



THE ROMANIAN INSTITUTE OF  
ORTHODOX THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY  
The Chapel "St. Apostles Peter and Paul"  
Incorporated in August 1993, New York

# *Symposium*

Vol. XXVII, Nr. 1, 2020  
New York



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**The Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality**  
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THEODOR DAMIAN

## **The Rescue of the Self: Man's Metaphysical Vocation and the Dignity of Being in Relation**

### *Introduction*

The more I am looking at the world we live in, full of violence, egoism, lies, distortion, greed, vanity, atrocities, cowardice, hypocrisy, corruption, imposture, theft, indecency, envy, revenge, etc., the more I think of Baudelaire's undignifying picture of his own world, not much different from ours. In the famous poem "To the Reader" from his book *Flowers of Evil*, he talks about "folly, error, sin, avarice," "pleasant remorse," "clandestine pleasure," proclaiming that "every day we descend a step farther toward hell," a picture very much in accordance with Abraham Heschel's warning who says that "today our concern seems to be to protect ourselves against the abyss of the future."<sup>1</sup>

Here, a moral dilemma confronts us: How can one pretend to be a moral person while living in an immoral society (a reference to the title of one of Reinhold Niebuhr's celebrated books), when one is part of that society and is contributing to its development? We can think of people who, while living in such a society are still navigating against its trend. And still, even if one was completely free of the vices listed above, the question remains: how can one achieve that kind of purity in such an environment? What does it take to have the strength to go against the current? What are the risks involved, the strategies used and how can one keep the result untarnished?

In other words, we have to once again ask the eternal question: Who is Man? (as Abraham Heschel titles one of his most popular books), which brings forward the issue of the self.

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## What is the “self”?

Many things can be said about the self. One can suggest a cataphatic description (*via positiva*), where one uses terms that indicate that it is knowable or has some kind of knowability. But if one takes every item of such a description and then asks the question: is that what the self is? The response would be: no. The self, we will realize, is beyond any such affirmation and even beyond all affirmations taken together.

Going beyond such descriptions, we then turn to metaphysics. Just as when speaking about God, a better approach might be to say what the self is not: it is not such and such, or so and so. That is the apophatic way (*via negativa*), which is more appropriate when we are trying to speak about mystery. By definition, we cannot say mystery is such and such, because then it would no longer be a mystery. But we can say ad infinitum, it is not this, it is not that.

When Matthew McManus describes the self as “a potentially infinite consciousness attempting to authentically participate in and understand, the Absolute of God,”<sup>2</sup> he speaks in clear apophatic terms.

The term “potential” has both physical and metaphysical dimensions; the term “infinite” is part of metaphysics; the term “consciousness” is more in the realm of metaphysics than of physics; so is the term “authenticity”. What does “authentic” mean? Conformity with the self? Then, what is the self? This is similar to the questions: What is truth? Conformity to reality? What is reality? Is the soul real? Is there a soul? Is consciousness real? Is there a consciousness? What is it? And what is “Absolute”? Is there such a thing? In contrast to what can we understand it? To the relative? But the relative, being relative, is unstable, even unreal. Illusion? Maya? And finally, “God.” Who is God? What is a divinity? If we say anything about it, how do we know that what we say is accurate?

So, McManus’ definition is beautiful, philosophical, but in fact, it is nothing. Yet it makes sense if we look at it theologically, meaning not through the prism of our knowledge but through the prism of our faith. Because, yes, man is not only a rational being, as reason itself is not explained in definitive and irrevocable terms, thus capable of some sort of knowledge; man is also a being capable of belief, of intuition, of feelings, of contemplation.

Thus, if we look theologically at the definition of the self, we discover a rich and wonderful array of possible ways to say something about the human being. The major theological premise about man is that he was created by God, in God’s image. Based on divine revelation we believe that God is a rational being, sentient, with free will. Being in the image of God, man has the same attributes, not as God has them but at a human, creaturely level. Then, when we speak of potentiality, to use McManus’s terminology

for the self again, we understand that God created man with a possibility of becoming. Indeed, the likeness announced by God at man's creation, according to Christian theology, refers to a possibility that man may reach a state of sanctity that would lead to immortality, as God Himself is holy and immortal. The image was given to man at creation. The likeness was given to him as a possibility for perfection, based on the characteristics of the image.

In his book *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola puts it wonderfully: "We have given you, oh Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor any endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgement and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven, nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able through your own decisions, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine."<sup>3</sup>

As we can see from the text, the self is, in Pico della Mirandola's view, in constant becoming, it is "a project, a matter of self-definition, in a constant process of negotiation and renegotiation."<sup>4</sup>

Back to Matthew McManus: The "self is a potentially infinite consciousness attempting to authentically participate in, and understand, the Absolute of God." So, the self attempts to participate authentically. The attempt is an inner drive toward something, it is a longing.

This attempt by the self to participate and understand the Absolute of God requires authenticity. Without it the attempt leads nowhere. Then, what is authenticity, or what is an authentic self, since the participation is that of the self?

One response is to grow in the direction in which man was placed at creation: towards the likeness with God, meaning to live a life of sanctity that leads to immortality, because that is what it means to participate in God's Absolute. And in order to have a holy life man has to follow God's revelation in what concerns him and the life he is supposed to live, more precisely, God's commandments.

The Bible, as God's revelation through His special people, is exactly that: a guide towards a holy life, according to God's will. Authenticity: be as God wants you to be, as He meant you to be according to the existential vocation you received. Vocation is calling; in this context authenticity is

when you hear God's call and respond, as a responsible being: Yes! Here I am.

We understand from here that we cannot participate in God if we lack authentic selves. That is the condition, the door to participation.

To participate in God's holiness and glory means to be saved, to be in final and eternal communion with God in His kingdom. Eternal, because in that state of existence man goes from glory to glory, as Gregory of Nyssa put it, and the ascension never ends, *epektasis*, as Gregory of Nazianzus wrote, because God is inexhaustible.

This participation, which is based on and starts from the image of God, meaning it is a rational, voluntary, conscious and deliberate process, implies a synergetic collaboration with God starting in this stage of life here and leading to what the Church Fathers call deification or theosis. As St. Athanasius the Great famously put it: "God became man in Jesus Christ so that in Christ man can become god". Participation is not disappearance into something else, it is, on the contrary, an existential fulfillment of man with all the gifts he received from God.

As McManus writes, through this participation man also attempts to understand the Absolute of God. To understand means to use reason to make sense of something. In this case of God's Absolute. But what is this divine Absolute? We have no idea.

When we want to understand something about God, one question could arise: why do we need to understand something about God?

The words are used carefully here; it is not about understanding God which would be like the creature trying to understand the creator, or, as a classic example puts it, like pottery trying to understand the potter. It is about understanding something about God's Absolute, something of God.

Another way to refer to God's Absolute is to speak of the supreme truth. Thomas Joseph White writes that "the noble vocation of the human intelligence is to relentlessly seek the truth."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Laurie M. Johnson believes that philosophy has to do with man using reason to approach the truth.<sup>6</sup>

If truth is part of God's absolute, and as man is not an absolute being, then, to think about understanding it is a utopia. Yet seeking it, approaching it, is a different story. It can be like living in the divine light without necessarily understanding what that light really is.

McManus speaks of another possibility as well: "Our true desire is to understand ourselves as part of God".<sup>7</sup> To be part of God could be interpreted as being immersed in God and becoming one with God by nature with no distinction between the two. This is not what Christian Orthodox theology teaches; but participation could also be interpreted as being in close communion with God, man and God keeping their own distinctions. In fact, when we speak of participation, we never imply transformation of the

participant into what he participates in. “Participation” implies becoming “part of” something, but in the case of man’s participation in God in the sense of communion, that implies reception and relation and not in the sense where the part has the same nature as the whole.

As Kierkegaard wrote, the self is ontologically, by structure, a relation: to itself first,<sup>8</sup> but then with everything else, culminating in and with God.

This type of understanding is based on the Trinitarian theology according to which God is one person in three hypostases. God is essentially relationship and man being made in the image of the trinitarian God is also essentially, ontologically, a relation, a being-in-relation.

Anoushka von Heuer says the same thing when she writes: “Everything is connected. And intelligence is the ability to discern among all things the links that connect them all.”<sup>9</sup>

### *The possibility of knowledge*

If we speak about understanding and intelligence we have to speak about knowledge.

God, in ancient Greek etymology, means seer, from *theos*, from *theastai*, which means to see. God is almighty because He knows everything, because He understands everything, because He sees everything.

When Adam was asked to name things, he had to name the world. What’s in a name? It is meaning. How does one come to meaning? By knowing. How does one come to know? By seeing.

A. von Heuer summarizes the entire scenario: by naming things, Adam makes them pass from essence to their projection into existence, a fact that we call Knowing.<sup>10</sup> Yet knowing should not be confounded with getting information.<sup>11</sup>

From Adam’s job to name all things in the created universe flows our innate aspiration towards universal knowledge.<sup>12</sup> However, this knowledge is not possible since we are within a system that does not allow us to look at it from the outside, but only from the inside, and even there, partially. Just as mathematician Herman Bondi put it: it is not possible to know something without knowing everything.

Nicolae Steinhardt explains it in his own way: “The great absolute truths we cannot know due to the Michelson Morley experiment. We are inside the system. We cannot make absolute conclusions as we cannot have certitudes. What can we have? Just intuitions, presuppositions, beliefs.”<sup>13</sup>

We can think of the difference between God’s knowledge of the universe as He created it, being outside it, beyond it, and Adam’s knowledge, who is only inside the created order and discovers it as he explores it, and then names it. In a sense, what Adam did by naming things is equivalent to

what scientists do until today as they explore the world, the universe and give names to their findings. However, what we know, according to Steinhardt, are trivialities such as: the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to one hundred and eighty degrees; the heart has two atriums and two ventricles; or that on an international scale from the six degrees up earthquakes will be devastating, and so on. The big, absolute truths, however, we cannot know.<sup>14</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore put it beautifully in his book *Stray Birds*: “The water in a vessel is sparkling / The water in the sea is dark / The small truth has words that are clear / The great truth has great silence” (CLXXXVI).

The superficial or partial character of our knowledge and implicitly of our capacity to know is admitted by Kant in his *Critique of the Pure Reason*, when he wrote: “That by which I know something I cannot know as I know that thing”.<sup>15</sup> In other words, I can know things but I cannot know the instrument, the ability that allows me to know. In that case how do I know that I know? What if the instrument through which I know is defect? What if the lens is stained? How can I understand a disease if I don’t understand the tools I am using to deal with it? I can have some knowledge about the disease by its effects and manifestations but what if in order to counter its effects I am using devices that I don’t understand? Kant’s statement raises this question as well: how do we call that by which we know?

He admits that we can know things. Yet what kind of knowledge is that when we discover them little by little and we never know if we achieved full knowledge about them? Let’s think of concentric circles. Maybe we get to know the external circle, and the second one inside, and a few more. When do we know precisely that we exhausted all of them? We can also think of the infinite implied in the theory of systems according to which each system, with its two major characteristics: status quo and change, is in constant interconnectedness with the other systems, as everything is a system in itself but at the same time part of another system. Again, Bondi’s question: How can we know something without knowing everything?

We could pretend that we know a particular thing when we understood all its possible connections – as a part for example – with everything else out there. That, however, is not possible.

It is just like one would ask: what is the purpose of that thing being there? Or this question: Why do we die? Why are we here?

If we admit that rational thinking allows us to have some kind of knowledge, partial or superficial as it may be, it is also the same rational thinking that would determine us to recognize the limits of our knowledge and that this very limit indicates that every thing, in itself, transcends us. Such kind of realization is called by Thomas Joseph White metaphysical realism as he speaks about our capacity for metaphysical reflection<sup>16</sup> and which should be an imperative of any philosophy.

In other words, rational thinking goes up to a certain limit and beyond that we have to rely on intuition and belief. That is why one should not be afraid or shy to accept the compatibility of reason and faith as two complementary tools for man's understanding of the world and of his being in the universe. It is in this context that Nicolae Steinhardt explains that man's specific attribute is the theological thinking,<sup>17</sup> reminding us that in fact, ontologically, man is a religious being, just as both Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade put it when they spoke of homo religiosus. To combine faith and reason and to live in the perspective of God is only logical since human being, according to Kierkegaard, is "a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal."<sup>18</sup> It is a historical fact that belief in God structured, informed and transformed the human civilization, and as one philosopher warns, "when we lose eternity as a horizon we can end up with totalitarian or individualistic nightmares nurtured by materialism."<sup>19</sup>

As image of God, man lives *sub specie aeternitatis* and he cannot take that away from himself. To paraphrase J. P. Sartre, we are condemned to eternity and as such, proving metaphysical realism, man should see eternity as a divine gift and make the best of it in a life lived according to his authentic vocation. Created in the image of God, man is a deiform being and his calling is to keep that form and make it shine and thus speak of God in the place God assigned him for his destiny.

## *Human dignity*

Human dignity is an entitlement that we have by virtue of our mere existence. However, to paraphrase A. Heschel, it is not the fact that we are human beings that is important and that confers dignity: rather it is being human that is important and brings about dignity.<sup>20</sup> Entitlement implies receiving a title as when you do something meritorious and someone else gives you a distinction. However, in man's case, being the image of God, the dignity is an existential feature and a title does not come from man's meritorious acts but it is a divine gift. In a sense, just like one inherits a title, let's say as in a royal family, without any special merit of one's own.

The Church Fathers see the human dignity at creation, where in contrast to everything else that God created through the Word, for man's creation, God not only spoke but also worked "physically", taking clay and fashioning man and then breathing on him the breath of life. That narrative indicates that man is above everything else in the created order.

Gregory of Nazianzus goes even further to explain that as man is made in the image of God he is kin with God (*syngenia*), hence his special dignity.

This dignity is a kind of glory that is inherent in the human being. In one hymn from the orthodox funeral ritual one can find this singularly

beautiful definition of man that reflects dignity in glory: “The image if Your ineffable glory I am, o God, even though I bear the wounds of sin.” In other words, man’s sin does not take away the inherent dignity he has, but only darkens—and diminishes it. It is up to man to use his freedom and put the divine gifts in him at work in such a way as to make that glory and dignity shine as intended at origin. And the place where this can happen is the world, where man, who is not an island, interacts with others.

As Johannes Gründel stated, the human being is oriented toward the encounter;<sup>21</sup> as image of the trinitarian God, man is a being-in-relation. Again, paraphrasing Sartre, we can say that man is condemned to relation. Without relation there is no fundamental understanding of anything.<sup>22</sup>

Yet being in relation requires the highest art of all arts. Man is meant to be a builder of communion, a community maker and that seems to be the hardest thing to do in particular in a world where relations are more like collisions than harmony and cooperation. Indeed, it takes intelligence, strength, faith, seriousness, dedication, humility, patience, understanding, love and hope, readiness to serve and other virtues derived from those in order to be a factor of cohesion in such a difficult and fragmented world as ours. But this is exactly where human dignity resides.

Andreas Niederberger puts it in simple and powerful words: man’s moral obligation is to not dominate others if he wants to live a life of self-respect.<sup>23</sup> The 11th commandment: do not try to dominate!

## *Conclusion*

Man does not possess his own self. (Fortunately, because, as Karl Barth says, whatever man possesses he destroys). As image of God, man is a mystery to himself. Yet he is called to explore that mystery, not to explain it, so that he can discover his authentic vocation in life which requires him to transcend knowledge as it is commonly understood, meaning to become metaphysically realistic and keeping his original dignity by building a cruciform type of relationship: on the horizontal with his fellow man, and based on that, on the vertical, with God.

## NOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> Abraham Heschel, *Who is man*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1965, p. 15.
- <sup>2</sup> Matthew McManus, "Becoming to Belong. On the Relation between Infinite Consciousness and the Absolute," in *The European Legacy*, vol. 21, nr. 1, 2016, p. 52.
- <sup>3</sup> Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, Gateway, Chicago, 1956, p. 7.
- <sup>4</sup> Costica Bradatan, "On Margins and Marginals," in *The European Legacy*, vol. 17, nr. 5, 2012, p. 732.
- <sup>5</sup> Thomas Joseph White, „Whether Faith Needs Philosophy”, in *The First Things*, Nr. 215, August-September 2011, p. 49.
- <sup>6</sup> Laurie M. Johnson, book review for *A World without Why* by Raymond Geuss, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2014, in *The European Legacy*, vol. 21, nr. 4-6, August-September 2016, p. 607.
- <sup>7</sup> Matthew McManus, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
- <sup>8</sup> David James, „The Self-Positing Self in Kierkegaard’s *The Sickness unto Death*”, in *The European Legacy*, vol 16, nr. 5, 2011, p. 591.
- <sup>9</sup> Anoushka von Heuer, *Le huitième jour ou la dette d’Adam*, Jean-Luc de Rougemont, Geneve, 1980, p. 61.
- <sup>10</sup> Anoushka von Heuer, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- <sup>11</sup> Marcel Herbst, „The enigma of Knowledge” (book review of *Handbook of Knowledge and Economics*, ed. by Richard Arena, Agnès Fastré and Nathalie Lazaric, Edward Elgar Press, Cheltenham UK, 2012, in *The European Legacy*, vol. 20, nr. 5-6, 2015, p. 649.
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas Joseph White, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
- <sup>13</sup> Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul fericitrii [The Happiness Diary]*, Ed. Mrea Rohia and Polirom, Iassy, 2008, p. 208.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 207-208.
- <sup>15</sup> See Bryton Polka, “How Do We Know What We Know?” (book review of *The Unpredictable species. What Makes Humans Unique*, by Philip Lieberman, Princeton, Univ. Press, Princeton, NY 2012) in *The European Legacy*, vol. 21, nr. 5-6, August-September, 2016, p. 583.
- <sup>16</sup> Thomas Joseph White, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51.
- <sup>17</sup> N. Steinhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
- <sup>18</sup> See David James, „The Self-Positing Self in Kierkegaard’s *The Sickness unto death*,” in *The European Legacy*, vol. 16, nr. 5, 2011, p. 592.
- <sup>19</sup> See Donald J. Dietrich, book review of *A Very Brief History of Eternity* by Carlos Eire, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2010, in *The European Legacy*, vol. 16, nr. 3, 2011, p. 413.
- <sup>20</sup> See Theodor Damian, *Gregory of Nazianzus’ Poetry and His Human Face in It*, Theotokos Press, New York, 2017, p. 131.
- <sup>21</sup> Johannes Gründel, *Peut-on changer la morale?*, Cerf/Desclée, Paris, 1973, p. 51.
- <sup>22</sup> Anoushka von Heuer, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- <sup>23</sup> Andreas Niederberger, „Esse servitutis omnis impatientem/ Man is impatient of all servitude: Human Dignity as a Path to Modernity in Ficino and Pico della Mirandola?” in *The European Legacy*, vol. 20, nr. 5-6, 2015, p. 522.



BRADLEY NASSIF

## “Authority” in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition

In one way or another, most of the theological issues which divide Christians today end up reflecting our different conceptions of authority. Authority lies at the heart of the issues which separate the Eastern Orthodox Church from Roman Catholics and Protestants. In order to understand the meaning of authority in the Eastern Orthodox Church we have to see how it has functioned in relation to the Church’s “ecclesial logic” and christological dogma over the past two thousand years. Such an approach – at once historical and systematic – reveals the Church’s belief that Christ, in his trinitarian relations, exercises his authority supremely through holy tradition, i.e. the Lord himself working through the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The ultimate question any Orthodox theologian who purports to speak on behalf of the Church must answer is, *How* has the voice of the risen Christ been heard through the ongoing life of the Holy Spirit in the Church? Through whom, how and when does the authoritative voice of the Spirit speak?

My answer to these questions will be given in five parts – arbitrarily divided in form for the purpose of communication, but theologically united in content. In part one I will evaluate the question of authority as a theological category in the history of Orthodox theology. Part two will narrow the question to the authority of Scripture as it relates to the Church’s approach to the knowledge of God, the development of the biblical canon and recent ecumenical dialogue. Part three focuses on the authority of Christ in the Church’s eucharistic ecclesiology. Part four centers on the authority of the Ecumenical Councils and the mystery of their reception. Part five focuses on the theological authority of the worshipping community, i.e. the Church’s liturgy, Fathers, saints, icons, canons, hymnography and architecture. The Conclusion is a brief commentary on how all this is supposed to work in the Church – in theory if not always in practice!

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## *Part 1: Authority as a theological category*

Eastern Orthodox Christianity generally has not raised the issue of authority in the same way that Catholic and Protestant theology has done. Instead, Orthodoxy understands Scripture and other aspects of the Church's life as expressions of a unified tradition. Orthodoxy's conception of the Church as a whole or "catholic" community results in a more "lived" and much less "defined" understanding of authority. The prophets and apostles, the Church Fathers, Councils, icons, saints, bishops, and laypeople are all understood as being intimately connected with each other. Placing one of these groups in isolation over the others as *the* locus of authority becomes unnecessary and actually destroys the unity of the Church's life. Collectively, all of them are witnesses to the truth in their own particular way with their own particular authority. So "authority" in the Orthodox tradition can best be understood not in legal or external categories, but in relation to the Church's corporate understanding of reality, all of which participates in divine life. This has created a climate in which there is very little developed understanding of theological authority as it has been discussed in the history of Catholic and Protestant theology. However, one can not conclude that the notion of authority is absent in Orthodoxy. On the contrary, it is more a matter of *how* authority is expressed in the life of the Church than it is a denial of its existence.

It is clear that the question of authority becomes especially important when the Church has had to counter competing pseudo-Christian systems, such as Gnosticism, Arianism, Nestorianism, Iconoclasm and other heretical challenges to the faith. It is in those contexts that we find the Church rising to defend its "rule of faith" by appealing to the Scriptures and the apostolic faith expressed through the worshipping life of the Church. The dictum of St. Vincent of Lerins sums it up best: "We adhere to that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all." The key question, then, is How does authority manifest itself in the context of the Church's *consensual* tradition? The answer is found through an organic concept of the Church in which Scripture plays a pre-immanent role.

## *Part 2: The authority of scripture*

Orthodox affirmation of biblical authority can be understood best through an understanding of the Church's general approach to the knowledge of God, the formation of the biblical canon and conciliar statements made by the Church in recent ecumenical dialogue. The limitations of space prevent us from a detailed analysis of patristic texts, liturgical prayers, and the hymnography of the Orthodox tradition – all of which richly communicate the Church's vision of biblical authority.

*The Knowledge of God.* Orthodoxy's understanding of the Bible and its authority in the life of the Church is personal in its emphasis. The question, "What is the authority of Scripture?" is resolved in the prior answer to "Who is truth?" Unlike certain forms of philosophical apologetics, we do not begin with proofs for the existence of God. Theological inquiry does not start with abstract questions over the possibility of belief in God, arguments for his existence, and the grounds for belief, which are all outside of divine revelation, and then, only after those questions have been answered, proceed to the Christian doctrine of the Bible and its authority. On the contrary, Orthodoxy begins where the New Testament and the Church's liturgy would have us to begin, namely, with the reality of the Father-Son relationship given to us in Christ and into which we are drawn by the Spirit. We embrace by faith the words of the Nicene Creed, "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty...and in one Lord Jesus Christ." So the general orientation of the Christian East grounds all genuine knowledge of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. Doctrinal authority, like salvation itself, begins not with a verification of possible belief in God as a hypothesis but with trust in a Person. This approach differs from 18<sup>th</sup> century European rationalists and their modern children, but it accords well with the common experience of countless Christians down through the centuries, both East and West. Simply put, faith is based on revealed knowledge.

