Russian confrontation on Bessarabian soil has led to a rhetoric of recrimination, which builds “the ideological foundations of [...] national consciousness” (Greenfeld, 1992: 180). Facing the Eastern threat, contemporary authors would have modern Romanians follow the glorified example of Finland in World War II and fight back on behalf of their ancestors who stood up to Russian aggression in the past. Although phrased as a question, the meaning of

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<sup>1</sup> My translation of “tata îmi lămuri pentru înțelesul minții mele ce era Basarabia și cum ni-o răpise rușii fiindcă erau mai tari mult decât noi”.

the address is unmistakable: “Romania – A Black Sea Finland?” (Dungaciu, 2015: 39). Finally, public storytelling spells out one and the same reason for indigenous misgivings about Russia: “Six times during the nineteenth century did the armies of the Czar invade and batten upon the Rumanian lands” (Lupu, 1919: 116). Basically, Bessarabia is the consequence of such expansionist policies, the name itself being extended “over all this territory” from the “southernmost” (Mitrasca, 2002: 10) parts of historical Moldova.

The theses of Romanian historiography are recognizable in the discourse of present Moldo-Romanian political science. “The historical development of the Republic as a state is closely linked, both culturally and linguistically, to its neighbour, Romania” (Prisac, 2015: 85). The cultural practice of deciding what is essentially Romanian, Russian or Moldovan boils down to either ethnic or historical rights to one province or another.

## 2.2. *Conflicting Emotions: Capitalist Atlanticism versus Socialist Eurasianism*

An inescapably bipolar world, made up out of parent-states and contemporary colonies surrounds, mostly with hostile intentions, the Moldovan polity. Romania’s “double membership—of the North Atlantic Alliance and, post-2007, of the European Union” (Dungaciu, 2015: 24) means that not only the area at large, but also Moldo-Romanian relations are shaped by the clash between “capitalist Atlanticism” and “socialist Eurasianism” (Dungaciu, 2015: 44)

The resilience of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century, nation state ideology is manifest in current political discourses and, unreservedly, in the partisan exchange between nationally-minded political scientists who assess geopolitics and security in Eastern Europe. On the one side of the fence, there is the Russian “geopolitician Aleksandr Dugin” (Dungaciu, 2015: 44). His words are deemed revealing of whatever his country has in store for NATO and the West. Simply put, he is portrayed as the mouthpiece of the Euro-Asian community that opposes the EU, and is currently in the making: “the Russian Federation, in turn, becomes an attractor and, simultaneously, an alternative, or secondary, entrostat” (Prisac, 2015: 100). Like in all good stories, at stake is something plain to see: the control over former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe, with the Republic of Moldova listed among Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine (Dungaciu, 2015: 39). Moreover, the trouble is not necessarily the Russian other, as much as the “indecisiveness to set the border wide enough so as to include peoples and nations that would like to be part of this area” (*Ibidem*: 24).

On the other, the simultaneously Europhile and pro-American political scientists of the “Euro-Atlantic frontier space” (*Ibidem*: 48) have their say on what it means to be “at the forefront of Euro-Atlantic expansion” (Vaduva; Thomas, 2015: vi) into the ex-Soviet bloc. The language of political science comes across as ‘offensive’, that is to say it conveys the transfer of democracy to the East and also succeeds in offending the enemy. The South-Eastern border of NATO and of the EU (the eastern border of Romania, i.e., the river Prut) conveys meanings that are transferred to the whole of Eastern Europe and, particularly to the Moldo-Romanian area. Effectively, this should explain the current state of affairs in the former Soviet republic, which is in one of the “areas raising claims [...] over, or of belonging to, a clearly defined area and to an inclusion within a certain border to which they do not, as of yet, have access” (Dungaciu, 2015: 25). It comes with the territory of English-written social science that all the above-mentioned authors necessarily take sides. English is the meeting ground between Moldo-Romanian and Russian perspectives on the Balkans and the Black Sea.

Moreover, the prospect of becoming “Russian *colonies*” (Dungaciu, 2015: 49), as it was the case with the Danubian principalities prior to 1859, is openly mentioned: 21<sup>st</sup>-century, Eastern (former Soviet) ‘weak states’ fit the profile of potential Russian colonies. The cautious wording of the issue by Igor Prisac contrasts with the straightforward approach favoured by Sebastian Vaduva and Petru Filip. In their words, “the challenges and provocations of Europeanization” (Vaduva; Filip, 2015: 17) in Romania deal with the “quiet desperation and apathy” (*Ibidem*, 12), which engulfed the nation in the aftermath of the 1989 revolution, once “it became painfully real how distant Romania was from Europe and how difficult it would be to catch up” (*Ibidem*). However, Romania’s proximity to central Europe meant that its “informational entropy was lower in comparison with that of the Republic of Moldova” (Prisac, 2015: 86). In other words, the Russian grip on the country was strong enough to cause trouble the way it failed to do in Romania.

All my primary sources read the overlap between ‘Atlanticist’ and ‘Euroasian’ politics in the Moldo-Romanian area in a contrastive manner. The ex-Soviet Republic and the ex-Eastern Bloc country are regarded as a litmus test of Western commitment to combat Moscow’s current policy of empire-building. Alongside other regional players, each of the two countries exemplifies “(geo)political events—whether evolutions or stagnations—carried out around the Black Sea” (Dungaciu, 2015: 24). They come together as opposites whose “europeanization would be the measure of the extent to which domestic/internal changes were triggered by” (*Ibidem*: 40) capitalist Atlanticism. As far as

Moldova is concerned, the looming prospect of colonial subjection to Moscow, i.e., the return to former Tsarist and Soviet circumstances, is either feared or relished by 21<sup>st</sup> century Moldovan citizens. The conclusion reached is that the present day independent republic is “still yet to solve its natural, historical and linguistic identity issues, and bears the geopolitical influence of both the West, and the East” (Prisac, 2015: 86).

Coming to terms with the past means that Moldovan contemporary history translates into a sequence of insurrectional moments, i.e., into the conflicting emotions brought about by notions of “change”, “evolution”, “development” (*Ibidem*: 87). Everything “start[ed] before the declaration of independence” (*Ibidem*: 84), and in Igor Prisac’s words, the reader finds out that “the first substantial self-organization [...] undertaken at the time of the Soviet system’s collapse and of the Republic’s gaining a democratic development pathway” (*Ibidem*: 90) is definitely something of a revolution. From that moment on, “the Moldovan socio-political system’s restructuring and developing [which] was not bottom-up but top-to-bottom” (*Ibidem*: 93) has undergone quite a number of “considerable transformations at the beginning of the twenty-first century” (*Ibidem*: 90). Increasingly, “the history of Romanian governance (1989–present day)” (Vaduva; Filip, 2015:10) is a story that openly addresses the common heritage of the two countries and the foreign policy of Bucharest considers “the Black Sea, and implicitly, the Republic of Moldova, a target of maximal interest for Romania” (Dungaciu, 2015: 29).

To cut a long story short, “Bucharest’s shift in paradigm regarding its relations to the Republic of Moldova, in particular terms, and to the Black Sea, in general terms, must take place. There was perhaps never a more pressing need for long-term projects” (Dungaciu, 2015: 48).