*Church and Canon.* Chronologically, the apostolic tradition was anterior to Scripture. The Gospel was first transmitted orally within the liturgical community of the Church as well as in its public preaching and missionary outreach. By the end of the first century that apostolic tradition was enshrined in written texts. The Church later decided which texts constituted the canon of Scripture by "recognizing" their apostolic origins, content, and usage within the worshiping community. Better yet, the Spirit embraced the Church with the Spirit's own canon. This does not mean that Scripture owes its inherent authority to the Church. Authority comes only from the Spirit of God and not a legal institution such as the papacy or a Church council as such. The Church was inseparably united with its sacred texts as the *mediating* authority that simply authenticated what was already there within its own life. Thus when the Church accepted the books of the canon it was also accepting the ongoing, Spirit-led authority of the Church's tradition, which recognized, interpreted, worshipped, and corrected itself by the witness of Holy Scripture.

Here it is important to understand that the Orthodox see themselves as the organic continuation of the same catholic (lower case "c" meaning "whole and adequate") Church that originally produced and recognized the canon of Scripture in antiquity. That tradition is believed to be directly tied to the contemporary Orthodox and Catholic communities, East and West (bracketing for this essay the differences between them). Those Orthodox

Churches are now located predominantly in the Middle East, Greece, Russia, Eastern Europe and now the West. The selection of canonical books originally came from communities in the Greek, Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Georgian, Armenian and other ancient Christian Churches. Spirit, Bible, (real, identifiable) Churches and tradition were inseparably united, then as now. So for the Orthodox, it appears that whether they are aware of it or not, every time Protestants pick up their Bibles, they are relying on the Church's judgment on the colossal issue of canonicity! Often without acknowledging it, they are validating the authority of the Spirit-led tradition as a norm of canonicity that recognized which books were and were not to be considered as Holy Scripture. It is the Orthodox self-understanding that the same Spirit-led tradition that governed the life of the Orthodox Church over the centuries remains faithful to it in the present. The history of the biblical canon is, of course, much more complicated, but such is the Church's theological conviction about it.

### *Recent conciliar statements*

In the area of biblical inspiration and interpretation, the most authoritative documents we can consult are the "Agreed Statements" between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians in their ecumenical dialogues over the past thirty years. These statements do not enjoy the same authority as the early Ecumenical Councils, but because of their Pan-Orthodox character they represent the Church's views in the context of contemporary Christian pluralism and are therefore more officially representative of Orthodoxy than are the opinions of any single theologian. An Orthodox theology of biblical inspiration and interpretation is well expressed in the "Common Declaration" of the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission adopted in Moscow during the Commission's session in the summer of 1976:

The Scriptures constitute a coherent whole. They are at once divinely inspired and humanly expressed. They bear authoritative witness to God's revelation of himself in creation, in the incarnation of the Word and in all the history of salvation, and as such they express the Word of God in human language. We know, receive, and interpret Scripture through the church and in the church. Our approach to the Bible is one of obedience so that we may hear the revelation of himself that God gives through it. The books of Scripture contained in the canon are authoritative because they truly convey the authentic revelation of God....

Any disjunction between Scripture and Tradition such as would treat them as two separate "sources of revelation" must be rejected. The

two are correlative. We affirm (1) that Scripture is the main criterion whereby the church tests traditions to determine whether they are truly part of Holy Tradition or not; (2) that Holy Tradition completes Holy Scripture in the sense that it safeguards the integrity of the biblical messages.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the Moscow Statement, the “Agreed Statements” of the more recent international Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission add further points of consensus:

The function of the holy scriptures is to serve the authenticity of the church's living experience in safeguarding the holy Tradition from all attempts to falsify the true faith (cf. Heb. 4:12, etc.), not to undermine the authority of the church, the body of Christ.

Regarding the relation of scripture and Tradition, for centuries there seemed to have been a deep difference between Orthodox and Lutheran teaching. Orthodox hear with satisfaction the affirmation of the Lutheran theologians that the formula *solo Scriptura* was always intended to point to God's revelation, God's saving act through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore to the holy Tradition of the church ... against human traditions that darken the authentic teaching in the church...

Inspiration is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the authors of the holy scripture so that they may bear witness to the revelation (John 5:39) without erring about God and God's ways and means for the salvation of humankind....

Expressions and concepts of biblical authors about God are inspired because they are unerring *guides* [emphasis theirs] to communion with God....

Authentic interpreters of the holy scripture are persons who have had the same experience of revelation and inspiration within the body of Christ as the biblical writers had. Therefore it is necessary for authentic understanding that anybody who reads or hears the Bible be inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Orthodox believe that such authentic interpretation is the service of the fathers of the church especially expressed in the decisions of the ecumenical councils.<sup>2</sup>

Although few Orthodox seem to be aware of it, the confessional debates within Lutheranism have influenced some of the theological

vocabulary of these ecumenical documents, which supports more liberal Lutheran positions that may become problematic for some Orthodox in the future. The failure to qualify the distinction between biblical inspiration and contemporary personal inspiration is a case in point. The use of the term “guides” also subtly leads the Orthodox away from accepting any notion of propositional revelation.

Still, these ecumenical documents demonstrate the Church’s views on the inspiration, interpretation and authority of Scripture. The Lutheran-Orthodox agreement maintains, “Inspiration is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the authors of the holy scripture so that they may bear witness to the revelation (John 5:39) without erring about God and God's ways and means for the salvation of humankind.” It also sees no discord between the Lutheran interpretation of *sola Scriptura* and Orthodoxy's view of the relation between Scripture and tradition. Likewise, the Moscow statement qualifies Scripture as the "main criterion" for testing truth and error in Church tradition.

The ecumenical documents quoted above acknowledge the Church as the final interpreter of the Bible, while Scripture itself is the main criterion of the Church's authority. The Moscow document explains that “Holy Tradition completes Holy Scripture in the sense that it safeguards the integrity of the biblical message.” This does not forbid individuals from making personal judgments or discourage them from engaging in critical scholarship, but it does mean that private opinions, as learned as they might be, are not to be preferred to the experience of the saints and the Church's rule of faith down through the centuries. The Church, the Bible, and holy tradition form an unbreakable unity of checks and balances wherein Scripture is given the most authoritative voice on matters of faith and practice.

### *Part 3: Eucharistic ecclesiology and the authority of the spirit*

“Authority” is most fully understood in reference to the Church’s *mystical* character. Authority is inseparably united with the Church’s understanding of the relation between pneumatology and ecclesiology. The Church is primarily conceived as a mystical communion of the faithful with God and with each other, on earth and in heaven, through the resurrectional life of Christ in his trinitarian relations. That resurrectional life creates a bond of communion (*koinonia*) between God and believers, patterned after the Trinity, through the eschatological irruption of the Kingdom of God that is “already” fulfilled in the Church but “not yet” consummated. The Church is the newly constituted society of the covenant elect, the community of the new age, the mystical body of Christ centered in the proclamation of the

Word and celebration of the Eucharist. It is a “mystical community of salvation” more than a sociological reality. That is why Orthodox ecclesiology is marked by a strongly mystical character, in distinction from the more institutional character of the papacy in Roman Catholic ecclesiology.

*Communion ecclesiology.* The whole of Orthodox ecclesiology is best interpreted under the rubric of “communion ecclesiology.” Without going into great detail, in communion ecclesiology, authority in the Church is seen as *relational*. It is not dictatorial or monarchical. This is true on all levels: local, regional and universal.

On the local level, the authority of the Church lies in the bishop who “teaches aright the word of truth” in an authoritative way. The bishop is also the guardian of truth. The bishop, however, is only an individual. He is interdependent with his community, namely, his presbytery and his lay people. As Christians, all are anointed by the same Spirit who anointed Christ. As the Father exists within the Trinity so the bishop ranks first in his community yet interdependent with his own flock, both clergy and laity. Unless he expresses the faith of his believing community, the bishop may be in error and thus be judged by the faith of the Church, according to established procedures.

Moreover, in communion ecclesiology, the Church’s understanding of “apostolic succession” is one that passes through the *community* of the local Church. The bishops are not “successors to the apostles” in an equivalent way, since the original apostles were eyewitnesses to the resurrection, and performed itinerant ministries rather than local ones. Bishops are apostolic successors to the extent that they transmit and preserve the original apostolic deposit in the context of their local communities, and to the extent that their ordinations occur within the Eucharistic context of a local apostolic Church. Thus apostolic succession is not defined as individualistic, or simply a succession of persons, but a *succession of communities* to which the individual bishops belong and stand in a relation of unity and communion with one another. Each Eucharistic community succeeds the previous one and is connected to other communities thus safeguarding continuity with the Church’s apostolic origins, faith and lifestyle.

On the regional and universal levels, ecclesiastical authority is also *relational and interdependent*. Just as the bishop is part of the community at the local level (not *above* but *within* the community), so he is to be at the regional and universal levels. But how does this relate to authority and the question of Roman primacy over the Eastern Churches? A full answer is impossible here, but it is obvious that the doctrine of the pope’s universal jurisdiction is at odds with the Orthodox understanding of communion ecclesiology. In Orthodoxy, every faithful member of the Church has a part

in the ministry of Peter as one who proclaims Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. In Catholicism, however, a disjunction has taken place between viewing the authority of episcopal ordinations as coming from their local communities, and seeing their authority as given only from Rome. From an Orthodox perspective, this shift in the bishop's authority from the local community to that of Rome betrays communion ecclesiology.

Much has been said in modern times by Orthodox writers concerning "communion ecclesiology," "Eucharistic ecclesiology," "baptismal ecclesiology" and "trinitarian ecclesiology" – all of which affect our understanding of nature of the Church and its authority.<sup>3</sup> Most recently, John Erickson observed the need for a "baptismal ecclesiology" as both a completion and a corrective of the shortcomings of "Eucharistic ecclesiology." He says, "The Church is a Eucharistic organism but only because the Church is a baptismal organism....Modern ecclesiology, like modern church practice, has tended to ignore the significance of baptism. Emphasis has been on Eucharistic fellowship, with relatively little concern for the preconditions for this fellowship."<sup>4</sup>

What has not been noticed, however, is that all this discussion about "communion ecclesiology" has been working backwards. It started with Zizioulas' retrieval of the Trinitarian foundations of the Church and from there went to the notion of "communion ecclesiology." Then came "Eucharistic ecclesiology" followed by Erickson's corrective about the need for "Baptismal ecclesiology" as the underlying reality which makes our experience of the Church as communion possible. Erickson does well to take it back to baptism as a precondition for Eucharistic fellowship, but what he fails to discuss are the preconditions for baptism itself. Again, theologians have been working backwards at this. What is needed, therefore, as of first importance in modern ecclesiology is what I would call "*kerygmatic ecclesiology*." The Good News of the Kingdom of God is issued in through the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. That is the fundamental reality that makes the whole of "communion" ecclesiology accessible to the believing community. *Kerygmatic ecclesiology* is simply the Church's proclamation of the Gospel and its Spirit-enabled acceptance by all those who believe. This is not to say that the divine life of the three Persons of the Trinity are dependent on the *kerygma*, or that baptismal and Eucharistic ecclesiology are unimportant. But it does affirm that the *kerygma* holds a special place of primacy in the Church as the undergirding reality and primary reference point of baptismal and Eucharistic ecclesiology. Without the proclaimed Gospel of Jesus Christ – rooted in the apostolic faith, enshrined in the biblical canon and proclaimed by the faithful – the ecclesiology connected with baptism and Eucharist makes no sense and ultimately falls apart. The historical facts of redemption are proclaimed, transmitted and received by the enabling power of the Holy

Spirit in the ongoing life of the Church. All who believe become members of one another in Christ's body, the Church. The "one baptism" we share through the life of the Trinity, and the "one Eucharist" we partake of in our local communities are rooted in the "one Gospel" we proclaim and embrace. It is that common *kerygma* that makes the Church "one, holy, catholic and apostolic." In Orthodoxy, kerygmatic unity is expressed in the evangelical dimensions of the liturgical and sacramental life of the local communities that are commonly shared by Orthodox Churches throughout the world. Since Christian existence itself stems from the apostolic *kerygma*, and that *kerygma* is enshrined in the biblical canon of the Church, then the notion of authority is rooted in the apostolic experience that has been interpreted preeminently in the Church's liturgy. *Thus the main ecumenical issue over the meaning of "authority" in this volume centers on answering the question of which Christian community reveals the fullness of catholicity in the totality of its life and interpretation of Scripture as compared to others.* It is the humble conviction of the Orthodox Church that authority is to be connected with the original apostolic deposit that has been proclaimed and preserved in tact over the centuries in an unbroken succession of truth in the worshipping life of its communities.

#### *Part 4: The authority of Ecumenical Councils*

One might be tempted to generalize that Protestantism locates authority with the Bible alone and Roman Catholicism with the Church hierarchy (principally the pope himself), whereas Orthodoxy locates the authority for determining doctrine with the Ecumenical Councils (C.E. 325-787). However, this perception would be misleading. The Orthodox do not determine truth by ascribing an inherent authority to the *de facto* convocation of a Church council. Rather, it is one of the chief responsibilities of bishops to express the truth of the Gospel. Each local bishop has the express responsibility to teach the faith in his own diocese. At the same time, the episcopal authority of local bishops form an indivisible unity because the Church is an organic whole, a living body. It is not merely a collection of individuals. Consequently each hierarch has the responsibility to proclaim the truth and to witness to it not only in his own diocese but in the totality of the Church. Each bishop exercises his episcopal authority in solidarity with every other bishop.

The exercise of this episcopal authority in solidarity becomes a concrete and visible reality primarily when bishops meet as a council of the Church. Christ's promise to abide where two or three gather applies no less to the assembly of the bishops in council. The authority claimed by an episcopal council is none other than the authority of Christ himself, present

by the Holy Spirit. This is already apparent in the record of apostolic gatherings in the New Testament. After Christ's Ascension, the Church immediately gathered and asked Christ himself to select a replacement for Judas: "Lord...show us which of these two *you* have chosen" (Acts 1:14). During their later meeting in Jerusalem they present their decision with these words: "It seemed good to *the Holy Spirit* and to us" (Acts 15:28). It is significant that the decision made by the apostles says "we" and not "I." Collectively, the pastors of the Church – be they the apostles or their appointed elders – speak with an authority which none of them can have individually. In each council that is truly a council of the Church, the totality is superior to the sum of its parts.

The key question to ask of any Church council, then, is this: How do we know if a given council is genuinely voicing the will of God? Are there any external criteria which can guarantee *in advance* that a certain assembly will turn out to be an Ecumenical Council? Can we predict with certainty that a council will be genuinely inspired by the Holy Spirit to manifest the truth of Christ? There are various external criteria we can observe that can indicate the potential presence of the Spirit, but none of them can be guaranteed or taken in isolation. Some of those indicators or signs are as follows, along with their limitations:

1) The number of bishops who attended a council is no proof of ecumenicity, since some were more numerous than others. Truth cannot be determined merely by a nose-count.

2) The geographical distribution of the bishops and their representative character requires, in principle, that they represent all the parts of the catholic Church. This does not mean that the bishops have to be from every single geographical quadrant of the world, but simply that those who are in attendance must be in communion with other bishops who themselves may not have been able to attend. Unless it has this representative character, a council cannot be considered as *ecumenical*, even if it is acknowledged that it proclaimed the truth. But this representative character, while being indispensable, is hardly in itself a sufficient criterion for authentic ecumenicity in the deepest sense. Externally, the councils of Rimini-Seleucia and Ferrara-Florence (1438-39) were as representative as each of the seven Ecumenical Councils, but neither the one nor the other has been recognized as ecumenical by the Orthodox Church because they have not reflected the catholic truth of the great tradition.

3) The conviction of a Council itself is no guarantee of its ecumenicity. Many councils explicitly proclaimed themselves ecumenical which were not, however, recognized as such by the Church. So this criterion is not by itself determinant. On the other hand, a council may in fact be ecumenical even though it did not proclaim itself as such. For example, it is not certain that the Council of Constantinople in 381 even

considered itself as ecumenical, yet it was subsequently recognized as such by the Church. This criterion, therefore, is not absolute.

4) Recognition by a later Ecumenical Council is ecumenically important but it is not sufficient by itself. One of the first tasks done by each Ecumenical Council was to ratify the decisions of the previous ones. This is an important step in the process of “reception” of a Council by the Church in its totality, but once again this is not a sufficient criterion in itself. For as long as the series of Ecumenical Councils might be, there is necessarily a final Council in the series, which has not as yet been confirmed by a later synod. Consequently, if we rest on this sole criterion, the validity of the entire series is diminished. In any case, we have only pushed the problem back one step. What criteria did the later Councils use to measure the previous ones and to distinguish between the true and false Councils?

5) Acknowledgement by the emperor was important in Christian antiquity, but it was not sufficient in the past, nor required for any future council that may be held in our day. Here we enter into the sticky area of “caesaropapism” which asserts that the emperor controlled religious doctrine in the Byzantine Empire. I do not have the space to unpack the complex relationship that existed between the Church and emperor, and the respective spheres of each, but the sum of the matter is simply that it did not exist. To be sure, emperors tried to manipulate the outcome of an Ecumenical Council, they ratified their decisions and enforced them as law, but they could not impose their beliefs upon the Church. The reception of a Council by the emperor was of great importance in the process of “reception” but it did not constitute final and decisive criteria. Moreover, some councils were convoked and confirmed by emperors and yet rejected by the Church, such as the notorious Robber Council (449) iconoclast Council of Hieria (751). St. John Chrysostom and Maximos the Confessor demonstrated with their lives that the state had no right interfering with the faith of the Church, and that the Church had a mind and a will of its own. The absence of a Christian emperor in the modern world does not render a modern Ecumenical Council impossible because truth is not determined by a particular time period or a specific political system.

6) Acknowledgement by the pope is critical so long as the pope is not isolated or exalted above his episcopal brethren. It was of great importance that the bishop of Rome, the pope, accept an Ecumenical Council simply because he had so often functioned as a theological referee, not to mention the authority of his purported double-apostolic succession and prestigious geographical location in the capital of the Roman Empire. But Orthodox cannot regard the ratification by the pope as decisive by itself, for Orthodox ecclesiology does not wish to isolate the pope from his brothers in the episcopate and from all the body of the Church. Once again, in Orthodox

eyes the Council of Ferrara-Florence is not ecumenical, even though it received the affirmation of both the emperor and of the pope.

So what are we left with? From an Orthodox point of view, there exists *no criterion or collection of criteria which would automatically guarantee the ecumenicity of a Council*. The Ecumenical Councils were not viewed as legal institutions but as *charismatic witnesses* to the unity of the faith accepted by the people of God in communion with their local bishops. There was no formal criteria of reception but rather an organic, Spirit-illuminated witness to the truth that was accepted by the faithful. In an illuminating essay on this subject, Georges Florovsky states that the “ultimate authority [of Church councils] was still grounded in their conformity with the ‘Apostolic Tradition’...It will be no exaggeration to suggest that Councils were never regarded as a canonical institution, but rather as occasional *charismatic events* (emphasis his).” Again, Christ himself is the criterion of truth, not Councils per se:

The teaching *authority* of the Ecumenical Councils is grounded in the *infallibility* of the Church. The ultimate ‘authority’ is vested in the Church which is for ever the Pillar and the Foundation of Truth. It is not primarily a canonical authority, in the formal and specific sense of the term, although canonical strictures or sanctions may be appended to conciliar decisions on matters of faith. It is a *charismatic* authority, grounded in the assistance of the Spirit: *for it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us.*<sup>5</sup>

In the final analysis, there is but one decisive indicator of ecumenicity and it is retrospective, namely, “reception.” The key question to answer is, Has a given assembly been accepted by the general conscience of the Church? In practice, the one way to determine if a given assembly is or is not authentically ecumenical, and thereby infallible insofar as it accords with apostolic truth, is to discern if the Council in question has been later accepted as ecumenical by all the Church. No conciliar decision carries binding force until the communities of faith and their bishops in communion with each other receive that decision.

But even “reception by the faithful” cannot provide automatic proof. One need only study the complicated developments which followed the Council of Chalcedon (451) to see how this is so. To what extent can it be said that this council was in fact “accepted by the faithful?” It was rejected by the majority of Christians in the Patriarchate of Alexandria and by about half of those of the Patriarchate of Antioch. So these facts merely confirm the point already made, namely, that the truth cannot be established by a mechanical application of formal criteria.

We must also acknowledge that it is difficult to find in the ecclesiastical canons, the dogmatic decrees and the “Acts” preserved from

the seven Ecumenical Councils, any passage where the Fathers of the Councils speak of the need for a later “reception” of their decisions by all the Church. None the less, this process of “reception” is a fact of history of which there exists abundant witnesses between the years C.E. 325 and 1100. How, precisely, does reception take place? There are no rules to follow in which this process is concretely carried out, much to the embarrassment of systematic theologians who are fond of neat categorizations in the theological formulation of the faith. There is no precise number of people required, nor a precise time limit in which the process of recognition must necessarily be finished. Historically, the process of recognition took place in various and sundry times and ways. The “reception” of Nicea (325) as “Ecumenical” was more or less an accomplished fact during the conclusions of the Council of Constantinople (381). But the Council of 381 does not seem to have been counted by Rome among the number of Ecumenical Councils before C.E. 517. And the seventh Ecumenical Council (787) was not generally received in the West before the eleventh century. The process of reception is thus not subjected to an external law or referendum. It is simply an historical fact that took place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At a true Ecumenical Council the bishops witnessed to the truth and that witness was then welcomed by the assent of the whole people of God, including lay people who by virtue of their baptism were to be responsible guardians of tradition. That verification was expressed not formally or explicitly, but simply *lived* in the worshipping community and individual lives of the saints. Conciliar decisions, therefore, are not true because they have been accepted by the Church, but they have been accepted by the Church because they are true. In this sense, the decrees of an Ecumenical Council are “authoritative” and “infallible” because they bear witness to the apostolic faith given in Scripture and lived out in the ongoing life of the Church. The truth of the councils are not made true by the external criterion of reception – there was no “confirmation” or “validation” in this process because the faithful do not “render” a council true but merely “recognize” or “receive” its truth. But at the same time this later agreement is the visible manifestation by which we know by faith that a council has in fact been guided by the Holy Spirit. *The definitive authority is the authority the living truth, Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, acting among us and in us by the Holy Spirit.*

As a result, Orthodoxy's view of the Church hierarchy and the councils is quite different from that of Roman Catholicism: Orthodox bishops and councils do not possess any inherent authority in themselves. They are not raised up above the rest of the Church as sources of authoritative teaching. Rather, their function is to recognize the truth that lies within the Church. And that truth is living, dynamic and communal. It is transmitted not by isolated individuals but by persons in relation, or in

communion, with the total ecclesial community, especially when gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is out of that Eucharistic unity that the Ecumenical Councils became true manifestations of the apostolic faith in the life of the Church.

### *Part 5: Authority and worship*

The remaining sources of theological truth have their own special place of authority in the life of the Orthodox Church. These sources include the liturgy, Fathers and Mothers, lives of the saints, icons, ecclesiastical canons, hymnography and Church architecture. Together they form a symbiotic relationship that is distinguishable from each other but inseparable from the total life of the Church. Each coinheres in the other. Each has its own reality that testifies in its own way to the truth. The late Father Alexander Schmemmann had a saying that summarized it best: “The Church is a mystery that has institutions, not an institution that has mysteries.”

*The Liturgy.* The Bible, Ecumenical Councils and liturgy are the most authoritative voices in the life of the Orthodox Church – in that order.<sup>6</sup> Along with the Bible and Ecumenical Councils, the Church’s liturgy functions as a vital theological authority. It is the function of the liturgy to be the “epiphany” of the Church’s faith. The faith of Nicea and Chalcedon is especially evident in its liturgical prayers and hymnography.

Liturgy expresses the beliefs of the believing community. Apostolic truth is liturgical in that it is manifested and communicated in the sacraments, rites and prayers of the Church. The old adage applies: *lex orandi lex credendi* (“The rule of prayer is the rule of faith.”). Orthodox theology discovers in the liturgy a wholeness of vision that stems from the apostolic faith. The source and goal of all theology is the apostolic experience rooted in the Bible and expressed preeminently in the Church’s liturgy. Sometimes, however, the opposite adage has been the case: *lex credendi lex orandi* (“The rule of faith is the rule of prayer.”). The victory of icons in the Church is a case in point. After decades of controversy (C.E. 726-843), icons were finally celebrated in the Feast of Orthodoxy (843) which demonstrates for our purposes how theology impacted the worship of the Church.

When consulting the liturgy as an authoritative source of the Church’s theology it is important to note that it is not on the same par as the Bible. The liturgy is an interpretive grid that discerns biblical faith through the eyes of the Church’s entire tradition – Fathers, Councils, creeds, hymns, saints, prophets, martyrs etc. This is not to say, however, that there are parts of its ancient liturgies which seem to have no biblical justification. The liturgy needs to be read and corrected in light of the total apostolic faith just as every other piece of theology in the Church’s mosaic of belief. But it is to be done

not on the basis of one's own private interpretation, but on the relational basis of the Church as communion with hierarchy and laity working together.

*Church Fathers and Saints.* The Church Fathers also enjoy a special place of authority in the Church as reliable teachers of the faith. Most often the Church's liturgy is the product of the "consensus of the Fathers" (*consensus patrum*). No single Father, however, has been elevated as "the" theological authority in Orthodoxy, though one had to be in communion with some of them (e.g. St. Simeon Stylites, see below) to be considered "orthodox" especially during the great controversies of the early centuries. In other words, there is no Orthodox equivalent to the supreme authority Thomas Aquinas enjoyed in the Catholic Church at Vatican I and elsewhere as the defining doctor of the faith. Orthodoxy has remained committed to the communal character of the faith of the Fathers (plural) and not to any one individual among them elevated above the rest. Moreover, it is important to note that no Father is deemed "infallible." One can not simply quote their writings to settle a dispute. As Serge Verhovskoy, my late professor of Dogmatic Theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary once said, "The holy Fathers are not Holy Spirits!" Every one of them can and do err at one time or another. Their authority is a relative one insofar as their teachings must accord with the apostolic faith handed down in the canon of Scripture and worshipping life of the Church.

The lives of the saints also play an authoritative role in testifying to the truth of Orthodoxy. Holy ascetics can be touchstones of Orthodox dogma. In the fifth century, St. Simeon the Stylite was consulted by Emperor Leo I regarding the orthodoxy of Chalcedonian christology. Simeon's holy life was seen as an embodiment of correct christological dogma because genuine holiness could not rightly exist without it. Leo decreed that one had to be in communion with Simeon in order to be in communion with the Church's faith. To that extent, great monastic leaders often became (and become) "living texts." Their lives were seen as a living exegesis of the Bible and sacred embodiments the faith. In fact, some of the strategies employed by the monks for discerning the correct meaning of Scripture included what they called "attaining a text." The way for them to rightly interpret the Bible occurred not simply through "exegesis" but by actually "trying on the text." Once the meaning was correctly lived, it was then correctly understood in the divinely intended sense and visa versa. At no time did the best of the monastic leaders ever diminish the authority of holy Scripture. Important as the liturgy and Fathers were, they understood the primacy of Scripture in the life of the Church. This is well illustrated in the 4<sup>th</sup> century when it was once said that Abba Amoun of Nitria went to visit the great Abba Poemen. While discussing the struggles of the spiritual life, Amoun asked Poemen a question: "When I am obliged to speak to my neighbor, do you prefer me to speak of the Scriptures or of the sayings of the

Fathers? The old man answered him, ‘If you can’t be silent, you had better talk about the sayings of the Fathers than about the Scriptures; it is not so dangerous.’<sup>7</sup>

*Icons.* Regarding the authority of icons, it is the Church’s conviction that images are dogmatic statements of faith in lines and colors. Unlike other useful expressions of Christian art used in the West (such as paintings by Michael Angelo), Orthodox icons are fundamentally a witness to the Incarnation. They are artistic affirmations of the Johannine truth that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). As such they are authoritative statements of the Church’s theology. The scenes depicted are theological affirmations, and each must be “read” on their own terms. How to interpret the theology of icons is beyond this essay, but suffice it to say that not all icons in the Church are true expressions of the faith. Discernment is needed to sift the wheat from the chaff – to separate what is authentically Christian from what is not. Many centuries of mixture and intermingling between Orthodoxy and Catholicism has sometimes led to Westernized forms of art in the Church (not that “West equals bad” but that the different styles simply communicate different realities, some more adequately than others). In most Byzantine and even Coptic iconography, artistic conventions are used to convey the transfiguration and deification of humans through Christ. The icons are not humanist or pictorial representations of Jesus, but theological affirmations of the union and divine natures and what that means for the deification of humans and the ultimate transfiguration of the cosmos. To the extent that an icon reflects biblical faith, it functions as an authoritative interpretation of and witness to the fullness of Christian experience that is made possible through the Incarnation.

*Ecclesiastical Canons.* Finally, ecclesiastical canons occupy an authoritative position over the lives of the faithful. Ecclesiastical canons essentially are pronouncements concerning the faith and order of the Church. Often, though not exclusively, they connected with the proceedings of the Ecumenical Councils. It is a complicated field of study fraught with the dangers of legalism. Rightly understood, the function of the canons is not to provide salvation, but to delineate the conditions which make salvation possible. They are not codes of law, but guidelines that are to be applied in concrete life situations such as when adultery, murder or apostasy has occurred as well as less spectacular offenses regarding marriage, Godchildren and a host of others. They also keep the structures of the Church in proper balance so that bishops do not overstep their regional boundaries. The ultimate purpose of the canons is to preserve the rule of faith for the salvation of the faithful. They are to reflect the will of God in each generation with its changing situations. Those known as “dogmatic” canons are the most theologically relevant to the question of authority

because they contain official affirmations of the Church's faith and order, which are unchangeable insofar as they reflect biblical faith.

*Church Hymns and Architecture.* Orthodox hymns have also expressed the faith of the Church. They are not designed to promote aesthetic values. "Dogmatic hymns" (*dogmastika*) are especially authoritative expressions of the Church's faith often reflecting some aspect of Nicene or Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. Very little actually focuses on the spiritual life and struggles of the individual believer. Much more is sung about God, Christ and the Holy Trinity and what that means for a living a life of purity and holiness. The authority of hymns belongs to the wider authority of the liturgy and is subject to correction only in light of the apostolic witness of the Church. Likewise, Church architecture is designed with the theological purpose of conveying the apostolic faith. For instance, in the Byzantine style one finds a large dome indicating the Incarnation, or Christ looking down in anticipation of the coming Judgment, or (in the Russian tradition) onion domes to convey the fire of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. These are not on a par with the Bible, Councils or liturgy but they do belong to the larger witness of the Church.

## *Conclusion*

In concluding our analysis of how authority is to operate in the Orthodox Church, one might easily get the impression that Church members know it well and apply it well. However, that is not always the case. The principles of authority do not always match the Church's practice of it. When all is put together, the Orthodox vision of authority may be likened to a Beethoven symphony: The conductor is the Holy Spirit, the baton is the apostolic faith and the musicians are the diverse sources of the Church's theology. So long as the musicians obey the conductor and take their cues from his baton, their music becomes a rich, varied and harmonious melody. However, as soon as the musicians take their eyes off the conductor and his baton the result is not a symphony, but a cacophony of discord. So also is the performance of authority in the Orthodox Church: It is often played with a mixture of sour notes and the sweetness of a Beethoven symphony.

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## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue: The Dublin Agreed Statement 1984*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1985, pp. 50-51.

<sup>2</sup> *Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue: Agreed Statements 1985-1989*, Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, 1992, pp. 11, 15-17, 26.

<sup>3</sup> John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1981; Maximos Aghiorgoussis, "Some Preliminary Notions of 'Baptismal Ecclesiology': Baptism and Eucharist, Constitutive of the Church as Communion," in *In the Image of God: Studies in Scripture, Theology and Community*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, 1999, pp. 75-113. John Erickson, "The Local Churches and Catholicity: An Orthodox Perspective," in *The Jurist*, 52 (1992), pp. 490-508.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 505.

<sup>5</sup> George Florovsky, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, Vol. 1 Buechervertriebsanstalt, Belmont, MA, 1987, pp. 93, 103. Florovsky says more in this one chapter on the authority of the ancient councils than what has taken a book for others to write.

<sup>6</sup> Orthodox theologians differ on the precise ranking of theological authorities in the Church. The order I've given above represents a broad consensus.

<sup>7</sup> *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, tr. Benedicta Ward, Cistercian Publishers, Kalamazoo, MI, 1975, pp. 31-32.

## **Does Wisdom Accompany Suffering? – “Melian” Notes**

### *1.*

Reflecting upon European identity, we not only remember our history and look ahead towards its coming developments, but we are also engaged in critique, that is to say in forms of analysis that bring into play normative standards by which actual developments are judged in view of unrealized possibilities of historical situation. Thus understood, critique is internally connected with hope, with the tenacious determination not to reduce history to a series of empirical events, but to judge and evaluate it both emotionally and morally in view of possibilities to lessen the suffering, to enhance the opportunities to experience joy and to increase the room people have to articulate what is more important for them and to increase the changes that they will be heard and understood by others.

### *2.*

When I asked recently a former dissident, who was imprisoned by the East German State Security (Stasi), “does wisdom accompany suffering”, and I did not mention the context of Ancient Greek drama, his answer was straight: “No. It does not.” And he explained:

This fallacy is perpetuated by people who have suffered and somehow need to justify that suffering. The idea that human suffering tends to be purposeless is so unattractive that we have to invent reasons for it - spiritual growth, character-building experience, trials of adulthood, punishment from god, and temptations of the devil, whatever. I won't try to convince you that your suffering has NO value. My thesis is on that wisdom is not conferred by privation or suffering.

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I replied:

Now what about privation? Does it sharpen our wits, make us lean and clever? Is necessity the mother of invention?" But he stood firm: "That's just something we tell ourselves so, once again, we can justify our suffering, and not have to stop. We seem to think of privation as one of our civilization's motivation techniques, and therefore, a good thing. We embrace our poverty like we embrace our pain. We have convinced ourselves that it's good for us.

Only when I added the Ancient Athenian context to our dialogue we could agree that the orchestra is neither a gulag nor a playground for brainwashing. *The Bacchai* came to mind as well as *The Melian Dialogue*.

3.

The *Melian dialogue* is a dramatic set-piece debate inserted by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, his account of the ruinous 27-year long struggle (431-404 BC) between the powerful Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta. It is one of the two most famous instances of fictionalized speeches in the book (the other being the defense of Athenian democracy in the funeral oration of Pericles in the beginning of the work). These speeches were not necessarily made just as written, but were inserted for literary effect, according to what Thucydides felt was "called for in the situation".<sup>1</sup> The Melian dialogue takes place fifteen years into the Peloponnesian war, during the confrontation in 416-415 BC between the Athenians and the people of Melos, a small island located in the southern Aegean Sea just east of Sparta. The Athenians demanded that the Melians surrender their city and pay them tribute or face the destruction of their city. The Melians claimed their right to remain neutral, appealing to the Athenians' sense of decency and mercy toward a small, peaceful, and defenseless city. The Athenians sternly replied that questions of justice did not arise between unequal powers and proceeded to lay siege to Melos as they had threatened to do, and to starve the resisting inhabitants into surrender, slaughter the men of military age, and enslave the women and children. This act has become "famous as the worst atrocity committed by a usually decent society, but even more as one of the most famous assertions in history of the rights of unbridled power," according to the historian Alan Ryan, who writes that, "The Athenian insistence that 'justice is what is divided when equal forces are opposed, while possibilities are what superiors impose and the weak acquiesce to' has been discussed by practical people and by philosophers ever since. Not everyone has rejected the Athenian case."<sup>2</sup> Ryan also notes that although Thucydides portrays the Melians as

having always been strictly neutral and wishing to remain so, in fact, this was not true. Melos was a Spartan colony and had aided Sparta at the beginning of the war.<sup>3</sup> In general, however, “the Dialogue is formally not about the morality of the eventual execution, but about the Melian response to the Athenians’ first demand, that Melos should submit.”<sup>4</sup>

The Athenians, in a frank and matter-of-fact manner, offer the Melians an ultimatum: surrender and pay tribute to Athens, or be destroyed. (Reading this, one can only hope that the Kiev government can resist Putin’s depredations. Kiev seems to understand it needs to gain the upper hand on the ground before contemplating a settlement.) The Melians argue that it would be shameful and cowardly of them to submit without a fight. In Thucydides’ account, “If such hazards are taken by you to keep your empire and by your subjects to escape it, we who are still free would show ourselves great cowards and weaklings if we failed to face everything that comes rather than submit to slavery.”<sup>5</sup> The Athenians counter that the debate is not about honor but about self-preservation.

The Melians argue that though the Athenians are far stronger, there is still a chance they could win. The Athenians counter that only the strong have a right to indulge in hope; the weak Melians are hopelessly outnumbered.

The Ukrainians understand (what the EU avoids to recognize) that Putin will grab what he can until Ukraine pushes back.

The Melians state that they also refuse because they believe they have the assistance of the gods. Thucydides recounts, “We trust that the gods will give us fortune as good as yours, because we are standing for what is right against what is wrong.”<sup>6</sup> The Athenians counter that gods and men alike respect strength over moral arguments, summarizing this in the famous dictum that, “The strong do as they can and the weak suffer what they must.”

The Melians insist that their Spartan kin will come to their defense. The Athenians argue that the Spartans have nothing to gain and a lot to lose by coming to the Melians’ aid – mere kinship will not motivate them.

The Athenians then conclude the argument by saying there is no shame in submitting to a stronger enemy. The Melians do not change their minds and politely dismiss the envoys.

The following quotation is from the dialogue between unnamed Athenian envoys negotiate with unnamed Melians as recounted by Thucydides:

ATHENIANS: For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretenses – either of how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Mede, or are now attacking you because of wrong that you have done us – and make a long speech which would not be believed; and in return we hope that you, instead of thinking to influence us by saying that you did not join the Spartans, although

their colonists, or that you have done us now wrong, will aim at what is feasible, holding in view the real sentiments of us both; since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must (5.89).

MELIANS: You may be sure that we are as well aware as you of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust, and that what we want in power will be made up by the alliance of the Lacedaemonians, who are bound, if only for very shame, to come to the aid of their kindred. Our confidence, therefore, after all is not so utterly irrational.

ATHENIANS: Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist forever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do (5.105.2).<sup>7</sup>

Later, about 2,000 years ago, the Teacher from Galilee gave a similar framework to guide his people through their troubled world. It wasn't meant to be trite philosophy or prose, but a personal anchor to securely moor them in times of great insecurity. The very night Jesus spoke it, it is believed, multiple prophecies were coming to a collective bursting point. His world and that of his followers was about to be turned upside down. In less than a day Jesus would be dead – crucified!

Nonetheless, his teaching squarely laid out a blueprint of hope for generations to come to build on in John 14:27-28:

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, I am going away and coming back to you.”

The peace that Christ mentions, believers can tell you, is something he owns by experience and shares with those who respond to his call of “Follow Me.” Such peace is a direct gift from God to those who focus on and truly believe in his promises and reach for them even in their very real moments of despair. Its “melos” expanded and enhanced during the atheist communist dictatorships for many suppressed as a spiritual perspective that

realized the incredible forces engaged in God's great abiding plan of rescue. During the 1989/90 revolution, the churches in East Germany were not only safer haven's to start from than the streets, but they gave the people insight beyond the moment to strengthen their unsteady hearts! *Melian dialogues* (on "round tables") with the weakening dictatorships accompanied the rising self-liberation of the people, providing the means to rise above whatever came their way.

4.

So influenced are we by the Greek origins of our thinking about political matters that the best of our political theory remains imprisoned within their forms of consciousness. A political theory raised to the height that the historical sense of the value of the person makes possible has not been developed. Our collective memory in Kraiova, at today's Melos, or in Eastern Ukraine, reminds one that history demands to be heard. If this precept so understood is explicitly held in mind, the primacy of the person looms so large that the secondary and derivative character of the state as a necessary, but limited, earthly institution, and not more, becomes sharply apparent. The state ceases to be seen as an institution universal and coextensive with the sum of human relations that is called society. It becomes possible for political theory to break out of the bonds imposed on it by the men of genius who created it, to overcome the limits of the conditions of the Greek consciousness, and to attain the deeper understanding accessible to it on the basis of the Western doctrine of the person.

5.

The view of modern Western story as "a catastrophe", as a succession of ruins - from the failed French Revolution to the successful mass-murders at Auschwitz - is central to the postmodern historical sense, to its offshoot in posthistoire, and to its depiction of the past. The unique twentieth-century intersections of rationality and genocide, of advanced technology and nuclear destruction, of an ideology of progress and praxis of barbarism, have become constitutive paradigms for the postmodern mind. Benjamin, a pre-WW II-Marxist essayist, is recently recovered as a witness for the troublesome headlines and the anguish of today's stalled social reality. He contributes to this store of images not only through his view of history as "wreckage upon wreckage" but through his view of the past as a formless potential that responds to, and emerges from, the needs of the present-which is the only incontestable reality. (...) For Benjamin, the present dictate the

past we use and remember, the past is called forth and “saved” by the needs of “now”, of Benjamin’s *Jetztzeit*. Unlike the Hegelian idealist perspective in which historical reason shapes historical evolution in an ever-perfecting progression, for Benjamin, memory is the central category of an historical consciousness. When I discussed with the dissident, which I mentioned in the beginning, this view, he quoted a old Christian view of resistance and hope: “It’s been said that ‘courage is fear holding on a minute longer’. As we take that brief time longer with focus on God’s promises rather than our human promises, our knees may still be knocking together, but shaky walls of our heart can begin to firm up. Let’s consider a few of those promises to enable you to ‘let not your heart be troubled’”.

Since the past is created through the needs of the present, history cannot be seen as a linear continuity, as a narrative with fixed and casual episodes. It is, after all, the victors who compose the “narrative with fixed and casual episodes. It is, after all, the victors who compose the “narrative” of the past, and they compose a “*continuum*” that always excludes the story of the vanquished. ...The continuum, that closed and casual narrative of the past, silences the memory of the defeated and powerless for which the past is an uneven succession of fragmented and interrupted moments. ...” The history of the oppressed is a discontinuous history,” Benjamin wrote, “Continuity is that of the oppressors.” Thus, in order to overcome this historicist hold on the past to those excluded, Benjamin proposed a view of history that would imitate memory, stressing the breaks and interruptions of the past and created in the form of discontinuous fragments. To really historicize his view and to use it for present challenges, the Ancient Melian’s demands as well as the Christian belief, that in the war against God, there is no question about who will ultimately win, determine their use value (*Gebrauchswert*).

6.

In 1989 we reached neither the end nor the beginning of history. But the democratic awakening of the Middle and Eastern European nations and its unifying force for the continent is the dominant quality and measure. From Estonia to Cyprus, from Wales to the Black Sea, in Athens and Bucuresti count the same standards for critique and normative justification for practical humanizing activities motivated by critical analysis and practical solidarity. It is the individual person and its unique worth that is at the center of most humanist traditions of such different cultural roots. But then again: what is this individual person? How should we envisage it identity, characteristics and capabilities? In view of all that has been said already, it is clear that we can no longer meaningfully picture the individual

person according to the modern model of the subject as a rational, self-contained, disembodied and autonomous person. It is precisely this humanistic and fallocratic model of the subject that has fallen prey to such a load of convincing critique during the division of Europe. (...)

My central contention would be that any model of the subject as a multiple entity has a chance to enlighten, if it opens itself for the experiences, feelings and thoughts of a great many individuals in post-1989 society. In my opinion and experience, this practical, individualized embodied humanism of the self-liberated also contains a promise. It is the promise that one day the angel of history will be able to do without wings, that is can become a human individual, no longer blown backwards into future by the storm of progress but able to fold its wings and kneel down at the mounts of human misery. Not to heal what was broken, nor to restore a lost unity or fulfill a promised destiny, but caring for the victims and their wounds, not leaving them alone – and thus caring for and accepting his own wounds and multiplicity and for that reason being very much alive...

As long as we use all dialectical tools to grasp the changing reality before our eyes we will gain the critical concept theatre needs to serve its audience.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Warren, New York, 1889, 2.34-2.46. Greek text and English translation.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Ryan, *On Politics. A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present*, Vol. 1, Liveright, New York and London, 2012, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> D. M. Lewis, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. V., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 444.

<sup>5</sup> Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, p. 403 (5.100).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 404 (5.104)

<sup>7</sup> Robert B. Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, Free Press, New York, 1996, pp. 352-354.

### Appendix

“Life cannot be destroyed for good, neither can history be brought entirely to a halt. A secret streamlet trickles on beneath the heavy lid of inertia and pseudo-events, slowly and inconspicuously undercutting it. It may be a long process but one day it must happen: the lid will no longer hold and will start to crack. This is the moment when something once more begins visibly to happen, something truly new and unique...something truly historical, in the sense that history again demands to be heard.”

Vaclav Havel (*Living in Truth*)



## The Critique of Rhetoric in Plato's Dialogues

The contact with four of Plato's Dialogues (428 – 347 BC) – *The Sophist* [or What It Identifies; the logical genre], *Euthydemus* [or The Eristic; the anatreptic genre], *Gorgias* [or On Rhetoric], and *Phaedrus* [or On Beautiful; an ethical dialogue] – represented not only a moment of great philosophical deepness but also different stages of the analysis of rhetoric which was practiced in the city.

The negative interpretation which was given to the word “Sophist” became a normal one starting, most probably, with Socrates and his disciples Plato, Xenophon, and later on with Aristotle. However, for Sophists, rhetoric was a civic and political first rank force. In their position of professional advocates in refutation and being fervent ethical and political supporters and educators of the new generation, they came out as rhetoricians or masters of rhetoric.

Yet, the speech and the arguments used by Sophists were sometimes on the verge of morality, substituting truth for reality, for a seeming truth which was induced through the seeming correctness of used arguments or of a bombastic speech. Thus, Sophists' rhetoric will become a source of manipulation for the hearers, while Sophists' ability will be considered by Plato (in his dialogue the *Sophist* / Σοφιστής<sup>1</sup>) more harmful for the act of knowledge than ignorance in itself. Hence the radicalization of this position in comparison to Sophists who were characterized as false educators.