### **3. Concluding on the Revolutionary Rhetoric of Moldo-Romanian Political Science**

In 2015, Moldo-Romanian political science remembers the past in an antagonistic manner, which essentially is meant to settle old scores. The adversarial worldview of nation state politics lies at the core of Romanian self-identification and 21<sup>st</sup> century academic writing in social sciences serves the greater good of society. The choice over the subject matter to be translated into English versus other topics, never touched upon with the English-speaking world, reveals the rhetorical commonplaces of Romanian historiography. As recorded in the discourse of social sciences, Romanian cultural politics still argues for a theory of ethnic agency that is steeped in the romantic tradition of the biological movement toward the final end of a 20th century nation state.

Of course, the ‘becoming’ happened over a time whose duration is determined by revolutionary shifts and changes. These paradigm shifts had the purpose of emulating examples based on Western values. For instance, the grand French-made model of the state has always been considered in terms of unity, equality, etc., since the reign of Al. I. Cuza, if not earlier. Basically, the rhetoric of alignment to the West is, somewhat redundantly, even now constantly at play in the making of a Romanian identity that has gained the recognition of E. U. accession. Westernizing the Moldo-Romanian identity has to do with a condition of social, political, or religious otherness obvious in the claim of aboriginality made by ethnic Romanians by means of their literary culture and national tradition.

Finally, it is safe to say that the Romanian master story features an eagerness to take up revolutionary challenges. English-written political science is a vehicle of national self-identification that dwells on such particular instances of social unrest, revolts and revolutions. The national narrative seems to hinge on working out which event of the past is the most important for current adjustments to the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century Europeanization. The characteristic spirit of the address is to claim that there is plenty to choose from, which should make the case of Romanian fortitude and sense of purpose throughout history.

The above-mentioned reference frame is plain to see in the writing of Sebastian Vaduva, Petru Filip, Dan Dungaciu, and Igor Prisac. They provide insight into Romanian self-identification: the ‘exceptional’ 1989 Romanian revolution is metonymic for the Romanian narrative quest for identity. The landmarks of Romanian memory make sense to the reading public, and are largely exemplified in the discourse of political science, which makes the most out of the traditional revolutionary theme and consequent national self-identification. The Romanian literary language itself is proof that both the medium and the message of influential public narratives have fostered a sense of identity fond of indulging in talk about revolutions. Much like in mainstream Romanian literary culture, shifts of power and systemic transformations are always at stake in Moldo-Romanian political science, particularly when it comes to insurrectional moments and their translation into English.

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## The 20<sup>th</sup> century – conformism and dissent in artistic technique, the opposition between tradition and innovation

Cosmin Paulescu \*

### **Abstract:**

This article presents the rapid changes in art that took place at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to scientific and technological progress: the electricity, the telegraph, the radio, later on the television, atomic physics, petrochemical products, plastic, computers, and so on. My analysis draws on how fast culture reinvented itself through technology, the conquests of the Industrial Revolution being an important stimulus for artists' imagination that fought against tradition. It is noted, therefore, in the first decades of the twentieth century a new sense of experimentation emphasized in art. The transformations that materials and artistic media undergo are radical, the artistic techniques used so far (painting, sculpture, drawing, architecture) being affected by “loans” coming from the utility area, the non – aesthetic area. This article focuses on the changes of artistic technique and mediums invented by the artists of Cubism, Dada Movement, Surrealism and Constructivism.

**Keywords:** material, technique, Cubism, Dada Movement, Surrealism and Constructivism, ready made, collage, assemblage

The twentieth century, and more precisely the first decade was marked by a strong idealism and by the belief that there is still a lot to discover, to explore and Art can find the necessary metaphors/ forms of expression as a means of explaining a radically changed culture. The industrial revolution, born in the very eighteenth century, finds its climax in the next century throughout the transformations imposed by the discovery of steam, steel, railways and so on and twentieth century is represented by faster and spectacular changes thanks to advances in science and technology: electricity, telegraph, telephone, radio and later television, atomic physics, petrochemicals, plastics, computers etc.

“The modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture” – Jackson Pollock (F. V. O’Connor, 1967: 79–81)<sup>1</sup>.

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The rapidity with which the culture was reinvented by technology seems supernatural. These “stimulus” provoked the artists’ imagination in that period, who rebelled against technical limitations of tradition. It is noted, therefore, in the first decades of the twentieth century a new sense of experimentation emphasized in art. The transformations that materials and artistic media undergo are radical, the artistic techniques used so far (painting, sculpture, drawing, architecture) being affected by “loans” coming from the utility area, the non – aesthetic area.

“A new form of art appears not only in order to express new content, but also in order to replace an old form, which has already lost artistic value. [...] Art is a way to experience the artistic quality of an object, the object is not important” (Shklovsky, 1973: 48–72).

Technologies developed for utilitarian purposes are often easily adapted to new forms of art (*collage, assemblage, ready-made*) while traditional artistic techniques – painting, drawing, sculpture – conquer by the variety of media and mediums used. Collages and assemblages contain the so-called ephemera that is printed materials that have “age limit”: tickets, leaflets, promotional materials, receipts, product labels, badges, invoices, posters, postcards, and so on.

These things being cheaper products, they have a short life due to acidic materials that compose them, so it is a challenge to preserve the achievements of the turn of the century.

This chapter will pursue the innovations brought by the artists of the first half of the twentieth century in their achievements, both two-dimensional and three-dimensional as well. The traditional support though, either paper or cloth, had the fewest alterations made by artists, for it was invaded by new materials, recent discoveries, becoming an area of creative sensations unknown so far.

Cubists were the first to introduce the conquests of technical progress both in form, giving modernity through analysis and synthesis, and in the medium too, through their searches in the area of its materiality, opacity and consistency, mixing oil paints with sand, gypsum, ash, and so on. Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Juan Gris are the inventors of this “substance” which helped them achieve the expression of a “new reality”, of a “new space”. In this way the cubists succeeded in energizing the canvas, illustrating with clarity the rhythm of life at the beginning of the twentieth century.

I will quickly review the most notable moments of those changes in art, starting with the spring of 1912, when Pablo Picasso created a collage in his work entitled *Still Life with Chair Caning*, in which,

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<sup>1</sup> F. V. O’Connor, 1967, a remarkable interview that shows the artist’s genius.

amongst the compositional elements (lemons, oysters, glass, pipe and newspaper) the artist stuck a piece of oilcloth that had the design pattern of a cane chair, indicating its presence without applying the traditional methods.

Pablo Picasso, by introducing this element (and others later) of mass production, opened art towards the industry of the present. In September of that year, Georges Braque was to create the first Cubist *papier collé*, a collage made of pasted papers: *Fruit dish and Glass*.