The Sophist's first six cases are obtained through *the division method* whose dialectical specificity is constituted by its dichotomic character i.e. the division of genre in two classes that exclude themselves on a reciprocal basis. They are contrary to each other and they often appear in a positive or in a negative form. The aim of the division method is not only limited to the division of genres according to classes. Its aim is that of defining and as far as our dialogue is concerned, its aim is that of giving the Sophist's definition. The pick up of one of these alternatives observes the law of non-contradiction and the rules of dichotomic division:

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STRANGER: Then let us try again; let us divide in two the class we have taken up for discussion, and proceed always by way of the right-hand part of the thing divided, clinging close to the company to which the sophist belongs, until, having stripped him of all common properties and left him only his own peculiar nature, we shall show him plainly first.<sup>2</sup>

Before the Sophist's arguments are presented one can notice that according to all definitions which resulted through the dichotomic division method, the conqueror's leitmotif is that of the one who possesses and "partakes of no mean art, but of a very many-sided one"<sup>3</sup>:

STRANGER: First ... let us count up the number of forms in which the sophist has appeared to us. First, I believe, he was found to be a paid hunter for the young and wealthy.

...

STRANGER: And secondly a kind of merchant in articles of knowledge for the soul.

...

STRANGER: And thirdly did he not turn up as a retailer of these same articles of knowledge?

...

THEAETETUS: Yes, and fourthly we found he was a seller of his own productions of knowledge.

STRANGER: Your memory is good; but I will try to recall the fifth case myself. He was an athlete in contests of words, who had taken for his own the art of disputation.

...

STRANGER: The sixth case was doubtful, but nevertheless we agreed to consider him a purger of souls, who removes opinions that obstruct learning.<sup>4</sup>

The answer to the Sophist's seventh case is obtained through a different method but also as a result of a long, reflexive, and metaphysical digression: the Sophist imitates wisdom, he dissimulates himself in the political life, he shows mimicry in the art of refutations, and he initiates creations. These negative attributes were explicitly formulated only at the end of this dialogue. But what could be the starting point of this analysis? The premise, the moment of preparation for the last case are very clearly stated:

STRANGER: We must not let that happen to us in our search through lack of diligence. So let us first take up again one of our statements about the sophist. For there is one of them which seemed to me to designate him most plainly.

...

STRANGER: Now let us examine and see what the subjects are about which such men say they make their pupils able to dispute. Let us begin our examination at the beginning with this question: Is it about divine things which are invisible to others that they make people able to dispute?"<sup>5</sup>

Trying to go into more details with this analysis in order to draw a last conclusion, Plato (through the intermediary of the *Stranger*) puts in a contrast the dichotomy between *what it is* with the refutation of *what the respective thing is not*. The newly applied method is, actually speaking, the main idea of the *Sophist* dialogue since through it he follows up the analysis of the problematic of the "being". It is not by chance that Plato focused on a series of supreme classes<sup>6</sup>, ideal entities, and forms of essence that exist in themselves and for themselves and whose status would be guaranteed by their simple, correct, and non-refutable definition.

The first three important cases or genera have a distinctive position: "being itself", "rest" or "repose", and "motion". There is a negative relationship between "repose" and "motion" because they do not mingle with each other. On the other hand, "being itself" mingles with the other two. However, each one of them has a double relationship: one goes to itself, it is *identical* with itself or "the same", and in comparison to the others it is *different* or "apart". Both of them are considered to be cases. Thus there are five genera, five general cases. Without going into further details, each case mingles in a certain way with the others, in a constellation of relationships.<sup>7</sup> Their diversity allows the existence of predication and of meaningful speech. According to Plato's mythology the supreme genera represent the universe of the authentic being while only gods are being endowed with eternal contemplation. In comparison to them, people are endowed only with the memory of contemplation, which is conditioned, in its turn, by the existence of sensitive things which imitate it.

According to some parts of his dialogue, Plato submits to our attention the important issue of the relationship between "being" and "non-being" attempting to find, with the help of a comparative analysis, a solution which was different in comparison to the one of his predecessors (Parmenides and Heraclitus). Thus, in a certain way, he anticipated and suggested the Theory of Ideas (The Theory of Forms). Non-being is presented in two different ways: on the one hand, as the refutation of being, i.e. it cannot exist; on the other hand, it appears as "another", as something *different* from the being, i.e. it possesses its own nature, which is the nature of *alterity*. Consequently, we can get to what even Plato himself called Parmenides' "parricide"<sup>8</sup>. We would just like to remind you briefly that according to Parmenides the whole of existent things, their permanent changing forms, as well as their motion represent only aspects of an eternal

and unique reality which we call “being”. His fundamental conclusion according to which “everything is One”, if we take “being” as thought, as “all things”, and as “One”, leads to the conclusion that any statement about multiplicity, motion, change or non-being is illogical and illusive. This is the interpretation of things according to judgement, the interpretation of abstract identity, of the whole being, a thing which leads to the impossibility of avoiding paradoxes. Contrary to that, Heraclitus gave a refutative interpretation to being, to all things, and to One. He stated that according to things that are in a permanent motion and in a constant change, “everything flows” (*panta rhei*). The implementation of this thesis at the level of thought leads to the identification of true with false, to affirmation with negation, to the simultaneous backing of two contradictory sentences, the passage of an idea to its opposite, a thing which leads to sophistry.

In spite of all this, Plato will not stick to any of the above-mentioned conceptions. In order to unbind them from the limits or constraints imposed by his fellow predecessors and in order to make predication possible, he will embrace, in a very clear manner, the ideas concerning the distinction between thought and sensitive things. Focused pre-eminently on the identification of Sophist’s last definition the relationship between being and non-being pops out both surely and indirectly as a background of a first solution of the dialogue.

In an explicit way, Plato speaks of *something that is*, around which an infinity of realities *that are not* can migrate. In other words, the fact of being another one, something else, alterity or, according to a relative and general sense, “non-being” treated as “another” but still within “being”. Last but not least, the aim is to make a clear-cut distinction between the division of being and existence, as well as the justification of false without appealing to any confrontation of judgement with sensitive things:

STRANGER: In relation to motion, then, not-being is. That is inevitable. And this extends to all classes; for in all of them the nature of other so operates as to make each one other than being, and therefore not-being. So we may, from this point of view, rightly say of all of them alike that they are not; and again, since they partake of being, that they are and have being.<sup>9</sup>

As a conclusion, Sophist’s seventh case is no longer the result of dichotomic successive divisions, but it is *the complementarity of a given reality, everything that is not*. Practically speaking, as for the quest of the last definition, a different type of meditative, reflexive, typically philosophical or metaphysical analysis intermingles. Yet, at the end of this dialogue, the philosophical reflection seems to lose its strength making room to the unfailable method of dichotomic division. It will keep being open as a presumptive and undetermined quest on the sage and philosopher’s lecture:

STRANGER: I am considering, and I think I can see two classes I see one who can dissemble in long speeches in public before a multitude, and the other who does it in private in short speeches and forces the person who converses with him to contradict himself.

THEAETETUS: You are quite right.

STRANGER: And what name shall we give to him who makes the longer speeches? Statesman or popular orator?

THEAETETUS: Popular orator.

STRANGER: And what shall we call the other? Philosopher or sophist?

THEAETETUS: We cannot very well call him philosopher, since by our hypothesis he is ignorant; but since he is all imitator of the philosopher, he will evidently have a name derived from his, and I think I am sure at last that we must truly call him the absolutely real and actual sophist.

STRANGER: Shall we then bind up his name as we did before, winding it up from the end to the beginning?

THEAETETUS: By all means.

STRANGER: The imitative kind of the dissembling part of the art of opinion which is part of the art of contradiction and belongs to the fantastic class of the image-making art, and is not divine, but human, and has been defined in arguments as the juggling part of productive activity – he who says that the true sophist is of this descent and blood will, in my opinion, speak the exact truth.<sup>10</sup>

We should add a further essential aspect which will allow us to go on with the analysis of the second dialogue. As far as this domain is concerned and as an expert in refutation the Sophist is also a teacher for others. What could possibly be the miracle of a Sophistical talent? With the *Stranger's* help, Plato will reveal this miracle: refutable argumentation, imitator of things, and control over a certain type of knowledge based on opinion and not on truth. The devastating attack on Sophists makes use not only of the two methods of analysis (that of dichotomic division and that of complementarity), consubstantially connected to the method illustrated by dialogue (dialectic) but it also focuses on the very argumentation, because, as an expert in refutation, the Sophist has not proved to be of a best honesty.

STRANGER: Well then, may we not expect to find that there is another art which has to do with words, by virtue of which it is possible to bewitch the young through their ears with words while they are still standing at a distance from the realities of truth, by exhibiting to them spoken images of all things, so as to make it seem that they are true and that the speaker is the wisest of all men in all things?<sup>11</sup>

Making use of their specific approach, in his dialogue *Euthydemus* (*Ευθυδημος*)<sup>12</sup>, Plato aims at bringing arguments to the impossibility of refutation, since refutation, as a dialogue relationship, is seen by Sophists as an essential element of the revelation and promotion of truth. But before we analyze the paradox mentioned hereabove and its aim in the dispute of argumentation and of the type of rhetoric which was practiced by Sophists, we have to analyze the very terms in the subtitle of this dialogue “eristic” and “anatreptic.

“Eristic” (Greek *eristikos*, from *erizein* – a contradictory discussion where *eriz* means chaos, strife, and discord). It is a sort of a verbal argument (Gabriel Liiceanu<sup>13</sup>) which, opposed to dialectic does not aim to resolve a conflict, but rather refute, at any cost, the opponent’s statements. The term is also a name (“the Eristics”). It was given to the followers of the Megarian school of philosophy due to their predisposition to the logical argumentation of a Sophistic nature. To this we shall have to add that during Plato’s time, eristic was a corrupted dialectic, a sort of intellectual immorality combined with an aimless skillfulness which took the risk of breaking the practice of wisdom with the cultivation of virtue, a real spiritual fact under the disguise of the Socratic dialectic. All these leave the impression that philosophy and truth are endangered. The other term, “the anatreptic genre” is a dialogue of refutation, overthrowing rebutting theses.

The whole dialogue *Euthydemus* deals only with Sophisms (it has 21 Sophisms of this genre). Evidently, it is not only Aristotle’s source of inspiration, but also the mere basis of his theory on Sophisms.<sup>14</sup>

Building a very solid structure (of situations and ideas) but also making use of irony according to Sophists, Constantin Noica<sup>15</sup> divides the 21 Sophisms in four relevant groups: teaching (Will you like to be taught? *But what is the meaning of teaching?*); true and false (Will you like to witness young people’s spiritual change? *But what exactly does it mean to pretend, to be, and to stop being, and how a truth can be about what it is not?*); refutation (Do you claim that you do not agree with us and that you refute us? *But how is refutation possible?*); encyclopedic knowledge (Do you question us on the art of knowledge and happiness? We are in the capacity of showing you that you have it. *He who knows one thing, knows them all.*).

Let us remove from *Euthydemus* the paradox of the impossibility of refutation (285 d – 293 b) and analyze its mechanism. The following dialogue is between Ctesippus (a Sophist) and Dionysodorus (Euthydemus’ brother, both of them Sophists). Their dialogue is on knowledge, virtue, and its nature, but in the end they both disagree:

Then Ctesippus said: ... And yet Dionysodorus here believes I am vexed with him. I am not vexed at all; I only contradict the remarks which I think he has improperly aimed at me. Come now, my

generous Dionysodorus, do not call contradiction abuse: abuse is quite another thing.

On this Dionysodorus said: As though there were such a thing as contradiction! Is that the way you argue, Ctesippus?

Yes, to be sure, he replied, indeed I do; and do you, Dionysodorus, hold that there is not?

Well, you at any rate, he said, could not prove that you had ever heard a single person contradicting another.

Is that so? he replied: well, let us hear now whether I can prove a case of it.

Ctesippus contradicting Dionysodorus: Now, will you make that good?

Certainly, he said.

Well then, proceeded the other, each thing that is has its own description?

Certainly.

Then do you mean, as each is, or as it is not?

As it is.

Yes, he said, for if you recollect, Ctesippus, we showed just now that no one speaks of a thing as it is not; since we saw that no one speaks what is not.

Well, what of that? asked Ctesippus: are you and I contradicting any the less?

Now tell me, he said, could we contradict if we both spoke the description of the same thing? In this case should we not surely speak the same words?

He agreed. But when neither of us speaks the description of the thing, he asked, then we should contradict? Or in this case shall we say that neither of us touched on the matter at all?

This also he admitted. Well now, when I for my part speak the description of the thing, while you give another of another thing, do we contradict then? Or do I describe the thing, while you do not describe it at all? How can he who does not describe contradict him who does?

At this Ctesippus was silent.<sup>16</sup>

The theme of this aporia is an amazing one, the more so that Plato's thinking is a permanent debate on refutation, while the theme of refutation is the basis of any dialectic. But the type of polemic which was practiced by some Sophists as well as the degrading way of supporting any point of view contrary to the truth, most probably made Plato offer them cynically not only a twisted sample of argumentation, as the one mentioned above, but also an argumentation which could compromise them. Thus, he worked out 21 different Sophisms that could apply to different domains, according to

which, common sense, characteristic to Ctesippus, had to keep quiet. One cannot deny the fact that Sophists are undoubtedly right in comparison to common sense. However, they miss another type of judgement, the speculative-philosophical one similar to that of Plato's according to which reality and thinking would be under the same prolific sign of refutation.

Refutation always makes reference to something, to a thing, object, occupation, phenomenon, situation, virtue, the destiny of the city-state, and the way youngsters are educated. In our case it refers to refutation having an impact on the relationship between true and false. A contradictory dialogue will always appear as an argument on things that are under dispute. So, what is the conclusion of the above dialogue?

If our argumentation tells the truth about things, then *contradiction is impossible* because, in the absolute, there is only a unique truth concerning the things we talk about; if one of the speakers expresses false arguments on things, *contradiction is once again impossible*, because we take into consideration only the qualities of things which cannot be easily changed; and if speakers talk about different things, *they do not contradict themselves* because any contradiction has to make reference to one and the same thing.

Then what is the mechanism of this paradox? On the one hand it relies on the impossibility of false: for instance, if two people talk about the same thing, they cannot contradict themselves, unless one of them utters a false argument; according to Sophists, this false argument cannot be uttered because, while saying something, one utters the being clearly and distinctly; consequently, to utter the false means to say nothing. On the other hand, the argument that one thing goes only for one statement, leads to the impossibility of refutation. This is based on the unacceptable identification between the argumentation of identity (A is A, which aims at the essence of the thing) with the argumentation of assignment (A is B, A is C, A is D etc., which refers to the diversified and multiple character of the same thing). From the metaphysical point of view, paradox is based on Parmenides' conception which we analyzed earlier. It denies the multiple character of being, while at a logical level, it denies division. What Sophists do not talk about is that anything is simultaneously one and multiple. This explains the possibility of expressing different statements about the same thing, thus the possibility of generating a contradiction. As a conclusion, Plato's text refutes the existence of contradiction which was so often used by Sophists in their argumentation. Although this conclusion seems to be a paradoxical and an amazing one, Plato made use of the very weapon of argumentation in order to disrepute "the art of controversy" which was practiced with a smaller honesty by some Sophists.

The discussion on controversies was reviewed in other dialogues as well, since Plato felt from an early age the necessity of approaching rhetoric, of establishing its essence, and value of truth. His answer was clearly stated

in *Gorgias* (*Γοργίας*)<sup>17</sup>, also known with the subtitle of *On Rhetoric*. In it Socrates, Plato's interface, stood vigorously not only against rhetoric (through the revelation of his philosophical and moral shortcomings) but also against the way Sophists made use of it in order to educate the citizens and the young people of Athens.

This dialogue is displayed on the three different levels of a deep analysis on the definition of rhetoric. Sometimes, it was cut by unexpectedly impulsive interferences out of which a whole series of theoretical and practical implications derived. The first level brings to the foreground Socrates in a dialogue with Gorgias.

Socrates and Chaerephon were invited to Callicles' who was an aristocrat. He belonged to the new generation of Athenian politicians and he was a student of foreign rhetoricians. They were supposed to meet the Sophist, Gorgias, who was a famous rhetorician and a teacher of demonstrative eloquence (epideictic) which makes use of fictitious themes or of moral dissertations on mythical topics presented with virtuosity and inventivity. Being interested in the technique of rhetoric, Polus, Gorgias' pupil, was there too. Arousing the hearers' admiration, Gorgias had just concluded a rhetorical argumentation. Then, Socrates asked the respected Sophist about the nature of his art, rhetoric. The given answers will become major premises of subsequent argumentations: the object of rhetoric is the art of speech where the word plays an essential part, while its force consists in its capacity to create conviction. Among all arts where the word plays the most important part, rhetoric can be applied in political life, in law courts, and in citizens' assemblies where the rhetorician has to persuade on things that are just or unjust.

SOCRATES: ... tell us what is this thing that you say is the greatest good for men, and that you claim to produce.

GORGIAS: A thing, Socrates, which in truth is the greatest good, and a cause not merely of freedom to mankind at large, but also of dominion to single persons in their several cities.

SOCRATES: Well, and what do you call it?

GORGIAS: I call it the ability to persuade with speeches either judges in the law courts or statesmen in the council-chamber or the commons in the Assembly or an audience at any other meeting that may be held on public affairs. And I tell you that by virtue of this power you will have the doctor as your slave, and the trainer as your slave; your money-getter will turn out to be making money not for himself, but for another, in fact for you, who are able to speak and persuade the multitude.

SOCRATES: ... Or can you tell us of any other function it can have beyond that of effecting persuasion in the minds of an audience?

...

GORGIAS: Well then, I mean that kind of persuasion, Socrates, which you find in the law-courts and in any public gatherings, as in fact I said just now; and it deals with what is just and unjust.<sup>19</sup>

For the Sophist Gorgias, to know what is just and unjust is nothing else but a means which the rhetorician makes use of. Opposite to that, Socrates states that we could not know what is just if we do not have the wish to achieve it. However, Gorgias' demand to consider rhetoric a domain of true craft or art (*techne*, having the meaning of a creating activity which is specialized and based on theoretical knowledge), urges Socrates to make a clear-cut distinction between knowledge and faith and to establish the two types of conviction: the former which is based on faith without knowledge (an equivalent to *doxa* opinion), the latter which is based on knowledge (an equivalent to knowledge, *episteme*). Where can we put rhetoric? Since all types of knowledge have the same aim, out of this dialogue, one can draw the conclusion that it is not enough to define rhetoric only through the wish of persuasion. While admitting that rhetoric is able to create a special type of persuasion which is called verisimilitude and which sticks to knowledge, Gorgias also makes the political rhetorician's portrait:

GORGIAS: Well, and is it not a great convenience, Socrates, to make oneself a match for the professionals by learning just this single art and omitting all the others?<sup>20</sup>

In other words, a rhetorician will be able to speak in front of anybody and about anything. He will be able to persuade the hearers according to his own wish, but, in exchange, he will not be tributary to any real knowledge. In order to prove all this, Gorgias confesses his own achievements:

GORGIAS: Many and many a time have I gone with my brother or other doctors to visit one of their patients, and found him unwilling either to take medicine or submit to the surgeon's knife or cautery; and when the doctor failed to persuade him I succeeded, by no other art than that of rhetoric. And I further declare that, if a rhetorician and a doctor were to enter any city you please, and there had to contend in speech before the Assembly or some other meeting as to which of the two should be appointed physician, you would find the physician was nowhere, while the master of speech would be appointed if he wished. And if he had to contend with a member of any other profession whatsoever, the rhetorician would persuade the meeting to appoint him before anyone else in the place: for there is no subject on which the rhetorician could not speak more persuasively than a member of any other profession whatsoever, before a multitude. So great, so strange, is the power of this art.<sup>21</sup>

It was not only Plato through Socrates, but, later on, in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle emphasized the quality of traditional rhetoric to persuade and not to know or learn. The first moment when the tension between the two opponents is shown is the attempt of Gorgias' shirking. He felt explicitly lured by a complete contradiction between the speech about justice expressed by the rhetorician and the occasional use of rhetoric in an unjust way:

SOCRATES: Of what sort am I? One of those who would be glad to be refuted if I say anything untrue, and glad to refute anyone else who might speak untruly; but just as glad, mind you, to be refuted as to refute, since I regard the former as the greater benefit, in proportion as it is a greater benefit for oneself to be delivered from the greatest evil than to deliver some one else. For I consider that a man cannot suffer any evil so great as a false opinion on the subjects of our actual argument.<sup>22</sup>

This formula used by Plato will often recur with slight variations in other tense moments of the dialogue (Socrates – Polus, 472 c; Socrates – Callicles, 500 c; Socrates – Callicles 513 a). It drew the attention to the absurdities made by eristical refutations opposed to the earnestness of the aim of the carried out dialectical analysis. It also dissociated more clearly Socrates from the Sophists who, generally speaking, were misjudged by Athenians.

The dialogue between Socrates and Gorgias is interrupted by the young and ambitious Polus. Defending the prestige of rhetoric, he presents it like being “the most beautiful of all arts” but, coming to the aid of his master Gorgias, he receives from Socrates an unexpected answer:

SOCRATES: Are you asking what art I call it?

Polus: Yes.

SOCRATES: None at all, I consider, Polus, if you would have the honest truth.

POLUS: But what do you consider rhetoric to be?

SOCRATES: A thing which you say – in the treatise which I read of late – “made art”.

POLUS: What thing do you mean?

SOCRATES: I mean a certain habitude.

POLUS: Then do you take rhetoric to be a habitude?

SOCRATES: I do, if you have no other suggestion.

POLUS: Habitude of what?

SOCRATES: Of producing a kind of gratification and pleasure.<sup>23</sup>

Being puzzled by the twist of the dialogue, since gratification and pleasure could also be characteristic to gastronomy, and it could be one and

the same thing with rhetoric, Gorgias interferes in the dialogue, offering bluntly the most sincere and the most severe appreciations on rhetoric:

SOCRATES: I fear it may be too rude to tell the truth; for I shrink from saying it on Gorgias' account, lest he suppose I am making satirical fun of his own profession. Yet, indeed, I do not know whether this is the rhetoric which Gorgias practices, for from our argument just now we got no very clear view as to how he conceives it; but what I call rhetoric is a part of a certain business which has nothing fine about it.

GORGIAS: What is that, Socrates? Tell us, without scruple on my account.

SOCRATES: It seems to me then, Gorgias, to be a pursuit that is not a matter of art, but showing a shrewd, gallant spirit which has a natural bent for clever dealing with mankind, and I sum up its substance in the name flattery. This practice, as I view it, has many branches, and one of them is cookery; which appears indeed to be an art but, by my account of it, is not an art but a habitude or knack. I call rhetoric another branch of it, as also personal adornment and sophistry – four branches of it for four kinds of affairs.

SOCRATES: Now, will you understand when I answer? Rhetoric, by my account, is a semblance of a branch of politics.<sup>24</sup>

Plato's inflexible position in comparison to sophistry and rhetoric as *arts of likeness* and not as arts of reality came after the dialogue between Gorgias and Polus and as a whole series of negative characteristics: *empiricism* or the domain of enjoyment and pleasure; *flattery* or the capacity of attracting and of manipulating people; *simulacrum* or the character of a likeness or of a utopic existence.

Asked by Georgias to give further explanations about the fact that rhetoric is "the simulacrum of a part of politics", Socrates starts on a new thesis which derives from the medical practice i.e. the medicine of the body as a paradigm of a medicine of the mind, a thesis which can be found in other dialogues that were written by Plato. The health of our body is kept up through *gymnastics* and *medicine*, while the health of our soul is kept up through *legislation* and *justice*. Their role is that of creating and re-establishing the health of the two branches. Politics represents the art of taking care of the soul in the two following ways: *legislation*, as a sign of taking care of a healthy soul i.e. a right one and *justice*, as a sign of taking care of a sick soul i.e. unjust (the curative – re-educative role of the judicial punishment, which is analogous to the medical treatment). Consequently, there are two methods of looking after both for the arts of the soul and for the arts of the body; the former is the one which takes care of *pleasure*, the latter or *the good*, is acquired not through the cultivation of pleasure but through its limitation. However, Socrates states that pleasure, flattery, and

demagogues are substituted to the two components of human entity: for the arts of the body, the pair of simulacra *toilet* and *cooking*, are opposed to gymnastics and medicine; for the arts of the mind, the pair of simulacra *sophistry* and *rhetoric*, that are contrary to legislation and justice. As far as these two components of the human entity are concerned, flattery seizes their way of functioning, seduces, and lures ignorance in the name of pleasure:

SOCRATES: ... and I say that this sort of thing is a disgrace, Polus – for here I address you – because it aims at the pleasant and ignores the best; and I say it is not an art, but a habitude, since it has no account to give of the real nature of the things it applies, and so cannot tell the cause of any of them. I refuse to give the name of art to anything that is irrational: if you dispute my views, I am ready to give my reasons. However, as I put it, cooking is flattery disguised as medicine; and in just the same manner self-adornment personates gymnastic: with its rascally, deceitful, ignoble, and illiberal nature it deceives men by forms and colors, polish and dress so as to make them, in the effort of assuming an extraneous beauty, neglect the native sort that comes through gymnastic. Well, to avoid prolixity, I am willing to put it to you like a geometer – for by this time I expect you can follow me: as self-adornment is to gymnastic, so is sophistry to legislation; and as cooking is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice. But although, as I say, there is this natural distinction between them, they are so nearly related that sophists and orators are jumbled up as having the same field and dealing with the same subjects, and neither can they tell what to make of each other, nor the world at large what to make of them. For indeed, if the soul were not in command of the body, but the latter had charge of itself, and so cooking and medicine were not surveyed and distinguished by the soul, but the body itself were the judge, forming its own estimate of them by the gratifications they gave it, we should have a fine instance of what Anaxagoras described, my dear Polus, for you are versed in these matters: everything would be jumbled together, without distinction as between medicinal and healthful and tasty concoctions. Well now, you have heard what I state rhetoric to be the counterpart of cooking in the soul, acting here as that does on the body.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, the aim of rhetoric is not the good, but *pleasure* and *delight*, a thing which leads to the negative appreciation of being *ugly* and *mean*, contrary to the Sophistical criterion followed by Gorgias and Polus, that of being the most beautiful of all arts.

As a sequence of the debate on the ethical principle which claims that it is better *to be backstabbed* than *to be unrighteous*, the second level of the dialogue between Socrates and the young rhetorician, Polus, enhances the

area of research to the aim of defining political rhetoric. One cannot acknowledge the idea of power connected to a tyrant who kills, banishes, and deprives of properties according to his own will. On the contrary, the true power is only when certain aims are pursued according to reason and good. Since he will always be an unjust person, a tyrant will always be helpless and unhappy. Nothing will oppose his own good than his own acts of injustice. Out of all bad things (Socrates claims while defending his own ethical principle) the worst of all is that of being unjust and not being punished for it. Only in this case can rhetoric be replaced. The guilty man will be differed to justice trying to serve his sentence or he simply tries to avoid committing bad things. Only by then will rhetoric have a utility to the extent in which someone's guilt and injustice are emphasized. Similarly to any medical treatment, the guilty man's punishment will be a method of acquiring good and happiness, i.e. the health of the soul:

SOCRATES: ... it is always the wrongdoer who is more wretched than the wronged and the unpunished than the punished? Is not this what I stated?... Then has it not been proved that this was a true statement?... Very well: so if this is true, Polus, what is the great use of rhetoric? For you see by what we have just agreed that a man must keep a close watch over himself so as to avoid wrongdoing, since it would bring a great deal of evil upon him; must he not?... But if he is guilty of wrongdoing, either himself or anyone else he may care for, he must go of his own freewill where he may soonest pay the penalty, to the judge as if to his doctor, with the earnest intent that the disease of his injustice shall not become chronic and cause a deep incurable ulcer in his soul.<sup>26</sup>

Callicles' vehement and the claiming intervention represents the third level of the dialogue. It consists in a complete confrontation between two diametrically opposed ways of thinking and existence; on the one hand, there is Callicles, who is the representative of the politician of his time (the type of an intelligent, active, power-hungry, pleasantries, and an honors man), on the other hand Socrates, the philosopher (the type of a contemplative man, the prophet of a new politics). A certain conception belongs to Socrates, who invokes, in all earnestness, for the first time, philosophy as a science of truth:

SOCRATES: In the Assembly, if the Athenian Demus disagrees with some statement you are making, you change over and say what it desires... you are unable to resist the counsels and statements of your darling, so that if anyone showed surprise at the strangeness of the things you are constantly saying under that influence, you would probably tell him, if you chose to speak the truth, that unless somebody makes your favorite stop speaking thus, you, will never

stop speaking thus either. Consider yourself therefore obliged to hear the same sort of remark from me now, and do not be surprised at my saying it, but make my darling, philosophy, stop talking thus. For she, my dear friend, speaks what you hear me saying now, and she is far less fickle to me than any other favorite... So you must either refute her, as I said just now, by proving that wrongdoing and impunity for wrong done is not the uttermost evil; or, if you leave that unproved, ... there will be no agreement between you and Callicles, but you will be in discord with him all your life. And yet I, my very good sir, should rather choose to have my lyre, or some chorus that I might provide for the public, out of tune and discordant, or to have any number of people disagreeing with me and contradicting me, than that I should have internal discord and contradiction in my own single self.<sup>27</sup>

Callicles, who was a successful rhetorician and politician, submitted to our attention a diametrically opposed vision. In a long and skillful speech, according to the Sophistical conception, he launches against Socrates the famous distinction between nature and law, accusing Socrates that he spread confusion in a deliberate way, thus interpreting things either starting from nature or starting the other way round.

Callicles states that laws were passed by the weak and by many people who use to call injustice the endeavour of those who struggle to have more than the others. But according to their nature it is right that the stronger takes by force the weaks' goods, that the latter leads the inferiors, and that the one who is more capable or skillful has more than the good-for-nothing; that is why in all the city-states and in all kinship, justice is defined according to the own law of nature and not to the one which was established by people. The conclusion is that as far as Callicles is concerned, happiness is nothing else but the endless satisfaction of the most unbridled passions.

Philosophy, Callicles went on with his speech, has its own role, mainly for the young ones who become free, insubordinate, worthy of beautiful and noble deeds. They become real politicians, useful citizens of their state. However, for a grown up man, who, one day, will become an accomplished and a respected man, philosophy weakens the mind, being harmful to an active life. Rhetoric is worthy to be considered as the most beautiful of all arts. On the one hand it is used as a defense weapon against injustice or even to save lives, and on the other hand it is the most efficient instrument to permit the access to the political life of the city-state to honors and to an existence which is full of pleasures:

**CALLICLES:** Well, that is the truth of the matter; and you will grasp it if you will now put philosophy aside and pass to greater things... For

as it is, if somebody should seize hold of you or anyone else at all of your sort, and drag you off to prison, asserting that you were guilty of a wrong you had never done, you know you would be at a loss what to do with yourself, and would be all dizzy and agape without a word to say; and when you came up in court, though your accuser might be ever so paltry a rascal, you would have to die if he chose to claim death as your penalty. And yet what wisdom is there, Socrates, “in an art that found a man of goodly parts and made him worse,” unable either to succor himself, or to deliver himself or anyone else from the greatest dangers, but like to be stripped by his enemies of all his substance, and to live in his city as an absolute outcast? Such a person, if one may use a rather low expression, can be given a box on the ear with impunity.<sup>28</sup>

Following Callicles’ involvement in a whole series of aporias that were developed from his own false premises, such as the hedonistic thesis of identity of good and pleasure and causing the bringing into discussion of the polarization of human skillfulness in arts and flattery, Socrates states that the true virtue and happiness do not consist in living a life full of reckless, unwise, uncontrolled, and inconstant pleasures that urge one to appeal to rhetoric in order to bring their salvation in courts. He urges them to pick a good, a reasonable, and a balanced way of living:

SOCRATES: For you see that our debate is upon a question which has the highest conceivable claims to the serious interest even of a person who has but little intelligence – namely, what course of life is best; whether it should be that to which you invite me, with all those manly pursuits of speaking in Assembly and practicing rhetoric and going in for politics after the fashion of your modern politicians, or this life of philosophy.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, Plato’s philosophical position in his dialogue *Gorgias* on true virtue and happiness (stated Alexandru Cizek<sup>30</sup>) involves the two Delphic principles – *meden agan* (nothing in excess) or the interdiction of the moving of the center of gravity towards the exterior through the accumulation of material values and *gnothi seauton* (know thyself) or the indication of the meaning of human interiority based on a contemplative existence. All these are precepts that one would like to apply at a political level meaning establishing an equivalence between politics and ethics. The force that is acquired in *Gorgias*, as far as the stating of moral is concerned, will find its equivalent only in the *Republic*.

Coming back once for all to the object of rhetoric, Socrates pursues the establishing of “true politics” in comparison to its appearance or its “simulacrum” and according to them he takes into consideration the issue of

the true human happiness; because whatever the situation might be, the rhetorician's duty, Socrates says, is that of pursuing only one aim i.e. to make people better.

Deciding to protect his status of a rhetorician and of a politician, Callicles considers himself to belong only to those who practice rhetoric with a view to promoting good and justice. However, following his argument with Socrates, he admits that these exceptional qualities are fulfilled neither by him and nor by any rhetorician of his time:

SOCRATES: But now, the rhetoric addressed to the Athenian people, or to the other assemblies of freemen in the various cities – what can we make of that? Do the orators strike you as speaking always with a view to what is best, with the single aim of making the citizens as good as possible by their speeches, or are they, like the poets, set on gratifying the citizens, and do they, sacrificing the common weal to their own personal interest, behave to these assemblies as to children, trying merely to gratify them, nor care a jot whether they will be better or worse in consequence?

CALLICLES: This question of yours is not quite so simple; for there are some who have a regard for the citizens in the words that they utter, while there are also others of the sort that you mention.

SOCRATES: That is enough for me. For if this thing also is twofold, one part of it, I presume, will be flattery and a base mob-oratory, while the other is noble – the endeavor, that is, to make the citizens' souls as good as possible, and the persistent effort to say what is best, whether it proves more or less pleasant to one's hearers. But this is a rhetoric you never yet saw; or if you have any orator of this kind that you can mention, without more ado let me know who he is!

CALLICLES: No, upon my word, I cannot tell you of anyone, at least among the orators of today.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, according to Plato, rhetoric, Athenian politicians' art, and that of their masters are nothing but a mere flattery and adulation, a misinterpretation of the truth since it aims at persuading and at convincing everybody in all respects without any knowledge. In *Gorgias*, Plato considers that the rhetorician is the one who has the capacity of being more persuasive than the one who knows for sure, because he aims at feelings and passions, appealing not to a truth but to likeliness. So, rhetoric appeals to what is worst in the soul, to the emotional side which is sensitive to pleasures, in general, and to the pleasures of flattery, to the credulous and unstable part of the soul. Rhetoric will never be a substitute for true politics because "true politics" coincides with philosophy. No wonder then that rhetoricians compare themselves with philosophy, as likeliness compares with reality, and phantasms with truth.

This very harsh judgement on rhetoric is somehow smoothed out in Plato's *Phaedrus* text (*Φαιδρος*)<sup>32</sup>, with the subtitle "On beautiful. An Ethic Dialogue" (according to their tradition this title was given by the late Antiquity experts). This dialogue has only two characters: Socrates and Phaedrus. A third character, who is only an ideational presence, would be Lysias, the rhetorician from Attica. He was brought into the spotlight by the young Phaedrus who was his fan. Some analysts claimed that this dialogue treated two topics: love and rhetoric. Other modern experts<sup>33</sup> have agreed upon the existence of several topics, such as: a main theme, i.e. rhetoric, followed by other important themes, love, beautiful, soul, truth, and other themes like dialectic, reminder, delirium, myth.

The dialogue begins with a meeting between Socrates and Phaedrus who was about to go for a walk out of Athens city-state. Phaedrus had just listened to the rhetorician Lysias' speech on love. Upon Socrates' insistence, who believes that Phaedrus has a copy of his speech with him, Phaedrus agrees in the end to read his speech, by a sycamore tree, on the banks of the Ilisos River. Lysias' thesis is that in comparison with passionate love, "love without love" is more profitable. After reading his whole speech, Phaedrus asserted his full admiration, but Socrates, in exchange, stated his discontent on the way this topic, which he loves so much, was treated.

SOCRATES: I did not notice it. I was attending only to the rhetorical manner, and I thought even Lysias himself would not think that satisfactory. It seemed to me, Phaedrus, unless you disagree, that he said the same thing two or three times, as if he did not find it easy to say many things about one subject, or perhaps he did not care about such a detail... Lysias has failed in every respect and that I can compose a discourse containing nothing that he has said.<sup>34</sup>

Remembering that other previous rhetoricians wrote about love, Socrates believed that he could treat this topic better than Lysias. Speculating this opinion, Phaedrus compels Socrates to start working immediately on a different speech, better than the one he had just read, a speech in which he would bring his own arguments in a more convincing way. Finally Socrates accepts to do this work, but out of embarrassment to god Eros, he decides to cover his head with his mantle. Claiming that his muses had left him, he did not succeed in bringing his argumentation to its end. But the voice of his own daimon made him fix the mistake he had committed in relationship to god Eros. Consequently, he will build up a new speech, this time with his head uncovered, thus paying tribute to the true love which he dedicated to god Eros. Tightly connected to this speech, a philosophical reflection matching mythical elements with the idea of love and beauty are clearly defined. Amazed at this exciting speech, Phaedrus leaves Lysias's team, declaring himself all of a sudden, Socrates' fan.

Being regarded as eloquent examples in relationship with the previous speeches, Socrates and Phaedrus went on analyzing the causes that make a speech successful or unsuccessful. Therefore and through his characters, Plato admits *the right of the existence of rhetoric*, as an art which has to do with the guidance of souls, only on condition that it submits itself to a *truth* concerning the things it talks about:

SOCRATES: Well, do you think we have reproached the art of speaking too harshly? Perhaps she might say: "Why do you talk such nonsense, you strange men? I do not compel anyone to learn to speak without knowing the truth, but if my advice is of any value, he learns that first and then acquires me. So what I claim is this, without my help the knowledge of the truth does not give the art of persuasion." ... A real art of speaking, ... which does not hold of truth, does not exist and never will.<sup>35</sup>

In order to reach the truth and run after different opinions, rhetoric must know and make use of *the specific rules* to this art. Having these rules as a basis, the two dialogists will deal with Lysias' speech and with the one addressed by Socrates to god Eros, in order to establish which one is in the position to be out of the rhetorical art and which one is not. In other words, one proceeds to the identification of the speech which manipulates people's opinion and to the one according to which the topic will be taken into consideration will lead to the hearers' knowledge of truth. Socrates states that, as far as Lysias' speech is concerned and although it is temperate, precise, and lacking of obvious mistakes, it still deviates from the rules of art:

SOCRATES: He certainly does not at all seem to do what we demand, for he does not even begin at the beginning, but undertakes to swim on his back up the current of his discourse from its end, and begins with what the lover would say at the end to his beloved... And how about the rest? Don't you think the parts of the discourse are thrown out helter-skelter? It seemed to me, who is wholly ignorant, that the writer uttered boldly whatever occurred to him... I fancy, that it makes no difference whether any line of it is put first or last.<sup>36</sup>

Contrary to Lysias' speech, *Phaedrus* suggests a more theoretical approach of the speech, described under the form of a unitary structure, similar to the human body:

SOCRATES: But I do think you will agree to this, that every discourse must be organized, like a living being, with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to be headless or footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and to the

whole... You mean that there must be an introduction first, at the beginning of the discourse; these are the things you mean, are they not? – the niceties of the art. And the narrative must come second with the testimony after it, and third the proofs, and fourth the probabilities; and confirmation and further confirmation are mentioned, I believe, by the man from Byzantium, (Theodoros) that like most excellent artist in words, of course, he tells how refutation and further refutation must be accomplished, both in accusation and in defense. Shall we not bring the illustrious Parian, Evenus, into our discussion, who invented covert allusion and indirect praises? And some say that he also wrote indirect censures, composing them in verse as an aid to memory.<sup>37</sup>

Socrates notices that the two speeches, his and Lysias', are opposed to each other but they also have something in common: love which acts like madness or like a delirium. We do not talk here about madness like a human illness, but about the madness which pushes someone to leave his/her ordinary purposes, as a consequence of a divine urge. This type of divine madness contaminated the Socratic speech which received a further support from the four gods worshipped by Socrates: Apollo (the predictor of future), Dionysos (the initiator of mysteries), Muses (the poet's inspirational goddesses), Aphrodite and Eros (the gods who were guilty of the madness of the falling in love). Socrates stated that all these deities helped him make his speech which he had conceived like a hymn wrapped in a mythical cloak in which Eros, the guardian of love, is praised. And even though we would have stated that both speeches had strictly observed the rules of the rhetorical art, they are completely different in their method. In *Phaedrus*, Plato stated clearly that the only method which could be used in a majestic way in rhetoric would be the dialectical method with its two means of implementation:

SOCRATES: That of perceiving and bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars, that one may make clear by definition the particular thing which he wishes to explain; just as now, in speaking of Love, we said what it is and defined it, whether well or ill. Certainly by this means the discourse acquired clearness and consistency... That of dividing things again by classes, where the natural joints are, and not trying to break any part, after the manner of a bad carver... Now I myself, Phaedrus, am a lover of these processes of division and bringing together, as aids to speech and thought... And whether the name I give to those who can do this is right or wrong, God knows, but I have called them hitherto dialecticians.<sup>38</sup>

In comparison to the traditional rhetoric, Plato's rhetoric is a *dialectic rhetoric*. In order to be persuasive, the rhetorician's duty is that of making a rational speech. The construction of such a discourse does not only need "the gift of speech". It also needs "knowledge" and "hard work". On the other hand, Plato condemned the rhetoric of his age using three main arguments: an excessive use of persuasion with the help of hearers' opinions and common beliefs; only the verbal outspoken statement of certain moral values that are simultaneous with the development of a programmatic amorality; the limitation of all arguments to formal examples, thus ignoring the true aim of the speech.

Initiating an ideal concept of the rhetoric, Plato tried to reconsider it from the philosophical point of view. This was the outlining of a *philosophical rhetoric* which was based first of all on the knowledge of truth. According to Plato, this new philosophical rhetoric entails dialectic (a connection which was to be criticized later on by Aristotle in his treatise entitled *Rhetoric*). Moreover, a real rhetorician needs to know human soul in detail as well as all types of discourse that are characteristic to it. And any adequate speech needs the systematic interference of dialectic. Given as an example of a perfect rhetorician, Pericles reached perfection not only due to his inborn qualities but also thanks to other qualities which he acquired later on, mainly due to his permanent contact with the deep thinking of Anaxagoras' philosophy. Inspired by Anaxagoras' philosophical thinking, Pericles knew what to take from the art of rhetoric: in order to reach the truth he acted not only according to the rules of art, but also to the knowledge of the nature of the object with which any speech is related to, i.e. man's soul, because the art of persuasion calls pre-eminently for one's soul. Consequently, together with the necessity of making a speech according to reason and with a persuasive aim, there comes the necessity of knowing *the nature of human soul*:

SOCRATES: The method of the art of healing is much the same as that of rhetoric... In both cases you must analyze a nature, in one that of the body and in the other that of the soul, if you are to proceed in a scientific manner, not merely by practice and routine, to impart health and strength to the body by prescribing medicine and diet, or by proper discourses and training to give to the soul the desired belief and virtue.<sup>39</sup>

As a conclusion, we can state that in order to reach persuasion, without analyzing human being's soul minutely, speeches that are built only according to the rules of art will never be sufficient. Through Socrates, Plato states that the true power of a speech consists in "psychagogy" a guiding line of the soul which makes use of seduction through the magnificence of *the form of speech*. There are instances such as law trials, when, in order to

convince, a rhetorician (be he a prosecutor or a defendant) does not need to know the truth about the rightness of things. He needs to know only what likeness is and in accordance with the rules of the art of rhetoric. Since Tisias' age (a founder of Ancient Greek rhetoric), one could find out that a plausible speech can influence the hearers due to its resemblance with the truth. In the end, and oscillating between the search for truth on the one hand and the acceptance of plausible proofs on the other hand, Plato accepted only the philosophical point of view.

So, according to Plato, philosophical rhetoric, which entails dialectic *in nuce*, would not be a rhetoric of the likeness but a rhetoric which is based on the knowledge of truth, of human soul, and of various types of speech that are able to move these different souls. Only through the knowledge of the nature of things and through the nature of human soul is it possible to build a true art of rhetoric, a true art of persuasion through speech. If before Plato, Greeks' spiritual world considered rhetoricians as their masters in life and in virtues, through the revealing of the philosophical dimension, rhetoric built new horizons. The next decisive step will be made by Aristotle.

Translated from Romanian by Muguraș Maria Vnuck  
and David Paul Vnuck

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Sophist*, 216 a - 268 d, in Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 12, translated by Harold N. Fowler, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA; William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1921 (<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper>).

<sup>2</sup> *Sophist*, 264 e. The rules of division will be found in the dialogue "The Statesman", 262 a - 263 d.

<sup>3</sup> *Sophist*, 223 b.

<sup>4</sup> *Sophist*, 231 c, d, e.

<sup>5</sup> *Sophist*, 232 b, c.

<sup>6</sup> *Sophist*, 254 d, e.

<sup>7</sup> See Alexandru Surdu, „Introducere la Dialogurile logice” [in Romanian], în Platon, *Opere* [“An Introduction to the Logical Dialogues”, in Plato, *Works*], Vol. VI, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1989, pp. 29, 42 - 46.

<sup>8</sup> *Sophist*, 241 d - 242 a, 258 a - 259 b.

<sup>9</sup> *Sophist*, 256 d, e.

<sup>10</sup> *Sophist*, 268 b, c, d.

<sup>11</sup> *Sophist*, 234 c.

<sup>12</sup> Plato, *Euthydemus*, 271 a - 307 c, in Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 3, translated by W.R.M. Lamb, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA; William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1967 (<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper>).

<sup>13</sup> See Gabriel Liiceanu, „Lămuriri preliminare la Euthydemus” [in Romanian], în Platon, *Opere*, [“Preliminary Explanations on Euthydemus”, in Plato, *Works*] Vol. III, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1978, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> See Aristotel, „Respingerile sofistice” și „Topica” [in Romanian] [„Sophistical Refutations” and “Topics”] în *Organon* II, Editura IRI, București 1998.

<sup>15</sup> See Constantin Noica, „Interpretare la Euthydemus” [in Romanian] în Platon, *Opere* [“An Interpretation on Euthydemus”, in Plato, *Works*], Vol. III, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1978, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> *Euthydemus*, Sophism 7 (Contradiction is not possible): 285 d - 286 b.

<sup>17</sup> Plato, *Gorgias*, 447 a - 527 e, in Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 3, translated by W.R.M. Lamb, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA; William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1967 (<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper>).