In the summer of 1912, Braque and Picasso were working in Sorgues in the south of France. Braque later recalled that one day, while wandering around the nearby city of Avignon, he noticed a roll of faux bois wallpaper displayed in a shop window. Braque waited until Picasso departed for Paris before incorporating pieces of the mechanically printed, fake wood grain paper into a series of charcoal drawings. These fragments from the real world add significant meaning to the fictive world of the picture: they can be interpreted as the front drawer of the table (onto which Braque drew a circular knob), the floor, or the wall of the bar. This collage marked a turning point in Cubism. Braque later said “After having made the *papier collé*, I felt a great shock and it was an even greater shock to Picasso when I showed it to him. (<http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/view?oid=490612>, accessed at 19.09.2015)

Preferred materials in this technique were strips of newspaper, wrapping paper, wallpaper. Braque uses gouache, chalk, newspaper and pressboard in works such as *Mandolin, violin and newspaper* (1913), *Mandolin* (1914). The collage, as its author defines it, involves the assembly of disparate substances and materials, involving the insertion (in a given context) a different entity.

“We sought to express reality with materials we did not know how to handle” (Sabartes, 1948)<sup>2</sup>.

Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Juan Gris and others have sought to emphasize the material density of their “paintings”, experimenting by adding elements coming from utilitarian area, mixing oil colors with sand, sawdust, filings and pasting on the surface of the canvas playing cards, business cards, tickets, packages of cigarettes, labels of mass consuming products and other “found” objects, in such a manner that these collages can be called “relief” or “painting – objects” that can be hung on the wall. Juan Gris goes even further, for his work *The Lavabo* (1912) is a collage incorporating a fragment of a mirror in the center of the composition, considering that no painting technique might not have its reflective qualities, so Art is reality.

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<sup>2</sup> The different techniques of Picasso’s collages of appear for the first time described in detail in this volume.

“We drew with scissors, adhesives, plaster, burlap, paper and other new instruments and materials; we made collages and montages” confesses Hugo Ball (Richter, 1966)<sup>3</sup>.

Dadaist collages, subsequent to the Cubist ones, were much more focussed towards a descriptive manner of expression, offering an even wider range of items deriving from mass consumer, present on two-dimensional surfaces.

In his collages, Francis Picabia adds various materials to paintings, such as feathers, matches, hair pins, sticks of bamboo, etc., as can be seen in works such *Feathers* (1921) in which over oil painting he overlapped feathers and sticks of bamboo arranged so as to create images of palm trees or trees with lush foliage.

In Hanover, the development of „Dada” movement faced the existence of a singular character, the painter and poet Kurt Schwitters, who was considered, rightly, the symbol of the individualist and utopian spirit of Dada artists in Lower Saxony. Refusing, in 1919, all accepted forms and traditions, Schwitters compose a self aesthetic founded on replacing the noble materials of painting with discarded objects, his paintings containing data of the worldly objects would be invaded, gradually, by all movements of artistic and intellectual emancipation from the early twentieth century.

Under the auspices of the “Der Sturm” magazine and together with other Dadaists, Kurt Schwitters presents to the public of Berlin his first relief – paintings (the *Merzbilder* cycles) expanding, in this way, their conception of “total art” together with theater and poetry and, especially, architectural *Merzbau* forms, whose constituent parts are juxtaposed in an automatic dictation derived from the fact that the image arising in consciousness instantly produce other ones, similar to onirical revelations. I shall return in the following lines with a broader presentation of Kurt Schwitters, because his artistic personality created a milestone in the evolution of art in terms of the ephemeral and durable means of expression.

Another unique work in terms of the visual appearance on the two-dimensional support is *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, created by Marcel Duchamp between 1915–1923. He relies rather on conceptual achievement of the work, on mental perception than on the visual one. “My search [...] is to find a way of expressing myself without painting, without being a writer [...] and also to produce

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<sup>3</sup> A comprehensive edition about Dada art especially from the author’s perspective who, it is well known, was linked to this revolutionary movement in European and American culture and mentality.

something that it is a project of my own. [...] The mixture between idea and visual representation interested me as a technique because it is about a new technique” (Richter).

The Surrealists also approached this technique in order to achieve a fantastic dream like narration. Max Ernst’s first creations were illogical compositions such as *Here everything still floats* (1920), in which the artist joins clippings of photos of insects, fish, anatomical drawings, in order to suggest the multiple identity of the illustrated elements.

Max Ernst is the inventor of the *frottage*<sup>4</sup> technique which is well-known that means printing an area slightly into relief (leaves, wood, cloth with different grains) by overlaying a sheet of paper and rubbing it with a pencil, of the *grattage*<sup>5</sup> technique in which the *frottage* is transferred to oil painting by scratching the painted surface and of *decalcomania*, a technique that produces the transfer of an image from a canvas to another, in order to create surreal fantastic images. Another technical invention of Surrealism is the *fumage*, created by Wolfgang Paalen in the late 30s, in which the image is created by the movement of a candle under a sheet of paper and this shows that there is a tendency of Surrealism to focus more on the materials used by the artist. This trend is represented by “automatic” drawing technique practiced by Juan Miro, Paul Klee and André Masson, in which these artists let the pen or drawing instrument slide freely, without following a certain plan. André Masson tried to achieve the same result in painting by drawing a network of lines with an adhesive substance on the canvas and then adding color by applying different layers of colored sand (*Battle of Fishes*, 1926)

Staying in the area of two-dimensional supports, one must also mention the photomontages created by the Dadaists, works that clearly illustrate the changes that mass media materials of that period underwent (manifests, magazines, posters, book covers, photographs, newspapers, and so on), cropped and juxtaposed in challenging compositions.

“We were the first to use photography in order to create totally separated elements from the spatial and material point of view, a new unit to illustrate a new visual and conceptual image” Raoul Hausmann (Richter, *ibidem*).

Remarkable examples of this technique were created by Raoul Hausmann (*Gurk*, 1918, *Tatlin at home*, 1920), John Heartfield (*Dada-Fotomontage*, 1920), Max Ernst (*Selfportrait*, 1920), George Grosz (*Daum marries her pedantic automaton “George”*, 1920), Hannach Höch (*The Beautiful Girl*, 1920, *Dada-Danse*, 1919–1921).

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<sup>4</sup> Frottage is the French word for rubbing.

<sup>5</sup> Scraping

However, the most important mutations that art undertook from the field of the industrial product, of the non-aesthetic zone, developed clearly with the invention of the *assemblages*, the constructions, the ready made or *objet trouvé* that have revolutionized artistic forms starting from 1911. At that time, the futurist Umberto Boccioni anticipated the targets of Dada movement of transforming the spirit and the artistic techniques by using new materials such as cardboard, wire, pieces of wood, metal, and so on. Remarkable in this respect is the work entitled *Horse* (1911), made in metal and cardboard, to which he added painting. Very interesting is the way in which Boccioni used the quality of the material in order to describe volumes, the metal (sheet metal) describing round shapes and curves and the cardboard for creating sharp angles and straight lines. Yet nothing compares to the extremely rich assemblages created by the Dadaist Kurt Schwitters.

Naming his artistic products *Mertzbild* (a nonsense term that comes from the second syllable of the German word *Kommertz*), Schwitters gathers and composes any kind of useless (for others) material, but artistic substance for him. Therefore, in the assemblage entitled *Mathias*, 1919, amongst labels and paper clips with this name, the artist includes in the composition fragments of ropes, sticks of wood, wire nets, can caps whom rectilinear and curved forms contribute to the balance of the composition. *Mertzbild*, 1919 was achieved by joining and juxtaposing of cards, pieces of sackcloth, sticks of wood, string, buttons, vinyl and many other objects, and at the center right, the artist writes on a cardboard his name and his address. But the most famous artwork created by Kurt Schwitters is the well known *Mertzbau* (*mertz* construction), a three-dimension assemblage conceived as a *Cathedral of erotic misery* of everyday life. For 13 years (1923–1936) he collected all kinds of objects until had no place to fill. This magnificent work is perhaps an example of „installation” *avant-la-lettre*, in which every object becomes part of the artwork. With impressive (3.5 x 2 x 1 m) dimensions, the assemblage comprised of a column traversing the two floors of the building, the whole house being actually “crossed up and down by passages like mine shafts, by crevices created artificially along floors, by snail-shaped tunnels, all those linking the cellar and the peak of the construction” – Hans Arp (Dachy, 1994). In this maze of tunnels there were wafers called “grottos” where Schwitters placed candles to light the construction, and each cave contained objects collected by the artist over the years: the treasure of the Nibelungs with thousands of shiny objects, a cave dedicated to Wolfgang Goethe decorated with a “leg” of the poet embodying a relic, “pencils totally consumed by poetry” – a corner dedicated to Luther, a brothel with a dame with three

legs designed by Hannah Höch and in another niche a box containing a doll aimed to illustrate the tomb of Saint Cecilia.

Kurt Schwitters created collages from almost anything that fell into his hands: tram tickets, envelopes, processed cheese or cigarettes wrap – everything that was thrown – and he raised them to the rank of art. Kurt Schwitters is the first of the artists who established the installation of useless objects in his own house, and legend has it that the floor where he lived collapsed not during war bombing, but caused by the weight of things collected over the years. There was in Kurt Schwitters' art a continuous interaction of different forms of expression and this happened at a high level of achievement.

In this respect, the artist, unique in its kind, affirmed: “My name Merz” and writes: “Everything an artist spits is art” ([www.schwitters-stiftung.de](http://www.schwitters-stiftung.de), 2001)<sup>6</sup>.

Without exceeding the limits, I can say that Kurt Schwitters embodied the history of modern art. The artist painted, created collages, assemblages and was interested in architecture and urban environment. He was one of the great typographers of his time, high rank representative of concrete poetry, he was a theater writer and theorist, contributing to the differentiation of these art forms in order to reach the total realization of the artwork. Painting leads him to collages and these transform, progressively, the poetry which, in turn, gives impulses to the composition and graphic texts. Addressing the plastic or literary work of Kurt Schwitters, I am impressed by the contrast and the apparent relationship between negligence and great formal accuracy.

Unfortunately, only the memories of his contemporaries and some photos can be testimony of this artwork, for this grandiose installation was destroyed in the war.

Representative for the Dada movement, Raoul Hausmann should also be noted with a significant work from the point of view of importing elements of everyday life in art: *The spirit of our time*, created in 1921. It is an assemblage based on a wooden sculpture – a masculine head “enriched” with objects that suggest the action of measurement: “the objects are common devices such as a ruler and parts of a typewriter and watch. They are devices of measurement and information. The tools attach to the wood like they are a part of the human head. The ruler curves down the forehead as if it no different from the skin. There are instruments stuck to the sides seemingly replacing the ears. The head has been transformed into its own form of

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.schwitters-stiftung.de/english/bio-ks2.html>, accessed at 11.10. 2013, Kurt and Ernst Schwitters Foundation, Artist Biography



instrument” (Elger, Taschen, 2004: 38). The title of the work is significant for all of the issues of that time, a kind of *Carpe Diem* at the beginning of the century, illustrating the concept of the transience of life transposed in this collage by the presence of the travel glass.

Marcel Iancu also used (at the same dadaist period) any useless object, these *objets trouvés* representing the “substance” of his assemblages – *Construction* no. 3, 1917, being a mixture of various materials such as wire, yarn thread, fragments of pottery, plaster and so on. The fact that they still exist demonstrate their durability, but the artists of those times counted on their disintegration more than on preserving and exposing them in museums as happens today.

The New York group of the Dada movement is represented by two great names of the XXth century art: Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray.

Marcel Duchamp is the one who revolutionized the artistic means and techniques by inventing the ready-made. Through the ready-made, Marcel Duchamp brought criticism to manual and “retinal” artwork, canceling, it attacking it. The ready-mades are actually common objects which acquire aesthetic value by the simple selection of the artist, metamorphosing them, sacralizing them (mediation.centrepompidou.fr, 2004).

In 1913 was created the first *ready-made*, *Bicycle wheel* (the original was lost, but there is still a version the author made in 1951): “In 1913 I had the happy idea of placing a bicycle wheel on a kitchen chair and watched it spins” (Richter, *op. cit.*).

After that follows an entire series of *ready-mades* created both of singular objects, and of commercial images (advertisements, postcards, posters) that he “adorned” with other small objects obtaining those “helped ready-mades” as Marcel Duchamp called them. Therefore, in 1914, he bought a reproduction depicting an evening winter landscape to which adds two pharmaceutical pills – one red and one yellow – on the horizon line, naming the work *Pharmacy*.

In 1915, Marcel Duchamp “chooses” a snow shovel writing on its tail the phrase “anticipating wrist fracture”. This process of “subjectivating” the objects thrown or purchased in small shops of household products, continue with the creation of two of the most famous works by Marcel Duchamp: *Bottle Dryer* (or *Bottle Rack*) and *The Fountain* (*The Urinal*). The rejection to exhibit *The Fountain* received from the committee of the Society of Independent Artists demonstrates that the famous *Salon des Independants* does not honor the status of aspiring social recognition. Photographed at Alfred Stieglitz’s studio in front of the canvas of American painter Marsden Hartley, *The Fountain* achieves an “almost” official status as an object with artistic



value and the “R. Mutt case” being hotly debated by the press. This work will be the *piece de resistance* in most of his exhibitions, Marcel Duchamp later gave another functionality by arranging a bouquet of flowers inside.

In 1919, Marcel Duchamp created for his American friend, collector Walter Arensberg, another ready-made entitled *Paris Air (Air de Paris)*:

I was in Paris at that time and was looking for something I could bring as a gift to Arensberg in California, so I went to the pharmacy and asked <Can you give me a vial (ampoule) but devoid of its serum, to seal it back and what it contains to be the air of Paris, Air de Paris!> The pharmacist has made it and I brought my gift of Arensberg in California, giving it the title *Fifty cubic centimeters of Paris air* (Dachy, *op. cit.*).

Together with Arensberg created *A secret noise*, 1917, an object formed by two brass plates that could be screwed one into another, catching a ball of yarn in the middle. Arensberg put something in the ball of thread without telling Marcel Duchamp, so that after screwing, when stirred, the object emitted an interior noise.

Regarding the „helped ready-mades”, most famous work is, without any doubt, *LHOOQ /Mona Lisa with moustache*, 1919, Duchamp decides to draw a curled mustache and a go-tee on the da Vinci’s portrait of Gioconda, following the satirical spirit of Dada artists. Hans Richter, in his volume about Dada art, explains the definition of this type of *ready-made* by a quote by Marcel Duchamp: “Since color tubes are manufactured and ready-made produced, we must conclude that all the paintings in the world are ‘helped ready –mades’”.