<sup>18</sup> Ecclesia = was the Athenian citizens’ assembly on Acropolis. There they would listen to pro and con arguments or they would raise their hands voting pro or con on certain proposals.

<sup>19</sup> *Gorgias*, 452 d, e, 453 c, 454 b.

<sup>20</sup> *Gorgias*, 459 c.

<sup>21</sup> *Gorgias*, 456 b, c.

<sup>22</sup> *Gorgias*, 458 a.

<sup>23</sup> *Gorgias*, 462 b, c.

<sup>24</sup> *Gorgias*, 463 a, b, c, d.

<sup>25</sup> *Gorgias*, 465 a, b, c, d.

<sup>26</sup> *Gorgias*, 479 e - 480 a, b.

<sup>27</sup> *Gorgias*, 481 e - 482 c.

<sup>28</sup> *Gorgias*, 484 c, 486 b c.

<sup>29</sup> *Gorgias*, 500 c.

<sup>30</sup> See Alexandru Cizek, „Notă introductivă la Gorgias” [in Romanian], în Platon, *Opere* [“An Introductory Note to Gorgias” in Plato, *Works*] Vol. I, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1975, p. 279.

<sup>31</sup> *Gorgias*, 502 e - 503 a, b.

<sup>32</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, 227 a - 279 c. in Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9, translated by Harold N. Fowler, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA; William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1925 (<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper>).

<sup>33</sup> See Gabriel Liiceanu, „Lămuriri preliminare la Phaidros” [in Romanian], în Platon, *Opere*, [“Preliminary Comments on Phaedrus”, in Plato, *Works*] Vol. IV, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1983, pp. 369 - 371.

<sup>34</sup> *Phaedrus*, 235 a, e.

<sup>35</sup> *Phaedrus*, 260 d.

<sup>36</sup> *Phaedrus*, 264 a, b, e.

<sup>37</sup> *Phaedrus*, 264 c, 266 d, e - 267 a.

<sup>38</sup> *Phaedrus*, 265 d, e, 266 b, c.

<sup>39</sup> *Phaedrus*, 270 b.

**DREPT-ZALMOXIANUL DONARES >  
DUNĂRE DIN DACIA (AETHICUS ISTER)**



**COSMOGRAFIE**

ION PACHIA-TATOMIRESCU

## **The Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister), *The Cosmography*...**

The Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister), *The Cosmography*, edition, introductory study, chronological table, notes and translation from the Latin language into the Pelasgian > Wallachian (Dacoromanian) language, by Prof. Ion Pachia-Tatomirescu, Doctor of Philology, Timișoara-România, Waldpress Publishing House (ISBN 978-606-614-239-7), 2019; Summary, pp. 665 – 670.

Together with several co-nationals of the “golden generation” – Niceta Remesianu (the author of *Pe Tine, Doamne, Te laudăm... / Te, Deum, laudamus... / We Praise Thee, O God...*, the hymn of the entire Christianity, a Pelasgian > Wallachian saint who ascended into heaven in the year 416 A.D., from the episcopal office at Remesiana/ South-Danubian Dacia), Laurențiu de Novae / Laurentius of Novae (the author of famous homilies amongst which *On Penitence / De poenitentia, On Alms / De eleemosyna*, etc., the bishop who ascended into heaven while holding the office at Novae-Moesia / South-Danubian Dacia, in the year 418 A.D., after having extirpated, at the epistolary recommendation from Pope Innocent I, the Fotinian-Arian heresy upspringing in his eparchy), Auxențiu Durostoreanu / Auxentius Durostorensis / Auxentius of Durostorum (the bishop at Durostorum-Moesia, in South-Danubian Dacia, who authored, in the year 383 A. D., the *Letter on Ulfilas’ Creed, Life, and Death / Epistula de fide, vita et obitu Ulfilae*, and died in the year 420 A.D.), the Blessed Hieronymus of Stridon-Dacia / Saint Jerome (the translator of the *Bible* from Hebrew into Latin, between 390 and 405 A.D, who ascended to heaven on 30<sup>th</sup> September 420 A.D.), Ioan Cassian / Saint John Cassian (the author of the 24 famous *Collations of Fathers / Collationes Sanctorum Patrum / Convorbiri duhovnicești*, a Pelasgian > Wallachian saint who went to sleep in heavenly peace on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 435 A.D.) a.s.o. –, the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia, better-known, within the imperial Latinophone area in particular, by his name translated as Aethicus Ister (c. 21<sup>st</sup> June 424 A. D. –

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30<sup>th</sup> September 499 A. D.) represented and is still stately shining – due to his extremely valuable and to the remarkable circuit of his interdisciplinary / encyclopedic work, the *Cosmography*, written in the horizon of the year 466 A. D., directly after returning from the “five-year circumnavigation of the Earth solely on seas and oceans” – not only the dawns of humanist universalism but also the culture / spirituality of the Pelasgian > Wallachian People, one of the largest peoples of Europe and, at the same time, one of the oldest and most ruthlessly disfavoured throughout the course of history, winnowed and scattered by the empires treading on these parts of the world.

Throughout the 38 sections / chapters of the introductory study, the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) – a rediscoverer of America and re-circumnavigator of the Earth between the horizons of the years 461 and 465 A.D., we have pointed out, in the first place, the fact that, within the Pelasgian / Wallachian space, (1) the important hydronym Donares > Dunăre / Danube is, at the same time, a distinguished onomastic term, the name of Dacia’s great philosopher and explorer being an indisputable proof, and we further emphasized the fact that (2) his family belonged to the Wallachian nobility, that (3) at his parents’ Wallachian-Dacian / Zalmoxian nobiliary domain at Histria > Istria in the Pontic-Danubian-Dacia – the Dunogaetia > Dynogaetia / Dinogetia province, whose name was changed into Scythia Minor (“Lesser Scythia”), some time after the conquest of South-Danubian Dacia by the Roman Empire, that he was born at Histria > Istria around the summer solstice of the year 424 A. D. (according to the “internal arguments” in his encyclopedic work, the *Cosmography*) and passed away after the autumn equinox, around 30<sup>th</sup> September 499 A. D., that (4) his traditionally Pelasgian appellation due to his good fame, the “Righteous-Zalmoxian” / the “Hallowed-Zalmoxian” was consistently translated in the Latin-Mediterranean world as Aethicus, owing, to a great extent, to the Kogaionic-Sarmizegetusan Institution of the Zalmoxian Knights which was highly revered by the people, even “sacralized”, each representative being treated, during his lifetime, as a king-god-physician, or, to be more accurate, as rex histrianorum, while posthumously he was heroized / deified, as it is recorded on more than three thousand votive and funerary reliefs found all over Burebista’s Dacia and Regalian’s Dacia, and that, furthermore, many historians – amongst whom Manfred Oppermann – consider the heroization / deification of the Zalmoxian Knight as the expression of an archaic monotheism, specific to the Pelasgo- > Wallachian-Dacian area, that, unquestionably, (5) the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) is a nation native of the Pelasgo- > Wallachian-Dacians, as the documents in his epoch certify, that (6) Histria > Istria in the Pontic-Danubian Dacia during the century of the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares (Aethicus Ister), has also preserved until nowadays the proofs according to which, there was a

transmutation from the “horseshoe-shaped” buildings belonging to the High Schools of Zalmoxian Knights to the “semicircular” altars in today’s Christian (Cosmico-Wallachian) churches, that (7) the 23-letter phonetic alphabet in use in Dacia – and in the encyclopedic / interdisciplinary work, the Cosmography, by the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) – represents the multimillennial fruit of the semantic-syncretic winding of the sign all over Dacia’s spiritual space, starting from the rupestral, or from the ceramic pictograms and ideograms, dating from the Paleolithic and the Neolithic Ages, “assembled” or not “into mythotexts”, to symbols / letters etc., which were transmitted through the penultimate text unit (Ut-768, infra) –

1 / Alamon (1), 2 / Becah (2), 3 / Cathu (3), 4 / Delfoy (4),
   
 5 / Efothu (5), 6 / Fomethu (6), 7 / Garfou (7), 8 / Hethmu
   
 (8), 9 / Iosithu (9), 10 / Kaithu (10), 11 / Lethfu (11), 12 / Malathy
   
 (12), 13 / Nabaletth (13), 14 / Ozechi (14), 15 / Chorizech (15),
   
 / Phythyrin (16), 17 / Salathi (17), 18 / Intalech (18),
   
 Thothymos (19), 20 / Azathot (20), 21 / Reque (21),
   
 22 / Yrchoni (22) și 23 / Zothychin (23),

accompanied, needless to say, by “the sacred key of the names of all these letters encompassed in the 19<sup>th</sup> one,

/ Thothymos (< *Totu-* “all” / the “whole” + *-mos / moș* “the aged”, the “Aged-Sun” = “Dacia’s God / the God of the Pelasgo- > Wallachian-Dacians”),

in the Pelasgian > Wallachian language being uttered as “totumosh” / “totumos”, the significance arising from semantically respecting the two constitutive elements (*supra*): “The whole is the Aged-Sun”, which, on the whole, relates to the Zalmoxian *nucleus-teaching: God is One / the Sacred Cosmic Whole* in which each and every Pelasgo- > Wallachian-Dacian (an indisputable sacred *part-of-the-Sole-God / the-Cosmic-Whole*), as the *immaculate, healthsome, lively-princely-charming* part (of all the others, from the heart / the stone to the Star / the Moon) *must reveal itself in accomplishing with a view to attain immortality.*

As for the remaining sections / chapters (8 – 38) of the introductory study, we have attempted to reconstitute / follow the “stretches” (specifying

the “landmarks”, the insular ones in particular, in almost each title) the oldest *circumnavigation of the Earth*, “solely on seas and oceans”, an ancient journey around the Earth carried out on the “classic sailing ships” between the horizons of the years 461 – 465 A. D., by the 101 skilled Pelasgo- > Wallachian-Dacian seamen (as genuine “Immortal-Kogaionic Warriors” / “Knights of Zalmoxianism”), under the guidance of the great explorer and philosopher, the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister): (9) *From the Pontic-Danubian Dacia – Donares’ native harbour-town of Histria > Istria – about the vernal equinox, 20<sup>th</sup> March 461 A. D., southwards, to Dacibuzes > Dacybuzes, whence they sailed on the right-hand side to the newish-great harbour, Constantinusa (Constantinople / Istanbul); (10) From Constantinusa > Istanbul to the island of “Soare-Moș” / the “Aged-Sun” (“Samos / the God in Thracia”), Samo[s]t[h]răcia > Samothraki; (11) From Samo[s]t[h]răcia > Samothraki to the Pelasgian Crete; (12) From the Pelasgian Crete to Syracuse / Sicily, then, along Aetna / Ethna / Etna, to further navigate the straits between Scylla and Charybdis; (13) Along the volcanic Aeolian / Eolie Islands, between Sardinia and Corsica, to Massalia > Marseille; (14) From Massalia > Marseille to the Balearic Islands, at Majorca (Mallorca); (15) From the Island of Mallorca, between the Pillars of Hercules / Gibraltar to the Atlantic harbour of Gādēs > Cádiz; (16) From Gādēs > Cádiz, “keeping on the right-hand side”, along the Iberian Atlantic shore, with short scrutinising stops at promontories, towards Hibernia / Ireland; (17) From Hibernia northwards, along the archipelagoes known as the Orkney Islands and the Shetland Islands, further beyond the Island Biza / Björnøya (the “Bear Island”), in the proper archipelago Bizae (or Insulae Byssiōrum – “The Islands of the Linen-Handkerchiefs”) / Svalbard (known in the Middle Ages under the name of Thule, or Tyle), whence he makes the return journey to the new basis, while also “swerving” his way to the mysterious islands of the near-Orkney North-West; (18) From the Hibernia “stop”, southwards, with the other two sailing ships, to the English Channel and further to the North Sea, in the Donaresian mission of interdisciplinary research of the island chain in Magna Frisia / Fritsia > Friġia Mare (“Great Frisia”); (19) The Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) between the Orkney Archipelago (Orkney Islands) and the “Trodden Rocks” Islands / Betotirite (Shetland Islands) from around 25<sup>th</sup> / 28<sup>th</sup> October 461 to around 20<sup>th</sup> March 462 A. D.; (20) From the “Trodden Rocks” Islands / Betotirite (Shetlands Islands) to the “Steep” Islands / “Insulele Râparice” / Faroe Islands – a Donaresian maritime route of 298 km; (21) From Rifaricae / Rîparice Archipelago / Færøerne / Faroe Islands to the island Riakeon / “Răcoanea” (“Great Crawfish”) / Iceland; (22) The “Rediscovery” of the largest of the North-American islands, Crisolita / Greenland, around 12<sup>th</sup> June 462 A.D.; (23) From Crisolita’s / Greenlandic Inuits (in Nuuk) and those on the Baffin*

*Island (at Pond Inlet), seemingly “on an ancient Arctic interisland navigable passage” (“in the summer of every five year”, or the year of sending Dacia’s Messenger to God, “a round trip” without fail), as far as the Inuits in Paulatuuk-Inuvik; (24) The Donaresians advance along the Alaskan Arctic shore, bathing in the fascinating green light, of Hiarca, that is the Aurora Borealis; (25) From the Eskimos in Pont Hope / Alaska to the Koryaks (Koriaks) in Chormacinata > Kamceatka (Kamchatka); (26) The Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) makes acquaintance with the people of the “serene / bright poetry” in Gadaronota / Japan; (27) From Gadaronota (the Japanese Islands) to Guam > Choa[m], near Abyssus Magnus / the Mariana Trench; (28) Amongst the “great volcanoes” in the Philippine Islands, to Calaopa < Calapan; (29) From Calapan (the Philippine Archipelago), in “the Navel of the Sun” in South Syrtinice (Java-Indonesia), at Tegal; (30) From Syrtinice Islands (Java and Sumatra) to Taprobane Island (Sri Lanka); (31) From Taprobane (Ceylon / Sri Lanka) to Trabundia Minor / Rubra between the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea (Socotra); (32) From Trabundia Rubra / Minor (Socotra) to the island of Trabundia Magna / Madagascar, at Morondava (“Dava Moronilor”); (33) From the Indian Ocean (Oceanus Indicus / Aethiopicum Mare), from Morondava (Trabundia Major / Madagascar), towards Hisperia, to the Cape of Good Hope (Hesperic Cornu), in Atlanticus Oceanus; (34) In quest / search of the volcanic islands of the Hisperia / Hesperides Insulae, as far as the Atlantic island of St. Helena; (35) Across the “Atlantic Equator” and advancing through Africa’s Cape Verde archipelago, called Hisperia / Hesperides Insulae; (36) From Hisperia (Hesperides Insulae), through the Fortunate Isles (Fortunates Insulae / the Canary Archipelago), with a stop at Ninguaria / Tenerife, then further on the Atlantic route to the „African side” of the Straits of Gibraltar, at Tingis > Tangier; (37) From Tingis > Tangier (Mauritania Tingitana / Morocco) to Egypt’s Alexandria; and the “last stretch” (38) From Alexandria-Egypt to Histria > Istria, in the Pontic-Danubian Dacia.*

According to the internal arguments in his encyclopedic / interdisciplinary work, the *Cosmography*, written after circumnavigating the Earth, in the horizon of the year 466 A. D., the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) was already the author of several interesting “books” / “papyruses” in his maternal language, the Pelasgian > the Wallachian, which were likely to have been translated into the official Latin language of the Roman Empire, in the following chronological order:

(1) *Poems / Carmina*, particularly the *odes to the five elements* of the world’s fundamentals: Air, Water, Fire, Wood / Ether, Earth, created between 440 – 466 d. H.;

(2) *The Crafts' Field* / Rure artium, from the horizon of the year 460 A. D., the Pontic-Danubian Dacia (Scythia Minor), the harbour-town of Histria > Istria (today, Istria Commune, in the Constanța County-România);

(3) *Quaestionaries* / Quaestionarii, from the horizon of the year 460 A. D., the Pontic-Danubian Dacia (Scythia Minor), the harbour-town of Histria > Istria (today, Istria Commune, in the Constanța County-România), a work of an encyclopedic / interdisciplinary character, undoubtedly polyglottic, to be used “on the spot” as well, created between 461 – 465 d. H., including the mother tongues of the people questioned on the Britannic-Celto-Germanic islands / lands, thus achieving (with the help of his crew / “his disciples”) the *interdisciplinary legwork inquiry-based investigations* (the term *qu[a]estionarius*, denoting “issues and investigations / interdisciplinary legwork research work”, was coined by the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares / Aethicus Ister, in the horizon of the year 460 A. D., first in his maternal Pelasgian > Wallachian language through derivation – *chestion-* < *chestioane* “a major matter” + the active suffix *-ar -*, subsequently adapting the “newborn Pelasgian > Wallachian word”, *chestionar*, to the imperial Latin language: *qu[a]estionarius*);

(4) *Catalogue-which-has-preserved-the-good-order* / Explicatus Cathalocus Conpescuit, “a notebook / travelogue with notes from both books and travels”, between the horizons of the years 461 and 465 A. D., representing the groundwork for his famous encyclopedic work (cf. Ut-762).

After having returned from his round-the-world journey on seas / oceans with his crew of *Zalmoxian Knights*, between the horizons of the years 461 and 465 A. D., the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) writes – in the horizon of the year 466 A. D. – his encyclopedic / interdisciplinary work, the *Cosmography*, structuring his material into the following “golden decade”:

I *On the Amorphous Matter* / De informe materia (Ut-6 – Ut-26 / cf. AethK-93, pp. 88 – 94);

II *On the Boulder [of Amorphous Matter] Itself and On the Bestowing Stature* / De ipsa massa ac statua (Ut-27 – Ut-27 / cf. AethK-93, pp. 94 – 117);

III *On the Aquilon Peoples [of Europe and Asia]...* / De gentibus [Eurōpae et Asiae] ad Aquilonem... / (Ut-132 / AethK-93, pp. 117 sq.);

IV *On the Knowledge About the Peoples and the Position of Their Islands* / De gentium peritia insularumque positione (Ut-134 – Ut-242 / AethK-93, pp. 118 – 141);

V *On the Investigation of Unknown Ships...* / De navibus ignotis indagazione... (Ut-255 – Ut-289 / AethK-93, pp. 144 – 150);

VI *On the Islands of Peoples and of Manifold Craftsmanship* / De insulis gentium plurimarumque artium (Ut-305 – Ut-380 / AethK-93, pp. 154 – 167);

VII *On Matters / Complaints which Other Works Omit to Relate / De questionibus que alia scriptura non narrat* (Ut-382 – Ut-695 / AethK-93, pp. 167 – 229);

VIII *On the Founded City [Rome], followed by On the Oriental and Southern Peoples / De Orbe > Urbe [Roma] condita et postmodum orientalium ac loca meridiana* (Ut-696 – Ut-760 / AethK-93, pp. 229 – 242);

IX *On Blowing Winds and Water Movements / De flatu ventorum et aquarum motione* (Ut-763 / AethK-93, p. 242 sq.); and

X *On the Earth and Down Watercourses, or the Groundwater (the Phreatic Zone) / De Terra et aquarum decursu vel venis aquarum* (Ut-764 – Ut-766 / AethK-93, p. 243).

Amongst “the ten poetic samples above” there resides the harmonization within the golden decade of the parts / sections (chapters / subchapters) of the encyclopedic whole, or, more precisely, the “wedding” of the five pairs of loops (the “rising loop” and the “descending loop”) framing the entire spiral of the *Cosmography*, written by the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister), from the horizon of the year 466 A. D., each of the five “pairs of loops” reverberating with one of the five elements of the cosmic foundation, *Air, Water, Fire, Wood, Earth* (since “there’s nothing else beyond ten, but all’s due to start again” and, therefore, X: *De Terra...* stands for both “closing” and “opening”).

Thus, after 297 years, in the spring horizon of the year 763 A. D., a counsellor, or, possibly, Pope Paul I himself / Papa Paulus (Episcopus Romanus: 29<sup>th</sup> May 757 – 28<sup>th</sup> June 767 A. D.) entrusted the Benedictine Hieronymus Presbyter of Freising-Bavaria (cca. 709 – 780 A. D.) with the mission of *transliterating* (from the Latin into which the author had translated his encyclopedic / interdisciplinary work from his mother tongue, the Pelasgian > the Wallachian, yet *his text having been calligraphed in the 23-letter Pelasgo- > Wallachian-Dacian phonetic alphabet*, into the Latin which possessed an etymologically Latin alphabet), *then the task of Christianisingly censoring* (“abbreviating”) and *further of multiplying* – at the School of Copyists / Scribes of the Freising Abbey – the encyclopedia entitled the *Cosmography*, by the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister).

We remind the Distinguished Reader that from the encyclopedic / interdisciplinary work written in the horizon of the year 466 A. D., the *Cosmography*, by the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister), there have been handed down – “in disarray” / “conjointly” – to the time of our present edition, through the “abbreviated-Christianised *Cosmography*” of the year 763 A. D., due to Hieronymus Presbyter of Freising-Bavaria, 769 “text units” (cf. AethK-93, pp. 87 – 244) of which 557 belong to the great Pelasgo > Wallachian-Dacian philosopher / explorer, while 212 belong to the Freising-Bavarian “Christianising-censor”.

Consequently, in our present book, the 557 text units represent inalienable parts of the *Cosmography*, by the Righteous-Zalmoxian Donares > Dunăre of Dacia (Aethicus Ister) – dating from the horizon of the year 466 A. D. – while 212 text units are (except for the few imperious Donaresian quotes which we indicated by using the “rigorous quotation marks”) “owned” by Hieronymus Presbyter of Freising-Bavaria; the Hieronymic-Presbyterian complex sentences having a “prefatory” / “commentative” character, or merely expressing opinions, judgments, have been organised into what stands for the *Preface / Praefātum*, in the horizon of the year 763 A. D.; the “Christianising excerpts” from the *Bible*, the “harpoon-sentences / complex sentences”, particularly the ones resulting from *verbum dicendi*, the “*clichés*” etc. have been placed, whenever the case, as notes especially marked (by [\*]), under each text unit (as it has been specified in the “Note on the Edition”).

Translated into English by Gabriela Pachia

N. GEORGESCU

## Din nou despre debutul lui Eminescu

*ABSTRACT: Dan Toma Dulciu discovers at the Metropolitan Library "Mihail Sadoveanu" in Bucharest, in the Collection Octavian Minar, an impressive book length manuscript entitled Eminescu's personality, containing Eminescu's correspondence. He edits the manuscript in electronic format and makes it available to the public. This manuscript will overturn a lot of information related to Eminescu's life the way it was known until now.*

Mai țineți minte zbaterile lui Florin Rotaru de acum vreo zece ani ? Pe scurt. A dat Legea bibliotecilor, ca deputat, a fost Directorul Bibliotecii Municipale „Mihail Sadoveanu” a Municipiului București unde a inițiat giganticul program „Biblioteca Dacoromania” de punere pe Internet a documentelor și tipăriturilor importante din cultura română, apoi programul de bibliografie a tipăriturilor bucureștene – era modelul de intelectual implicat în fapta științifică și culturală. Și încă mai este, desigur, numai că a trebuit să se „exileze” din România și actualmente funcționează ca profesor universitar în Suedia, la Universitatea Upsala pare-mi-se... Dat în judecată la noi pentru achiziția unor cărți și documente la un preț considerat (de către cei care l-au acuzat) prea mare, dat afară de funcție, obligat să viziteze, pentru scurt timp desigur, beciurile regimului – a ieșit de acolo, și-a dovedit în instanță nevinovăția, i s-au calculat despăgubirile materiale (câteva sute de mii de euro, am auzit, care trebuie plătite), a fost repus chiar în drepturi – dar această ultimă reparație a declinat-o pentru, repet, situația din Suedia. Prietenii îl roagă, încă, să revină. Poate va fi din nou cercetătorul model de acum zece ani...