Creating the ready-mades, Marcel Duchamp emphasizes the antinomy between art and the uniqueness of *ready-made* technique: “take a painting by Rembrandt and instead of contemplating it simply use it as an ironing board. Iron the clothes over it and so it becomes a reciprocal *ready-made*” (Dachy, *op. cit.*).

*Air de Paris* is the last one of the *ready-mades*, Marcel Duchamp setting aside this technique for a long period of time, and it was only after 1940 when he recreated *ready-mades* when he “composed” *Box in a Suitcase/ La Boîte en Valise*. This work is, actually, a portable museum of all Duchamp’s *ready-mades*, containing small replicas of those, the artist initially creating a “de luxe” edition of the suitcase in 20 copies. This work is an artistic resume of Marcel Duchamp’s life, elaborated carefully and sacredly towards the ephemeral legacy of the materials used.

Flirting with Surrealism between 1935–1945, Marcel Duchamp conceived an assemblage – installation for The International Exhibition of Surrealism in Paris in 1938. Salvador Dali was also there, present

with a work in the same technique: the visitors were greeted at the entrance of the exhibition with the assemblage entitled *Rainy Taxi*, 1938, which was actually a taxi car with holes in the ceiling and filled with rainwater and inside with mannequins and living snails. Inside the gallery, Marcel Duchamp lays on the pavement a thick layer of dry leaves and 4 beds, one of them being situated near a water pool and hundreds of charcoal bags were hanging from the ceiling. The only light source was a lamp used by mine workers. Visitors were given flashlights to help them see something.

Over the last 20 years of his life (the end of the '40 until 1968 when he died), Marcel Duchamp created his last major work, which remained, unfortunately, unfinished: *Given/ Étant donnés* composed of two parts *The Waterfall* and *The Illuminating Gas*. This work provides, through two small holes in a wooden door, the image of the “enigma” Marcel Duchamp and also of that series of *Boxes/ Suitcases* in which he presents the most important of his works, a sort of mini-museums to promote his creations.

Man Ray – painter, photographer, film maker – also stands up by the numerous technical innovations that he arrived at completion in various mediums. His association with Duchamp is obvious in the creation of *ready-mades*, but as some of the works of Marcel Duchamp were made simply by their de-contextualization (*Bottle Dryer*, *The Fountain*, *The Pharmacy*), Man Ray’s power of invention manifested itself by any possible technique in order to transform useful objects around him in things without any utility. Among the most famous are: *The Gift*, 1921 – an iron on the sole of which Ray stuck a row of spines, *Broadwalk* 1917 – which is a surface like a chessboard on which the artist adds a kind of buttons linked by pieces of string suggesting walkway routes, and not least *The Riddle or The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse*, 1920, which is a photo assemblage. Suggesting the fact that Isidore Ducasse was hiding his identity under the name of *Count of Lotreamount*, this work was the climax of the transience of the artistic gesture in my opinion, and also the locking the concept of artistic product, ideas took further by well known land artist Christo. In this case, Man Ray hides an object (later he revealed that it was a sewing machine) under a cloth bag, closely tied with a string, which he would later destroy after having photographed it, perhaps in order to let enigma still alive and to play once again with the ambivalence and double meanings whose master was Isidore Ducasse. In 1920 dates the first *objet trouvé* entitled *The 8th Street* in memory of his birthplace: a can smashed by a car, but also the first “air sculpture” – *Obstruction* – made of wood hangers hung from each other.

In 1923 creates *Object to be destroyed* (which was even shot at in 1957 by the anti-dada protesters) which is, in fact, a metronome with a photograph of an eye attached to its swinging arm. Another innovation dates also in 1921 and represents a new photographic technique by exposing to light various objects laid on photographic paper conceiving the so-called “rayograms” in order to create surreal visions.

Another American, Joseph Cornell was noted for the concreteness of its surrealist objects. He created *The Box* as a storage system for different elements of the surrounding world (terrestrial and celestial maps, tubes, mirrors, clocks, cones, caps, wine glasses or small drawers with red sand) similar to the Insectarium for school. Remarkable is the object *The Egypt of Miss Cléo de Merode: elementary course of Natural History* created in 1940, which shows itself as an ancient and wonderful cosmetic box with small bottles stacked in the circular holes of the interior decorated with marbled wallpaper. Each container includes one attribute of Egypt: sand, wheat, rolls of paper called “Nile snakes”, pearls, and so on. *Celestial Navigation*, another work by Joseph Cornell, is a shadow box made of wood, plaster, painted earplugs, eyeglasses, metal, nails, paper collage, tempera and stained glass.

Salvador Dali’s work *The lobster Telephone* subscribes to the same tendency of achieving “strange”, “unreal” objects. Created in 1936, the phone has the receiver replaced by a painted plaster replica of a lobster.

*Bull’s head*, 1942, is one of the few *ready-mades* created by Pablo Picasso, in which he assembled the saddle and the handlebars of a bicycle in order to look like a head with horns, and later in 1945 he finds a burner stove whose shape correspond to his affinities to prehistoric goddesses of fertility, he placed it standing up, becoming *Venus Goddess of Gas*.

Strongly influenced by Max Ernst’s personality, Meret Oppenheim was one of the most important female artists of Surrealism. The most famous and, perhaps, the most durable of all is *Object/ Breakfast in fur*, 1936, artwork depicting a cup on a saucer with a spoon next to it, all covered with fur. The cult of the surrealists towards the object oscillates between extravagance and simplicity, between unreal and emphasized sexuality.

I left at the end the Constructivism simply because it had a short life (1916–1925) as an artistic movement in Russia, the artists continuing their works abroad. One of the targets of this movement was the creation of abstract sculptures for the industrialized society, pioneering the juxtaposing of materials such as wood, glass, plastic and steel, the first works of this kind were created by Vladimir Tatlin. As will be seen, the remaining elements after the end of Constructivism are many and they

strongly influenced other types of art and especially architecture, so that we can talk about sustainability both material and conceptual for this artistic and aesthetic current.

“The building is a modern concept. Art is a branch of mathematics, like all sciences. The building is the modern need for organization and use of materials. Constructivist life is the art of the future” (Art in Theory, 1992: 317)<sup>7</sup>.

Constructivists denied the mass and the volume of the sculpture as plastic elements and as space representation elements, preferring the principles of geometry and mechanics in achieving their work. The machines, as an inspiration source, were considered by the constructivists as something beautiful, elegant, simple and also complex, requiring great precision and perfect calculation. Seeking to express the pure reality, without any accidental intervention, the constructivists created “engineered” objects that do not exalt any strong feeling or any reference to literature. The constructivists created sculptural images of the new world of science, of industry, of mass production. The progress, the century of the speed mark them so much that they considered their works as a gesture of participating to a universal phenomenon.

The West met Constructivism through the works of Antoine Pevsner in Paris and Naum Gabo, his brother, in Germany. Together with the publication of the “Realistic Manifesto”, both artists supported the idea that art has a separate value and role from those of the state, and that the geometric principles represent the foundation of sculpture, the one in which the line describes the relationship between full and empty volumes (Bann S., 1974: 3). Outstanding in this respect are the works: *Model for “Column”*, 1920–1921, made of cellulose nitrate, *Construction in Space: Diagonal*, 1921–1925 (reassembled in 1986) made of glass, metal and celluloid, *Construction: Stone with collar*, 1933–1936, in which Gabo uses stone, cellulose acetate, slate and copper or *Construction in space with crystalline center*, 1938–1940, made of plexiglass and celluloid.

Vladimir Tatlin, the promoter of this movement, was influenced by Pablo Picasso after he visited him in 1913 and admired his reliefs created of sheet metal, wood and cardboard. Returning to his studio, Tatlin also created some constructions entitled “painted reliefs”. Profoundly interested in transforming the engineering machineries in sculpture, the artist receives, in 1919, the order to create a monument

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<sup>7</sup> Alexandr Rodchenko – “Slogans” and “Organizational Programme” of the Workshop for the Study of Painting in State Art Colleges.

which soon became his most famous work: *The Monument to the Third International*, for which he builds a project exhibited on the occasion of The Eighth Congress of Soviets in December 1920. With an altitude of 6,7 meters, the project was a spiral structure of iron meant to sustain a glass cylinder, a cone and a glass cube, each having the ability to be moved with variable speeds. The interior of the monument was supposed to contain lecture halls, conference rooms or for other activities, reaching a height of 396 meters, but the project remained at the design stage, caused by the Soviet government's refusal towards abstract art.

Alexandr Rodchenko abandoned the futuristic type painting in order to make three-dimensional constructions of wood, metal and other materials, using geometric shapes arranged in dynamic compositions. In fact, Alexander Rodchenko was the leader of the "productivist" group within Constructivism and his major interest was the closeness between art and industry, most of these works having mobility as a strong feature.

Futurists desired to launch the Man towards the new world of technology, for their aesthetic programme was a refusal of the artistic past. The same nihilism was taken over also by the Dadaists, who operated a fundamental change by abolishing the fixed and "unique" notion of work of art, transporting art in the midst of the surrounding reality, "infused" with the elements of technical and industrial progress. The art of this period (in all formal responses of the historical avant-garde) was manifested primarily as a gesture and as a creative process, being the reaction whose origins come from a social necessity full of contradictions. All these artistic transformations must be "read" in the context of some specific Spatio-temporal coordinates, allowing not only "the interpretation" but also their historicization.

Concluding, in the era of technical reproducibility, the work of art lost its cultural and traditional values together with its title of uniqueness, but won a new possibility, the one of expressing its significance using every day objects.

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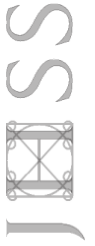
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## Interface between the Public and the Press\*

Carmen Neamțu\*\*

### **Abstract:**

This article presents the importance of spokesperson as an interface between the institution/ organization and the public, through the press. The article includes the attributes of the press bureau and its role in the economy of the organization it is incorporated in as well as the tactics that any spokesperson must master in order to have an efficient activity in his/her relation with the press and the public.

**Keywords:** press, spokesperson, public, PR

After 1990, a new profession was gaining field: the spokesman of the institution in its relations to the press. An interface between the public and the press. We will limit the public relations domain, referring only to the spokesperson's institution. Who is he, and what is his role? What difficulties is he confronted with? The applied, practical part of the project is a discussion with a former journalist, who chose to put her skills in use within spokesperson's institution. I chose a public institution that interacts often with journalists, the Police of Arad. Our interlocutor comes herself from the field of written press, being a former journalist. Thus, an advantage for the institution which she represents, because she manages to make herself better understood, guessing what her brethrens, the written press and audio-visual journalists want. We made an interview with Camelia Tuduce Berar, the current spokesperson of Arad Police Department. The journalist offers her perspective regarding this domain, revealing a few of the adventures of her profession.

The spokesperson is the individual who organizes press conferences, who draws up and conveys official statements, refutations or rectifications. Usually, the spokesperson knows very well the professional norms of journalists, their editing strictness, and their tactics. That is why, a professional spokesperson conveys important information for the public, hence for the press, consistent and most

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importantly, accurate. The spokespersons` manuals demand them to moderate the relation between the institutions which they represent, to be communicative, consequently, to have communication abilities. It is no surprise that, therefore, most spokespersons are journalists or have communication studies. Because they worked in the press, they know the basic rules of the guide for which they edit informative materials or convene press conferences. It is actually adequate that the organization has such communicative employees, who, coming from the press, know the tricks of their fellow journalists, guess what they desire and answer them accordingly.

### **Who Is S/He?**

The spokesperson is actually the individual who carries out his activity within the press bureau of the organization, which he represents. It is often said that the spokesperson bares on his shoulders the image of the institution, which he represents. He bares the hardship of communication, especially if the institution, which he represents, is going through an image crisis, or if the leader of the organization is not such a good public speaker, is a shy one, even if he is a very good professional.

We will see in the following, which are the attributes of the press bureau, and what is its role in the economy of the organization that incorporates it.

According to the theoretician *Jacques Deschepper*, in *Savoir communiquer avec les journalistes de la presse, de la radio et de la television – guide pratique*, Paris, Editions Eyrolles, 1990, on page 9, it is shown that the press bureau of the organization establishes and maintains a good relationship with the press, to the benefit of the organization which it represents. The press bureau, the French theoretician writes, – broadcasts the image of the institution among its audience. Another attribute of the press bureau is that of creating a climate of understanding and collaboration between the institution and the press.

The press bureau is the department that also satisfies the need for information of the audience and press. The press bureau, the analyst continues his enumeration, informs the organization on what the press states, in regard to its activities or aspects which can be of interest to or influence the organization.

Therefore, the press bureau tasks could be: the accurate research and evaluation of the need of informing the audience/press; the proposal of activity programs with the press; putting together the press magazine; the permanent updating of the complete data basis regarding the life and



activity of the organization; the elaboration of the press files, knowing the journalists that are going to deal with the events from the organization; knowing the structure of the editorial staff and the target audiences specific for each publication or audio-visual station.

Phillipe Bachmann, in *Communiquer avec la presse écrite et audiovisuelle*, Paris, Centre de Formation et de Perfectionnement des Journalistes, 1994, on page 84, tells us what not to do as a press bureau: As a press bureau, do not assault the press with official statements, without pause and discernment; Do not protest when your official statements are not published. Although, as already mentioned, many spokespersons come from the press, once they find themselves in the press bureau, they forget that the publishing space of newspapers is a limited one, that the lengthy texts edited in the organization's bureau cannot fit entirely in the newspaper page; Do not ask the journalists the article so that you may make changes before publishing it. Journalists must not be looked down upon, seen as puppets, stupid and incapable of discerning the important information from the less important one; Do not ask for the questions of an interview to be handed down to you in writing, a long time in advance, and do not answer until only after a week of profound thinking. Put yourselves in the position you once occupied, namely the journalist's, say the media analysts, and then you will understand how it is when you receive in the last minute the necessary informative materials; Do not organize a press conference each month and do not invite only journalists, which you like. You risk, in this way, to harass the journalists, which wait for news and not supposed events. The persistence in delivering false events, in the same news, repeatedly, leads to journalists refusing to participate in a new event organized by the press bureau. The most often claimed reason by them? "We aren't going, just to hear again the same novelties like a week ago!"; Do not systematically repeat the history of the organization at the beginning of each press conference or press dossier. These enumerations bore. However, it is recommended that the press dossier contain a brief history of the organization especially if the institution is celebrating an even number from its founding. At an anniversary it is even recommended to draw up flyers with the organization, which should include its history, the most important moments in the evolution of the organization, photographs with its headquarter/headquarters or management etc.; Do not adopt a highly technical manner of speaking; Do not convince your superiors that the press is hostile towards the organization or incompetent; Do not use the right to a replica, constantly, as a method of criticizing the press. A tense relationship with

the press does no good to the organization; Do not ignore going through the written press, radio or local and national television stations.