Până atunci, însă, vrem să vă prezentăm unul dintre manuscrisele achiziționate la propunerea lui de către Biblioteca „Mihail Sadoveanu”. A fost editat de Dan Dulciu – un intelectual român stabilit de curând în Austria – dar nu pe hârtie, ci pe internet. Cultura română își caută puncte arhimedice în Europa, despre asta este vorba. Iată, stimați cititori, ce conține

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Manuscrisul Minar, achiziționat de Dl Florin Rotaru cu prețul libertății sale, și apoi cu dobânda exilului, și cum răstoarnă acest manuscris viața lui Mihai Eminescu de până acum.

Octav Minar este pe cale de a deveni un „nod gordian” în eminescologie. În anii noștri s-a încercat descălcirea lui cel puțin de două ori: o dată când a apărut volumul XVI din ediția academică, și a doua oară când s-a descoperit un manuscris al său la altă bibliotecă decât cea a Academiei Române, unde se acreditase ideea că se păstrează toată arhiva sa.

În 1989, la apariția amintitului volum (care conține *Corespondență* și *Documentar*), lumea culturală a fost luată oarecum prin surprindere, dar presa n-a avut răgazul comentariilor: cartea cuprinde masiv scrisori din fondul Minar aflat la Biblioteca Academiei. Coordonatorul ediției, D. Vatamanic, aduce acuzațiile tradiționale (corespondența lui Eminescu în general „este larg exploatată de către biografii poetului, și aici s-au operat falsuri, ca cele ale lui Octav Minar. Apasă și astăzi incertitudinea asupra epistolelor pentru care nu avem originalele sau reproduceri în facsimile.”) – dar conchide sec: „Minar are meritul, trecând peste acuzațiile ce i se aduc, de a fi păstrat corespondența (...) și ea a intrat în fondurile publice. Suntem astfel în măsură să eliminăm din corespondența lui Eminescu epistolele inventate sau falsurile operate, indiferent de ce natură.”<sup>1</sup>

Două chestiuni rezultă de aici. Mai întâi, că aceste scrisori, existente, nu sunt plastografii – adică scrise de altcineva imitând scrisul lui Eminescu. Era una dintre acuzațiile tradiționale: Octav Minar plastografiază. Apoi, fiind primite în fondurile unei instituții publice, ceea ce presupune o comisie de achiziții cu experți și evaluatori, aceste scrisori existente sunt certificate ca aparținând destinatarilor.

O concluzie se impune: ele validează, de asemenea, și o mare parte din studiile lui Octav Minar unde sunt folosite parțial sau în întregime.

Volumul academic conține, desigur, și scrisori ale Veronicăi Micle către Mihai Eminescu, la secțiunea „Corespondență primită”. Și acestea, multe dintre ele, au mențiunea „Din colecția Octav Minar” (fiind, de altfel, ștampilate cu *ex libris*-ul colecționarului). Și unele scrisori editate prima oară încă de către N. Baboeanu, cuprinse de asemenea în volum, au mențiunea că se află în „Colecția Octav Minar.” Practic, numai fragmentele de scrisori nu sunt primite în acest volum – și, atenție, multe dintre scrisorile Veronicăi Micle publicate prin presă de fiicele ei (C. Mille în *Dimineața*, 1908, publică șase asemenea scrisori – din care ediția primește numai două; acestea sunt cu adevărat pierdute; ediția academică le reia numai pe cele publicate între timp în cărți, nu merge direct la ziar; alte confruntări nu facem, pentru că nu-și au locul aici). Lipsind o ediție a tuturor scrisorilor (întregi sau fragmente), iar bibliografiile fiind, încă, lacunare – ne dăm seama cât de încălțit este domeniul. Ridicarea din arhive a lui Octav Minar a fost, pentru

acest al XVI-lea volum din *Opere*, mai degrabă o invitație la studiu aplicat, la continuarea cercetărilor cum se zice.

Și iată a doua resurrecție a lui Minar: Dl Dan Toma Dulciu găsește, la Biblioteca Metropolitană „Mihail Sadoveanu” din București, un manuscris consistent al acestuia, de fapt o carte în toată legea intitulată *Personalitatea lui Eminescu*. Rezultă că nu numai Biblioteca Academiei deține părți din arhiva Minar – ci și alte instituții publice. Probabil – știindu-se profilul înaltului for științific și cultural – aici s-a primit arhivă propriu-zisă, documente adică, nu și manuscrise de cărți. O cutumă instituțională care face ca o arhivă, probabil foarte mare, să nu fie strânsă la un loc, și să fie răspândită în mai multe părți. Biblioteca Metropolitană nu deține și alte manuscrise de la Minar – presupunându-se, așa spune cu necesitate, că ele mai există și prin alte părți.

Dl Dan Toma Dulciu editează manuscrisul metropolitan în format electronic, iar volumul este disponibil pe google. Dau un singur exemplu pentru a se înțelege importanța lui. Perpessicius, în vol. V al ediției sale (*Poezii postume*), la final, cap. Apocrife, publică această poezie de Mihai Eminescu:

#### Poetul

Gânduri multe ca furtuna  
A cuprins o minte mare,  
Fremătând ca-ntotdeauna  
Praful lumii spre creiere.

Viața-apare luminoasă  
Înălțându-și cânturile...  
Moartea este-ntunecoasă  
Distrugând avânturile

Tu alege – fantezia...  
Urcă-te spre cer nirvanic  
Prieten bun e poezia  
Și Pegas un nobil crainic.

Și comentează: „Ar fi apărut „în revista *Rândunica* scoasă de elevii gimnasiști români din Cernăuți în 1865. Poezia e semnată *Mihail Eminovici, elev gimnasis*”, cum stă scris în Mihail Eminescu: *Poesii (1865-1887)*, ediție publicată de Octav Minar, București, ed. Librăria nouă (1927), p. 11. Revista *Rândunica* nu ne este cunoscută, însă caracterul apocrif al textului se manifestă cu violență și nu mai are, socotesc, nevoie să fie demonstrat. În fața documentului, evident, vom ceda.”<sup>2</sup>

Ar fi vorba de debutul lui Eminescu, pe care această revistă îl atestă pentru anul 1865, cu doi ani mai de vreme decât se știa. Ediția la care face referință Perpessicius nu există în Biblioteca Academiei, nici în Bibliografia M. Eminescu nu este consemnată, nici în Bibliografia Românească modernă (se prea poate să fie vorba de o pierdere a fișei din Fișier: fără aceasta, nicio carte nu mai poate fi găsită). Dar iată ce scrie Octav Minar însuși, în manuscrisul editat recent:

„Această deprindere, îmi scria Stefanelli, o avusese și ca elev gimnazist, la Cernăuți, unde scoteam o foaie așa zisă literară „Rândunica”. Eu eram tipograful, redactorul și expeditorul. Dintr’o tablă, făcusem o formă de mărimea unei coli de hârtie, în ea turnam clei de pește topit, apoi copiam cele ce-mi da colegii pe o foaie, cu cerneală chimică violetă, o aplicam; și trăgeam câte zece exemplare, bineînțeles după ce făceam această treabă pentru cele patru pagini ale revistei noastre.

Acolo, Eminescu a început să publice diferite aforisme găsite prin cărțile răsfoite de el, între care și poezia „Poetul”:

Gânduri multe ca furtuna  
A cuprins o minte mare,  
Frământând ca’n totdeauna  
Bozul lumii spre creiere.  
Viața apare luminoasă  
Înălțându-și cânturile ...  
Moartea este întunecoasă  
Distrugeând avânturile.  
Tu, alege fantezia ...  
Urcă-te spre cer nirvanic,  
Prieten bun e poezia  
Și Pegas un nobil crainic.

Începutul poetic, comunicat mie de Stefanelli, din revista scoasă de el, și din care păstrase vr’o patru numere, pe care voia să le dăruiească Academiei Române, orientează inspirația lui Eminescu spre cugetare.”<sup>3</sup>

Este greu să ni-l închipuim pe Minar un imitator al lui Eminescu scriind ca poetul la 15 ani și dând poezia ca debutul absolut al lui. Logica faptelor cere să înțelegem că *Rândunica* era o revistă confecționată de elevi cu producții de-ale lor. Vedem că în textul preluat de Perpessicius este „Praful lumii...”, iar la Dan Toma Dulciu: „Bozul lumii...”; diferențe de lectură pot exista chiar la Minar – dar, repetăm, în contextul acestei mărturii a sa e greu să-l credem un plastograf. Mai degrabă e ciudat cum de n-a oferit Stefanelli însuși informații, sau un exemplar din această revistă artizanală Bibliotecii Academiei.

Octav Minar consultă intens arhiva sa, și mai reține (copiază) din ea:  
„În revista școlărească *Rândunica* Eminescu mai publicase și poezia  
„Zadarnic”:

Nimicul n'are nici o scară  
Să te urci spre gând nirvanic,  
Ca să nu fii de ocară  
Nu'ncerca să-i fii lui crainic.  
Din nimic, ce vrei să fie  
Când nimicul este nimic ...  
Poate un suspin în poezie  
Când ești mare și el tot mic.

Și mai departe: „Într-o altă strofă, pe care o găsesc rătăcită prin  
manuscrisele păstrate de Stefanelli, poetul alege tot din odele lui Horațiu un  
vers care devine filozofic prin interpretare:

Grijile supărătoare le alungă numai vinul,  
Sărăcia chiar dispare împlinindu-se destinul,  
Regăsindu-te pe tine, fericit vei fi o clipă ..  
Viața noastră stă ascunsă, sub a morții aripă.”

Este vorba, așadar, de un „relata referro” (relatez ceea ce mi s-a spus),  
de informații luate de la prietenul din copilărie al poetului, Theodor  
Stefanelli, la manuscrisele căruia Octav Minar a avut acces.

Alt exemplu: „În poezia „Din străinătate” (1866), încearcă o  
îmbărbătare: «Da! da! ași fi fericite, de-ași fi încăodată în patria-mi iubită, în  
locul meu natal, să pot a binezice, cu mintea'nflăcărată, visările juniei, visări  
de-un ideal». «În natură parcă nu e tristeță, numai în sufletele noastre găsim  
această moștenire ereditară.» Explicat în notă: „Din manuscrisele păstrate  
de Stefanelli.”

Chiar și traduceri: „În timpul școlarității din Schiller îl interesase  
*Fecioara de la Orleans*. Portretul Ioanei D'Arc, adus pe scenă în realizarea  
poetului german, îi dase motive de inspirație:

«În cercul tău meschin și strâmt  
Stai tot cu ochii spre pământ ...  
Nemurirea o privesc numai eu, -  
Căci vecinicie fără Dumnezeu.  
Nu poate fi, te uită în zarea aurie  
De-acolă dreptatea o să vie!»

Cu trimiterea la subsol: „Frederik Schiller, *Fecioara de la Orleans*. Actul 5 scena 4, din manuscrisele păstrate de Stefanelli.”

Să recunoaștem că este vorba de un alt Eminescu, pentru care nu cred că suntem pregătiți. Octav Minar mai are asemenea trimiteri: „Din caietul manuscris, păstrat de T. Maiorescu, nedonat Academiei Române.”; „Originalul în posesia lui V. G. Morțun, de unde a fost copiat.”; „Din același caiet păstrat de Vasile Pogor”; „Originalul în posesia lui T. Maiorescu, de unde a fost copiat”; „Din caietul manuscris păstrat de Vasile Pogor”; „Originalul păstrat de profesorul Novleanu din Iași de la care am copiat scrisoarea”; „Din caietul manuscris păstrat de profesorul A. D. Xenopol”.

Practic, el a mers din om în om pe la foștii prieteni ai lui Eminescu și a copiat ori a preluat manuscrise atunci când i s-au dat. Întrebările curg de la sine: ce a făcut V. Pogor cu asemenea documente eminesciene, dar V. Burlă, Novleanu, Stefanelli, V. G. Morțun, etc.? Unde sunt arhivele acestora? Cum și-a protejat Junimea în general prestigiul de descoperitoare a lui Eminescu?

Este unul dintre motivele – foarte serioase! – pentru care Octav Minar a fost un incomod printre contemporanii lui (dar mai ales pentru cei ai lui Eminescu, atâția câți mai trăiau). Să fie și motivul pentru care ar trebui să refuzăm în bloc ce a colecționat sau copiat el, ce a salvat de la pierdere?

Un alt tip de notație minariană, după un lung șir de citate: „Din întreaga Corespondență a lui Eminescu au fost culese aliniatele ce-i lămuresc personalitatea, făcând din ele un fragment de autobiografie.”

Acest stil al colajului, definitiv pentru Octav Minar, este extrem de derutant: vrei să știi totdeauna și ce este dincolo de fragment, nu te mulțumești niciodată cu ce ți se dă, istoria literară nu se poate face cu porția. Primul care a sudat fragmente de scrisori eminesciene ca să arate cât de grea a fost viața poetului la *Timpul* a fost Eduard Gruber – și acum, când avem scrisorile din care decupează el, vedem că unele sunt scrise cu veselie de către Eminescu, altele sunt ironice...

Iată cum bunăvoința volumului XVI din *Opere* și norocoasa intrare a Dlui Dan Toma Dulciu în arhivele Bibliotecii Metropolitane relansează chestiunea Minar în literatura română. Desigur, e nevoie de căutare a tuturor locurilor unde se află această arhivă – și de editare, sau cel puțin descriere a ei: ar fi o „catagrafie” necesară înainte de a o respinge în bloc sau de a o accepta ca teren de cercetare.<sup>4</sup>

# 1/ Cultură și Personalitate

## I

Critica contemporană neavând perspectiva  
creației totale, nu va reuși să <sup>evadăm</sup> aprecieze <sup>în</sup> <sup>toată</sup>  
dreapta valoare personalitatea scriitorului studiat.  
E o lege psicho-istorică prin care trecutul se războiește  
contra prezentului. Chiar un filosof ca Maliorescu,  
voind să elucideze acest principiu, scria: « Ne  
vine greu să-l cităm îndată după Alecsandri,  
dar în fine poet, poet în toată puterea este el!  
Mihail Eminescu » (1).

Marele poet mai conștient de vocația sa, - și  
aici intervine reversul legii de mai sus, că nimeni  
nu poate stăpâni viitorul anticipând prezentul,

1) T. Maliorescu: Direcția nouă în poezia și proza română //

apropierea duto natură și divinitate. 10  
Adnotând: „Nu știți că <sup>2</sup>hausul e totuși lucrurile și că forma și materie eu e dus lumea în starea în care e aflo?”  
Zminescu încă din copilărie îl periorax cerul cu tot cortajul lui de astri. Problema hausală văzut de acești ochi iscoditori, capote un întele deosebit în fragmentul volterian.  
«Nu știu de unde căpătase o lunetă, scrie Nicu Zminovici, și în fiecare seară seadam cu dânsul, și mi explică mersul stelelor pe cerin».  
Această deprindere a rămas o plăcere deosebită, căci și în bogdăna delu Dan, poetul explicase lui Creangă tot mecanismul cerului cu scara lunetă care o avușese la protest și care a rămas printre lucrurile preferate.  
Adnotând pe Zădărnice: „Basinul sunt ca vânturile cari unflu pânzele corăbiei, ele o scufund câte odată, dar fura ele cu greu se merge corăbia».  
Subliniind acest pasaj, Zminescu e căutat și explică propria lui pasiune pentru fumone în rine, pentru adertonul seare din cărți, pe care le cercetase la protest.  
«Mai departe: «Răii sunt» totdeauna nenorociți, ei știu ce să pună la

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Eminescu, *Opere*, XVI, Corespondență. Documentar, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1989, p. XLIV.

<sup>2</sup> M. Eminescu, *Opere*, Vol. V, Ediție critică îngrijită de Perpessicius, București, 1958, p. 689.

<sup>3</sup> Octav Minar, *Eminescu Poet – Filozof Cultura – Personalitatea – Poezia* (Mss. XX638), Vol. I, Studiu introductiv Dan Toma Dulciu, București 2014.

<sup>4</sup> După publicarea acestui text în revista *Banchetul* din Pietroșani, am aflat mai multe despre manuscrisul de la Biblioteca Metropolitană „Mihail Sadoveanu” din București. El face parte, putem spune aici, din achizițiile făcute de Dl Florin Rotaru, fostul director al Bibliotecii, care după această achiziție și-a pierdut postul, apoi locul de muncă, apoi libertatea pentru un timp – după care a câștigat proces cu proces, a fost chiar despăgubit pentru șase ani de șomaj forțat, iar acum se află „exilat” în Suedia, profesor la una dintre universitățile de prestigiu ale nordicilor. Dl Florin Rotaru, eminent istoric, editor și autor de vaste și importante programe culturale (*Biblioteca Dacoromanica*, inițiată de el, s-a închis după ce a fost dat afară din serviciu, programul de digitalizare a presei românești vechi, de asemenea, iar seria de documente privind istoria cărții bucureștene și-a întrerupt apariția), autor al Legii bibliotecarilor pe care a propus-o și susținut-o în Parlament, este, între altele, și un bun anticar având dorința de a scoate din colecțiile particulare scrieri și documente de interes public. S-a apreciat că e prea mare prețul pe care l-a plătit proprietarilor. Dar, ca o compensație tot către negativ, aceste comori documentare n-au fost publicitate nicăieri, a trebuit să vină un alt cercetător, Dl Dan Toma Dulciu, să ofere doar ediția pe internet a lor. Nu comentăm mai mult, credem că doar admirație trebuie să avem pentru asemenea persoane al căror curaj sparge inertiile.



## **BOOK REVIEWS**



THEODOR DAMIAN

## Rediscovering the Old, Fundamental Values

William J. Byron, *The Power of Principles: Ethics for the New Corporate Culture*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 2006, 236 pp.



William J. Byron is a Jesuit priest and economist. He is also Professor at the Sellinger School of Business and Management, Loyola College in Maryland, teaching corporate responsibility.

The book represents and reflects the interdisciplinary interest and expertise of the author: theology, ethics and economics. Throughout it is evident that William Byron communicates his belief that ethical behavior both at personal and corporate level is based on revelation and on reason as well. Both sources reinforce each other to make the moral imperative more powerful.

Starting with reflections on Merrill Lynch's ethical principles (client focus, respect for the individual, teamwork, responsible citizenship, integrity) and offering a number of definitions for the term "principle", the author invokes Gandhi's list of seven sins in the world: wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice, and politics without principle" (p. XIV).

Having in view these parameters the author, through this book, wants to raise awareness about work, conscience, character, morality, humanity, sacrifice, and principle. In Byron's view the corporate world needs to rediscover the fundamental ethical values that can keep the world going. Without that, irresponsible behavior becomes the norm. We already live in a time of „vacuum of accountable control" (p. XVIII). Consequently, this book is offered as a contribution to fill this vacuum.

The author begins his book by making a review of the old American ethical values, such as freedom, individualism, competition, loyalty, thrift, stability, fidelity, efficiency, self-reliance, power and profit. Then he elaborates on the meanings of principle and culture. In the framework of these reflections he introduces to the reader the set of ten principles that are viewed as the most solid basis for real progress in our world today.

These principles or values are: Integrity, Veracity, Fairness, Dignity, Participation, Commitment, Responsibility, Common Good, Subsidiarity and Love.

The following chapter of the book discusses several ethical issues related to the way in which old corporate culture allows itself to be downgraded whereas the new corporate culture where everything is more humane, needs room to grow and make a serious impact on the world of its time.

Starting with chapter 3, Byron dedicates one new chapter to each of the ten new commandments or principles or values that he promotes and that were mentioned above.

The analysis and interpretation of each of these values is at once enlightening and useful in the practical daily life. In this framework the author recourses often to bibliographical resources, old and new, and in several languages. The analysis is like an inheritance that he leaves from one generation to the other, as the last chapter of the book is titled, in a world that will not be able to go forward if at the same time with looking ahead will not turn its face to tradition as well.

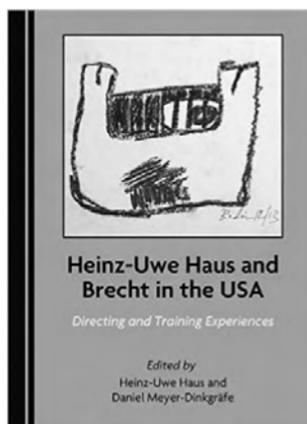
ODILE POPESCU

## Of Brecht's effectiveness in the US

Heinz-Uwe Haus and Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe (eds.), *Heinz-Uwe Haus and Brecht in the USA. Directing and Training Experiences*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2019, 326 pp.

Since Max Frisch's wishful thinking about Brecht's "ineffectiveness of a classic" or Heiner Müller's abuse of Brecht's pieces as "trade union literature", the end of the Cold War and the emerging globalization had caused some so-called Brechtians to hang their cloaks after the wind of time. John Fuegi leads this squad.

But the reality of the theater world in Asia, Latin America and North America has never been impressed by such prophecies of doom and changes of mind. Brecht's effectiveness was and is unbroken there. His almost



“universal” worldview is still the complete opposite of ineffectiveness, as a new book publication by Heinz-Uwe Haus shows.

The number of performances may have declined overall, above all due to an obviously increasingly self-reliant program policy in European countries, especially Germany. If you look at a preview in the magazine *Theater heute*, well-known works from ancient Greece, German classic, dramas from Shakespeare to Ibsen are apparently only brought onto the stage in edited versions: “after” is more often said than “from”. What arrogance to drift around in the texts and dramaturgy of masterpieces! Brecht cannot be dealt with like this, hopefully the Brecht heirs will prevent that for a long time to come. This is probably why it is played less often than necessary on German-speaking stages.

The director Heinz-Uwe Haus, a student of Wolfgang Heinz and Manfred Wekwerth, had already made a name for himself as an interpreter of Brecht during the GDR era. His production of “Mother Courage” for the Shakespeare Days in Weimar in 1979 attracted sustained international attention and is now used as exemplary teaching material in dramaturgical seminars because of the extensive program book of the National Theater. Together with the British-German theater scholar Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, he has now presented a documentary volume on his directorial work in the USA, where he has been active since 1979.

Haus, who headed the directing department of the Directing Institute in East Berlin, Fritz Bennewitz, long-time artistic director of the drama at the National Theater Weimar, and director Wolfgang Pintzka from the Berliner Ensemble have been ambassadors of Brecht's work abroad since the 1970s. They each developed their own way of working in encountering different cultures: Bennewitz mainly in Asia, Pintzka in Scandinavia, Haus in Cyprus, Greece and finally also in the USA. The work of these three directors has significantly promoted the international academic discussion of Brecht's theatrical making and, as Brecht put it, has proven its “use value” (“Gebrauchswert” in German). During the Brecht days initiated by Werner Hecht in the BrechtHaus in Chausseestrasse and in the *notate* magazine of the Brecht Center, the experience of intercultural dynamics under unfamiliar viewing and listening habits was received. These discourses had shown how to employ methods of “epic” presentation and techniques of de-familiarizing that are important to understand and achieve effectiveness.