### **Tactics for Spokesmen**

Jan Bolema, former CEO in charge of communication and internal business at Haga City Hall, Holland, recommends the spokespersons to keep in mind a few key words: **hospitality, opening, honesty, and understanding**. An ideal spokesperson should have: availability for dialog, impartiality in his relations with the journalists, promptitude and initiative, the capacity to mediate the relations between the officials and the journalists, responsibility, the capacity to elaborate a concise, intelligible and appealing text, knowledge about the local/central mass-media, charisma, patience, the capacity to organize and lead the PR team.

The spokesperson must know how to anticipate precisely what journalists want to find out, so that he has all the information and is not caught in the crossfire of puzzling questions. He must know the previous concerns of the journalists, their thematic area, the type or articles they write, their tactics, their attitude towards the organization. The spokesperson must know the specifics of the journalistic types and formats so he may cope with the journalist's requests. The spokesperson must speak from a public interest point of view and not exclusively from that of the company's preoccupations and interests. He must not be passive: a question can be stirred up, a topic can be suggested. The spokesperson must not be defensive: the questions are an opportunity to present the organization, not to deny or confirm an opinion of the journalist. He must have the ability to place the most important information or statements at the beginning of his message and end the discussion with the journalists on a positive note. The spokesperson must give straight answers, without exaggerations, without aggression or haste. The spokesperson must not answer the questions, to which he does not have a clear answer, but must take up the task of quickly finding the information and put them and the journalist's disposal. It is not recommended that the spokesperson uses a formula like NO COMMENT, but to honestly explain why he cannot answer a certain question. No comment is a comment! The spokesperson must not be aggressive, must keep his calm and must not argue with the journalists, even when their questions seem aggressive. The spokesperson must avoid expressing personal opinions, and when he does, to underline this fact, so that he does not risk being quoted by the journalists as expressing a public opinion. Because when you work with the mass media, "any mistake that you make can become public in any moment".

(Carole Howard, Wilma Mathews, *On Deadline – Managing Media Relations*, Waveland Press Inc., 1985, p.71)

### **The Journalist and the Spokesperson, Both Deal with News**

Two sides which resemble each other, in the respect that both deal with NEWS. They use the same methods, the same jargon. Both travel in the same circles and have the same wish, their creed to confirm themselves. Both have the same position concerning the persons from which they receive their information. Then, as a mode of organization, when things get urgent, a communication department of an institution functions as a newspaper. Let us not forget that journalists wish the acquiring of news as quickly as possible, press bombs, a big racket. The spokesperson also wants to make his news public as quickly as possible, but he will always try to optimize the impact of the message, wishing that the story published in the media is revealed in the most favorable light.

We have pointed out so far that the spokesperson of the organization or the leader of the institution in the relations with the press is a very important person for the institution, which he represents. The way in which he comes out to the press, presenting the institution, leads to the image the public perceives the institution through the press. However, why is a spokesperson necessary, in the end? Here are just a few answers in favor of the spokesperson and the institution he represents: The leader of the institution has a busy schedule and cannot always be at the disposal of the press. Then our person comes in, the spokesperson!; The leader of the institution may not necessarily have communicating skills; In certain situations, hazy ones, the spokesperson may state that he does not know the management's point of view, that the subject is still a matter of debate, offering a necessary time out for the completeness of the official statement. A stalling if you will, in favor of the institution!

The spokesperson becomes an important actor in the press bureau's structure, being the journalists' main source of information, at the same time, the accessible and concrete image of the organization. He takes the organization leader's place in front of the mass media, gaining a unique autonomy and responsibility, because he represents the institution at any time and he expresses, through his statements, the official attitude of the organization in regard to general or specific issues, requested by the journalists

The spokesperson directly subordinates himself to the leader of the institution and to the manager of the press bureau. Some studies have shown that women gain the confidence of the journalists easier, and are

better in this role, especially in the governmental institutions. Selection criteria: authority, credibility, personal charm. (See: Watson S. Dunn, *Public Relations – A Contemporary Approach*, Richard D. Irwin Inc.1986, p. 374)

The relationship between the journalist and the spokesperson has always been a tense one. Indisputably, they need one another to work, because a journalist without sources is deprived of topics worthy to be published. A spokesperson without the press, without the mass media is deprived of his main stream of conveying information. Then, each of these poles, the journalist and the spokesperson, proud, believe that the other is not up to it: the journalist sees the spokesperson as a manipulator of the information he holds, and the spokesperson imputes the journalist of lacking seriousness and rigor. In reality, the two professions confront daily. The analysts that write about the PR profession notice the fact that the interests of the journalists and the spokespersons from PR are antagonistic and complementary at the same time. A mixture of cooperation and conflict. They explain this state between the two professions through the nature of both their interest – journalist and spokesperson. The first works for the general (public) interest, and the latter protects the private interest of the institution, which he represents.

The ones from public relations have an advantage over the journalists. They can mold their message according to the media support, written press, TV or radio. It is known that, for instance, on TV the journalist has less time and space available to analyze the problems than the one from the written press. That is why the media analysts affirm that a good PR employee will know which media channel he should address his message to, which, thus, must be differently edited for the written press, radio or TV, including, for the written press, more details, which fade in the radio, for example.

Referring to the tense relationships between spokespersons-journalists, the Frenchman Gaston L'Heureux points out the fact that both of them end up by mutually bearing each other: Our relationships resemble those of an old couple that ends up living together. The flaws grow simultaneously with the wisdom. The disputes persist, the quarrels doing more or less damage, depending on the situation and the arguments. Are we already victims of routine? Too old to divorce and too helpless to find other solutions, we are condemned to bear each other.

**The spokesperson for Arad's Police is always energetic. Dialog with Camelia Tuduce Berar**



**– Please, explain to me a bit, how a day from a spokesperson life unfolds. What does he do since morning till 16 hours when his program ends? How many official statements a day does he send to the press?**

– My program starts before 8 in the morning, when, while I drink my coffee, I read the local press. I do the local and central press magazine practically. We must be informed about everything that appears in the mass-media in connection to our activity, the activity of the Police of Arad. Then I will document myself about the events, which took place in the last 24 hours, the documenting regards special cases and, subsequently, the editing of official statements. According to the number and complexity of the events, I try to edit each event as a piece of news. Thus, the classic event bulletin turns itself into more information. If I had to put my signature at the end of editing all these pieces of information, in any newspaper, and I could do it with my head held up high, it means that everything is very good; it is ok. Returning to your question, obviously that this activity goes on with its inherent interruptions, when, starting with 9 o'clock, the journalists start making documentary phone calls.

**– What do journalists usually ask you?**

– Well, they inform themselves about the events which took place or wish to be supported in documenting their own subjects. Most of the times, some come straight to the Police press bureau relations. Then follow the granting of synchrony for the radio and TV stations, statements for the written press etc. Anyway, in essence, no day is like the other, they are not alike. Each day is a new challenge; I couldn't say that I come to work one morning thinking that it will be an easier day.

We're always busy. And I never know if my program ends at 16 hours. If there are events in the afternoon or during the night, I'm on duty.

– **Were there any cases which marked you as a person, as a woman if you will. Crimes, frauds, thefts which emotionally moved you? Give me a few examples in this way.**

– I generally got used to all sorts of cases. I am still marked by cases in which children are involved, events in which children are victims, traffic accidents or worse...

– **You work in the police, you are a tough person, and how do you see yourself, now, at a mini-survey? Doesn't the femininity dissolve in a place like this?**

– Even if I work in the police, I don't think that the ones working here could be characterized as being rough. As far as I'm concerned, it's more likely the case of femininity and such an attitude. I like what I do and try to do everything as professionally as possible. Femininity is something native, a characteristic which I think the woman never loses, regardless of her working place. It's just that it shows more in some persons. Or less. I don't know if it's good or bad.

– **Which was the crisis that the police went through and took most of your time and energy?**

– The image of the institution I represent is eventually the final purpose of the activities I do daily. Of course, there were some delicate times from this point of view. We overcame them and labeled them under the chapter experiences from which we had to learn.

– **Do you pass on to the press the cases with corrupt colleagues of yours, felons? Don't you feel a slight regret?**

– It is obvious! Policemen are humans too. It is normal that the human impulse in such situations, to be the first, but we must distinguish between what the profession means, applying the law and the sentimental side of things. We cannot ask citizens to abide the law, and not do it ourselves. On the other hand, even worse, break it. As you've noticed, we make public all the cases in which policemen are involved. Today's police management is a pro transparency one. I don't think that anyone from the police inspectorate enjoys making public these aspects, but we all know that lying doesn't get you far. The people will find out about these events from other channels, maybe distorted, and will penalize us if we hide them. On the other hand, we must demonstrate that such cases are rare in the Police Department of Arad, and are not characteristic to the majority of the police force. It's a shame to label all policemen as corrupt... I think that because of this reason as well, the credibility percentage of the population in the police has increased lately.

– **Are you satisfied with the image of Arad’s Police as it is reflected in the mass-media? What would you like to set right in the future?**

– I’m part of this category of people who are never satisfied. Although, as I’ve told you, I try to do my job as I know best. There’s always room for better. As far as the image of the Police Department of Arad in the press, generally speaking, it is portrayed objectively and I thank the journalists who have chosen to show our activity in an equidistant way.

– **And still, for the future...**

– For the future, maybe there should be more stability concerning the fluctuation of accredited journalists around the police institution. Regardless if we are talking about the police, hospitals or public administration, I think that in order to benefit from more information characteristic to these domains, reporters should be kept on these fields for a longer time. Thus, they would be able to perceive much better the activity within these areas of institutions, and, obviously, will gain a plus of experience and more professionalism.

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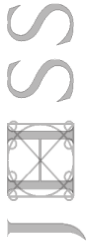
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## REVIEW ARTICLES

JESS

## Gabriela Petrache, *Forme și funcții ale grotescului în proza românească*

Emanuela Ilie\*

**Gabriela Petrache, *Forms and Functions of the Grotesque in Romanian Prose***

La origine teză de doctorat, cartea *Forme și funcții ale grotescului în proza românească* (Editura Universitas XXI, Iași, 2014), de Gabriela Petrache, readuce în atenția cercetătorilor români un concept care a cunoscut o bogată carieră în mai toate domeniile artei și a suscitât interesul esteticienilor, filosofilor și criticilor de artă moderni sau postmoderni din diverse spații culturale (Karl Rosenkranz, T. Th. Vischer, John Addington Symonds, Thomas Wright, Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, Philip Thomson, Evangelos Moutsopoulos, Madeleine Sechter ș.a.). Cu toate că e bine informată și din bibliografia românească, inevitabil mai săracă, a temei, lucrarea de față nu e concepută ca o sinteză exhaustivă, în care să se recapituleze, cuminte, cele mai elocvente puncte de vedere în privința acestui subiect. Căci prezentarea lor analitică, altminteri bine concepută (*Conceptul de grotesc. Interferențe cu alte categorii*), urmată de o survolare a teritoriilor artistice în care avatarurile grotescului sunt captivante și ofertante hermeneutic (*Reprezentări istorice ale grotescului în literatură și artele plastice. Forme și funcții*), nu fac altceva decât să pregătească, mai exact, să instrumenteze demersul aplicativ propriu-zis al cercetătoarei.

Capitolele cu adevărat personale ale cărții investighează modurile specifice în care s-a manifestat grotescul în creațiile câtorva autori români de vârf, pentru prima dată re-citiți și așezați împreună sub această cupolă problematizantă: *Grotesc și alegorie. Dimitrie Cantemir; Grotesc și comic. Ion Budai-Deleanu; Proza satirică și pamfletară cu implicații grotești. Ion Heliade Rădulescu; Răs și grotesc. Ion Creangă; Grotesc și absurd. Urmuz*. Diferența specifică este totuși, în fiecare caz, punctată cu o rară limpiditate. Astfel, „complicatul obrăzar alegoric aplicat discreditant de Dimitrie Cantemir personajelor din *Istoria*

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*ieroglifică* este o manieră de a face frondă realității grotesc deformată”; „Universul himeric al *Țiganiadei* capătă, în viziunea parodică a lui Ion Budai-Deleanu, accente burlești și caricaturale, vizând « lumea pe dos » și sistemul ideatic iluminist”; „Proza satirică și pamfletară a lui Ion Heliade Rădulescu are implicații grotești, satiristul având în vedere caracterologia sarsaililor și ciocoilor striviți de șarja caricaturală a pamfletului presărat cu invective, blesteme și obscenități de limbaj”; „Grotescul de efect umoristic vizează, în *Poveștile* lui Ion Creangă, eliberarea prin râsul sărbătoresc de tot ceea ce este urât și rigid în universul înconjurător”. În sfârșit: „Grotescul și absurdul capătă noi nuanțe în literatura avangardistă a lui Urmuz, atenționând asupra neliniștii și impasului secolului și parodiind sentimente, trăiri, aspirații, existența însăși, percepută ca o imensă mașinărie absurdă sau ca o grotescă butaforie”.

Spre deosebire de majoritatea studiilor ieșite de ceva vreme din matca academică – doctorală sau postdoctorală – autohtonă, volumul Gabrielei Petrache nu e nici hiperspecializat, nici pedant, nici narcisic. Scris cursiv, curat și elegant, rezistând tentației de a miza, precum obiectul său, pe stridențe sau extravagante, fie ele analitice ori stilistice, opul se impune totuși prin seriozitatea documentării și miza în fond pedagogică: parcurgându-l, cititorii au multe de învățat despre avatarurile istorice ale acestui concept manifestat cu precădere în artele vizuale și artele cuvântului. Dar și de reflectat pe marginea inflației aproape înspăimântătoare de grotesc, involuntar și discreditant, în existența noastră cotidiană.

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A R A D