This volume brings together working materials, reviews and photos of the productions that Haus has brought out at university theaters, professional training programs and regional theaters. The materials also reflect different audience reactions at different venues in the states of Kansas, California, Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Delaware. Descriptions of his extensive workshop activities at well-known universities and educational institutions - from the Folger Library to Harvard, New York

University and Cornell - give an insight into the wide interest in Haus' Brecht reception. The material is supplemented by the inclusion of conference lectures and important magazine publications on questions of acting training in the sense of Brecht. Brecht's distinct contribution to the theorizing of acting and audience response is examined in detail, and each essay and concept is placed in the context of the aesthetic debates of the times, subjected to a critical assessment, and considered in light of subsequent scholarly thinking or professional achievements.

The communitarian character of Brecht's directorial work becomes clear. Questions about war and peace ("Mother Courage"), fascist threats ("Arturo Ui"), a new morality beyond bourgeois conventions ("Galileo Galilei") and other topics that are encroaching on contemporary society ("Threepenny Opera", "Good Person of Szechwan ") evidently hit the nerve of an increasingly politically sensitive American audience. Whether young or old, liberal or conservative, Brecht's theatricality and Haus' ability to bring them to fruition, often with the simplest means, are addressed. The reviews describe how the productions are visually linked to the emotional memory of the audience. Some (especially academics) are also amazed that Brecht does not seem to be a dogmatist, so that "it is a pleasure to get involved in his view of things".

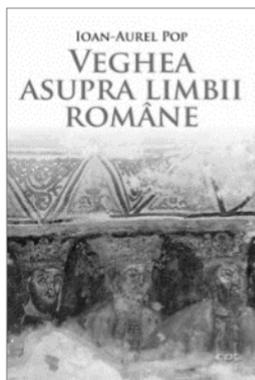
How do you do that? In his texts documented for training, the director analyzes the dialectic of character behavior, and lets you participate in how Brecht teaches how to create characters through behavior and how to precisely assert situations. The author is committed to "targeted storytelling so that the audience stays focused". His unique ability, often with the simplest elements - panels of fabric, props, furniture - to visualize processes out of nowhere and in the twinkling of an eye, also promotes ensemble play, which is part of the tradition of American musicals and many off-Broadway groups.

The documentation is reminiscent of the famous *Theaterarbeit*, that Helene Weigel published in 1952 at Verlag der Kunst in Dresden to provide information about the work of the Berliner Ensemble. The book, which in Europe became the basis of a new, dialectical dramaturgy for theater in the second half of the 20th century, has not yet been published in English.

Haus' und Meyer-Dinkgräfe's documentation continues this tradition methodically and thus gives theater makers and viewers a current insight into the effectiveness and power of Brecht's theater in the English-speaking world.

THEODOR CODREANU

## Ioan-Aurel Pop: „Stăpâna noastră”



I

*Cât privește pe Emil Cioran, cel nemulțumit profund de neantul valah, găsea, totuși, că suntem salvați, în ierarhiile civilizației și culturii universale, de două creații: limba română și Eminescu.*

Un eveniment editorial de acută actualitate și trebuință culturală este apariția cărții președintelui Academiei Române, Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Veghea asupra limbii române* (București – Chișinău, Editura Litera, 2020). Echilibrul interior, venind din adâncurile „cumințeniei pământului” ardelenesc, dar și brâncușiano-eminescian, rășfrânt în luminoasa lui scriitură, ca și în discursul public, întotdeauna așezat, plurireferențial, și de aceea incomod pentru extremismul ideologic neomarxist al „corectitudinii politice”, face din Ioan-Aurel Pop modelul emblematic al spiritului academic și nu întâmplător, chiar în anul Centenarului Marii Uniri a fost ales Președintele celui mai înalt for al științei și culturii românești.

La drept vorbind, nu mă așteptam la o carte despre limba română din partea binecunoscutului istoric, dar structura ei eseistică, accesibilă și nespecialiștilor, acoperă pe deplin, riguros, formula aleasă, pe care autorul ține s-o motiveze: „Eu spun din capul locului că nu sunt un lingvist cu diplomă. (...) De aceea, această carte este una de eseuri și nu de studii erudite. În aceste eseuri, însă, am preluat argumentele specialiștilor, dincolo de argumentele bunului-simț, pe care le-am semnalat de fiecare dată./ Este foarte bine să ne vorbim limba și s-o prețuim, dar, ca să facem acest lucru, trebuie s-o și cunoaștem și nu oricum, ci corect. Limba, ca și poporul care o folosește, are nevoie să fie apărată, protejată, ferită de intruziuni nefirești, ocrotită părintește. Limba maternă o primim cu toții, din fericire, de la mamele noastre, dar faptul acesta nu este suficient pentru prosperitatea și perenitatea ei, nici pentru exprimarea noastră corectă” (p. 21).

Contextul istoric pe care-l trăim propulsează *veghea* propusă de Ioan-Aurel Pop în miezul formelor de degradare la care este supusă limba română, în ultimele decenii, școala însăși devenind neputincioasă, condamnată fiind să producă „analfabeți funcționali”, încât mult lăudatul proiect politic al „României educate” se arată, în realitate, o ofensivă cinică a „deşcolarizării României”, cum demonstrează un alt istoric de profesie, ieșeanul Mircea Platon<sup>1</sup>, redactorul-șef al revistei *Convorbiri literare*. În istoria românilor, apărarea limbii române, într-un mediu geopolitic ostil și agresiv, a constituit o dimensiune axială a existenței. Cel mai bine a surprins această condiție Antonio Bonfini (1434–1503), devenit secretar la curtea lui Matei Corvin (1486), citat de Ioan-Aurel Pop (p. 76-77): „Înecate sub valul de barbari (coloniile romane, n.n.), ele totuși emană limba romană și, ca să nu o părăsească nicidecum, se împotrivesc cu atâta stăruință, încât îi vezi că luptă nu atât pentru păstrarea intactă a vieții cât a limbii. Căci cine nu s-ar minuna – dacă ar sta să socotească dese puhoai ale sarmaților și goților și, de asemenea, ale hunilor, vandalilor și gepizilor și incursiunile germanilor și longobarzilor – că s-au mai păstrat încă până acum la daci și geți rămășițele limbii romane?”

Iată cum apărarea limbii române a devenit o permanență a istoriei, la români, în contra agresivităților de tot felul. Numai în ultimele trei secole, s-au produs câteva „invazii”: cea greacă (Moldova și Țara Românească), la apogeul și sfârșitul veacului fanariot, când limba greacă a tins să înlocuiască româna ca limbă de cultură și educație, fenomen căruia i-au pus capăt Văcăreștii (Ienăchiță Văcărescu inaugurând și tradiția odelor-testament închinată limbii române, pe urmele cărturarilor Bisericii și ale cronicarilor) și pașoptiștii, care au pregătit biruința limbii marilor clasici. În Basarabia, agresiunea fără precedent a stăpânirii rusești, de după ocupația din 1812. În Transilvania, permanentul asediu unguresc, căruia i s-a opus Școala Ardeleană. La începutul secolului al XX-lea, România a mai fost invadată de moda franțuzească, stârnind reacția mișcării de protest a lui Nicolae Iorga, la Universitatea din București (vezi Nicolae Iorga, *Lupta pentru limba românească*, București, Editura Minerva, 1906). *Veghea* d-lui Ioan-Aurel Pop se înscriseră, așadar, în această lungă înșiruire, primejduirea, acum, venind pe fondul a ceea ce s-a numit „romgleză”, dar nu numai.

În esență, constat cu bucurie că apărarea limbii române la istoricul nostru coincide cu argumentele ontoestetice și istorice ale lui Eminescu în aceeași speță, toate contextualizate pentru anii pe care îi trăim astăzi. Le-am subliniat, din perspectivă eminesciană, în eseu introductiv *Limba ca taină a ființei* la cartea mea *Hyperionice* (Iași, Editura Junimea, col. „Eminesciana”, 2019). Reamintesc, pentru contemporanii noștri, arguția complexă, genial concentrată, a lui Eminescu: „Nu noi suntem stăpânii limbei, ci limba e stăpâna noastră. Precum într-un sanctuar reconstituim piatră pe piatră tot ce-a fost înainte – nu după fantezia sau inspirația noastră momentană – ci după

ideea în genere și în amănunte – care a predominat la zidirea sanctuarului – astfel trebuie să ne purtăm cu limba noastră românească. Nu orice inspirațiune întâmplătoare e un cuvânt de-a ne atinge de această gingașă și frumoasă zidire, în care poate că unele cuvinte aparțin unei arhitecturi vechi dar în ideea ei generală, este însăși floarea sufletului etnic al românimii”<sup>2</sup>.

Este și ideea-forță care dă viață *veghii* d-lui academician Ioan-Aurel Pop, idee reductibilă la prima frază: *Nu noi suntem stăpânii limbei, ci limba e stăpâna noastră*. Toți stricătorii de limbă se cred, dimpotrivă, *stăpâni ai limbii*, fie din ignoranță, prostie, vulgaritate, fie cu program politic, precum „creatorii” conceptului de *limbă moldovenească*, în Basarabia, fie, în cazul snobilor, cărora limba română le cade rău, îndemnându-ne, hiperironici, s-o folosim doar la înjurături, fie în cazul amatorilor căzuți în exces de dacism sau de cumanism: „Un amator nu are voie să emită sentințe despre limba română, să spună cu nonșalanță că ar fi tracică, dacică sau cumană, că ar coborî până în preistorie sau că ar fi existat înainte a fi pe lume poporul român. Toate aceste elucubrații – unele născute nu numai din ignoranță sau rea-voință, ci și din bune intenții – fac un mare rău cadrului general de manifestare a limbii, plasează în derizoriu secole de cercetări și îi dezorientează pe membrii publicului larg, care nu au instrumentarul necesar pentru a discerne între o teorie și o ipoteză, între adevăr demonstrat și fals adevăr, între certitudine și probabilitate. Prin urmare, teoriile despre limba noastră trebuie să fie preluate de la profesioniști, de la aceia care s-au pregătit sistematic în meseria de lingvist” (pp. 20-21). Nu e vorba, desigur, să negăm substratul geto-dacic al limbii și poporului român.

Cât privește pe Emil Cioran, cel nemulțumit profund de *neantul valah*, găsea, totuși, că suntem salvați, în ierarhiile civilizației și culturii universale, de două creații: *limba română* și *Eminescu*. Ambilor termeni ai ecuației le-a adus supreme elogii. În Eminescu a întrevăzut starea de *arheu*, în capodopera *Rugăciunea unui dac*, din care recunoaște că și-a tras sevele propria lui operă, realizând, totodată, cea mai concentrată și mai adâncă exegeză a poemului<sup>3</sup> (în raport cu ceea ce Mircea Eliade a numit „teroarea istoriei”), textul datând din 1989, când uita limba franceză, întorcându-se, salvator, la română. Cât despre fenomenul invers: *părăsirea limbii române pentru limba franceză*, tot el a îndreptat lucrurile, în chip genial, într-o formulare magnifică, pe care, nu întâmplător, Ioan-Aurel Pop o reține ca moto al cărții sale: „Să treci de la limba română la limba franceză e ca și cum ai trece de la o rugăciune la un contract”. Această întoarcere de la cartezianism la liturgic, la *fagurele de miere* eminescian, la limba „vechilor cazanii”, este astfel comentată de Ioan-Aurel Pop: „Este o revenire formală acasă a fiului rătăcitor, o revenire la esențele din care acesta și-a tras seva și care i-au imprimat pentru eternitate în subconștient ideea că patria sa originară era limba română” (p. 15).

Cartea lui Ioan-Aurel Pop se deschide cu eseul *Elogiul limbii române*, convins, ca și Cioran, că „cea mai importantă creație a poporului român este limba română” (p. 25) și, de aceea, trebuie s-o păzim ca supremă comoară, după îndemnul lui Ienăchiță Văcărescu. Cei 7,5 miliarde de locuitori ai planetei vorbesc circa șase-șapte mii de limbi, cele mai răspândite fiind din grupul indo-european, din care fac parte și limbile romanice. În 2017, Alain Calvet și Louis-Jean Calvet au finalizat cercetarea *Barometrul limbilor din lume*, fundată pe *factori intrinseci* (numărul vorbitorilor, entropia/cantitatea de informații, factorul vehicular între etnii, statutul limbii, traduceri *din* și *în*, premii internaționale, prezența pe Wikipedia, învățământul universitar) și *contextuali* (dezvoltarea umană, fecunditatea demografică, penetrarea rețelei de internet în limba vizată). Raportată la factorii intrinseci, româna ocupă locul 11 (după engleză, franceză, spaniolă, germană, rusă, italiană, mandarină, portugheză, japoneză și poloneză). Cumulând cele două categorii de factori, româna ocupă locul 15 în lume. Sunt situații absolut onorante, chiar neașteptate, la prima vedere, încât își găsește noima și o apreciere a lui Noica asupra identificării celor mai apte limbi pentru filosofie, în Europa: greaca veche, germana și româna, aceasta din urmă sortită, deopotrivă, și *poeziei*. *Dicționarul Tezaur al Limbii Române* (realizat, în două valuri: 1906–1944, 1965–2010) numără peste 175 000 de cuvinte, cu peste 1 300 000 de citate, finalmente înmagazinând, cu adaosurile următoare, aproape 250 000 de termeni (pp. 27-30).

Partea paradoxală, izvorâtă dinspre cârcotași, mulți chiar intelectuali prizonieri ai ceea ce Luca Pițu numea „sentimentul românesc al urii de sine”, contrapus celui nicasian (*sentimentul românesc al finței*), nu mai istovesc în „demitizări” și ostilități: „sunt multe voci astăzi, care critică vehement limba română, dar și creația lingvistică și literară a românilor, considerându-le minore, nesemnificative, încărcate de prejudecăți și de complexe. Evident, soarta limbii este legată inexorabil de destinul poporului român și, de la o vreme, al națiunii române, plasate și acestea sub semnul incertitudinii, al provizoratului, al neașezării și al autoflagelării. Românii – prin unii dintre ei – sunt mari «maestri» în a se nimici singuri” (p. 30). Cartea d-lui Ioan-Aurel Pop are ca vector și o terapie a unei asemenea mentalități năruitoare, fără a cădea în extrema cealaltă.

Următorul eseu are ca temă *Conservarea etnonimului romanus numai la români*, ceea ce pare o excepție încurcată însă rău, aș zice, de *teoria cumană* a lui Neagu Djuvara. Și Ioan-Aurel Pop constată: peste tot, numele popoarelor neolatine, atât în Europa, cât și în America Latină, „nu au nimic sau mai nimic cu latinitatea, cu numele poporului roman: italienii își au numele de la o noțiune geografică, spaniolii tot de la o denumire geografică (de sorginte feniciană), francezii de la triburile germanice ale francilor, provensalii de la un substantiv comun (lat. *provincia*), catalanii de la numele unor populații germanice și sarmatice (Got-Alania) etc.” (pp. 33-34).

Djuvara explică aceste adopții etnonimice prin predominanța, la un moment dat, a unei nobilimi străine asupra popoarelor romanizate, ceea ce nu se confirmă decât în puține cazuri. Conform teoriei, românii ar fi trebuit să se numească *cumani*, dar s-au încăpățânat să-și zică *români*, *rumâni*, din „megalomanie” automitizantă, târzie (ar zice un alt educator al neamului, Lucian Boia). În realitate, replică, indirect, Ioan-Aurel Pop, „Azi însă este și mai clar decât altădată că românii s-au numit întotdeauna români (rumâni), de când există ei ca popor, adică de la începuturile lor” (pp. 34-35). „Rumân” are sensul de legat de glie, iar *român* este oglinda îndelungatei legături cu cele două Imperii Romane, cel apusean (aparent părăsit după retragerea aureliană) și cel răsăritean, Bizantin, până la căderea din 1453. Cât privește termenul de *vlah*, cu toate variantele, se datorează străinilor, în memoria primului trib celtic romanizat: „Astfel, «rumânii» erau oamenii pământului, care, o vreme, au fost supușii nou-veniților, până la asimilarea totală a acestora din urmă” (p. 38). În ciuda lor, cei transformați, vremelnici, în „rumâni”, în sensul șerbiei medievale, au redevenit stăpâni ca români, în țările românești. Chiar și între Prut și Nistru, numele corect al limbii vorbite este româna. (Vezi capitolul *Limba română și numele ei corect*). Minima onestitate științifică o confirmă și lingviștii ruși, de la mai vechii Viktor Vinogradov (1895-1969) și Ruben A. Budagov (1910-2001) până la Vladimir Șișmarev și Samuil Bernștein.

## II

*„Câtă vreme mai locuim în limba română – «ca un fagure de miere», cum scria Poetul – înseamnă că avem încă o patrie română, oriunde ne-am afla”*

Misiunea apărării limbii române și-au luat-o Biserica Ortodoxă (inclusiv cea Greco-Catolică, prin Școala Ardeleană) și cărturarii, misiune instituționalizată prin Academia Română (cu numele inițial „Societatea literară”, la 1866), având ca scop principal stabilirea normelor ortografice, redactarea unei gramatici unitare, pentru toate provinciile, și a unui dicționar-tezaur. Istoria acestui program normativ este descrisă în esul *Apărarea limbii române*. Reforma din 1953-1954 a dat câștig de cauză moștenirii slave, cu eliminarea totală lui *â* în favoarea lui *î*. În 1964, s-a revenit la *â* în cuvintele *român* și în toate derivatele. Ultima reglementare s-a produs în 1993, cu generalizarea lui *â*, dar cu păstrarea lui *î* anumite poziții (începutul și finalul cuvintelor și în cele compuse). Controversele n-au întârziat să apară. Românii sunt atât de greu de împăcat între dâșșii, încât anumite edituri, reviste bravează (cu „argumente”, desigur) respingând legea propusă de Academia Română.

Chiar prin aceste avataruri ale normelor ortografice, limba dă seamă de istorie. Firesc, Ioan-Aurel Pop se ocupă și de *Limba română ca izvor istoric*. Exemplele sunt multe și lămuritoare, constituindu-se într-un studiu care depășește tenta esecistică. Doar câteva dintre ele: păstrarea vie a perfectului simplu în Oltenia (*fui, fuisti, fuit, fuimus, fuistis, fuerunt* sau *fuere*) arată extensiunea și persistența prezenței romane timpurii în această zonă românească, atestând un adevărat „tezaur lingvistic identitar arhaic” atât în spațiul general al limbii române, cât și ansamblul celor romanice (p. 53). O situație similară cu păstrarea imperfectului verbului *a fi* (*sum, esse, fui*): *eram, eras, erat, eramus, eratis, erant*, „asemănare tulburătoare”, lipsă în celelalte limbi surori. Alte exemple: arină din *arena* (în Transilvania), a la (*lavo, lavare*), anțărt (*annotertio*), domn/domnitor, Domnul/Dumnezeu (*dominus*), oaie (*ovis*), păcurar<sup>4</sup> (*pecorarius*), mur (*murus*) ș.a.m.d. În total, peste o sută de cuvinte latinești, trecute în română, dar nu și-n celelalte limbi romanice. La exemplele comentate de d-l Ioan-Aurel Pop, aș adăuga unul absolut singularizant pentru istoria creștinării românilor, furnizat, din punct de vedere teologic, de Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae, în primul volum din *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (1978). Româna este singura limbă neolatină care a conservat cuvântul *lume* din latinescul *lumen*, lumină, dovadă a creștinării încă din vremea romanizării, identificarea *lumii* cu *lumina* fiind o realitate dogmatic-teologică profundă, adusă de lumina taborică, aceea care face existența pământească pentru întâia oară *transparentă*, înlăturând *opacitatea* împărăției Diavolului. Întrebările privind geneza și continuitatea românilor în spațiul geografic tradițional își află răspuns și prin tezaurul limbii: se atestă, astfel, „intensul proces de romanizare, continuitatea de locuire a daco-romanilor și apoi a românilor în interiorul arcului Carpaților”, dar și „faptul că așa-zisa teorie imigraționistă nu este decât o alcătuire politică târzie, reluată din interese naționaliste și iredentiste. Prin urmare, cuvintele sunt tulburătoare mărturii, vorbind despre latinitate și despre conviețuirea noastră cu ceilalți, despre conservarea identității” (p. 72).

Spații ample din cartea d-lui Ioan-Aurel Pop remarcă intruziunea ignoranței în organicitatea limbii, care este un organism viu, de o mare mobilitate, care asimilează sau respinge elementele noi sau pe cele ce întinează metabolismul lingvistic. Din acest punct de vedere, limba română a fost și încă este de o vigoare comparabilă cu cele mai importante idiomuri din lume. Așa se explică miracolul lingvistic (și istoric) al supraviețuirii latinității orientale înrădăcinate în substratul dacic, încât se verifică și aprecierea lui Herodot cu privire la numărul extins („cei mai numeroși după inzi”) al ramurilor trace. Între teoriile „extremiste” ale purității dacice și latiniste, autorul temperează lucrurile: „Poporul român nu este totuna nici cu dacii și nici cu romanii (latinofonii), ci este o plămădă nouă, rezultată din sinteza daco-romană, îmbogățită cu elementul slav și cu alte influențe ale populațiilor migratoare” (p. 91).

Judecăți greșite, intrate în mintea publicului, s-au emis cu privire la „jubileul” Centenarului Unirii, care, pentru unii, a însemnat *un secol de existență* a României, eroarea fiind amplificată imediat de către alții, care au contrapus Centenarului existența altui stat de 1100 de ani! De unde „drepturi” suveraniste asupra Transilvaniei! (p. 90). De aici, erori vehiculate prin termeni istorici ca *unire*. Lui Mihai Viteazul i s-a negat realizarea primei *uniri* a statelor românești sub acuza că a fost „un fel de condotier, năimit de unii și de alții” (p. 93). Domnitorul nu a „cucerit” și nici nu a „alipit” Transilvania și nici Moldova, fiind vorba de țări cu populație majoritar românească, etnic și confesional: „Astfel, cel mai potrivit termen pentru acțiunile întreprinse de Mihai Viteazul la nord și la est de Carpați este acela de «unire», inclusiv din perspectiva istorică a «duratei lungi», care a făcut din principele Țării Românești un erou național și în sensul în care actul s-a repetat în intervalul 1859-1918. Mihai Viteazul nu avea de unde să știe că a prefigurat România modernă și nici că avea să devină erou național, însă noi știm asta și este legitim să marcăm întreprinderea sa în funcție de valorile noastre” (p. 94).

Este absolută nevoie de precizarea sensurilor istorico-lingvistice ale conceptelor cu care operăm. În acest sens, nepotrivită este și formularea „alipirii Moldovei la Țara Românească”, la 1859, fiindcă s-au unit două state egale, fără a se subordona unul altuia. Greșită este și sintagma „unirea Moldovei și Munteniei”, căci lasă afară Oltenia. Corect: „unirea Moldovei cu Țara Românească” sau invers (p. 95). La 1918, în schimb, nu mai e vorba de unirea unor țări egale ca statalitate: România nu s-a unit cu Bucovina, Basarabia, Transilvania și Banatul, ca state, ci ca provincii ale aceleiași spațiu etnic. Nu e vorba să fim „tipicari” în exprimare: „Publicul are nevoie de precizie, de claritate și de puritate în exprimare. Limba română nu este pentru nimeni dintre cei care o vorbesc facultativă în privința formei ei” (p. 96). Motivația: „Noi scriem istoria românilor din perspectivă românească și nu chineză”, căci „Nu există în istorie un singur adevăr valabil, ci adevăruri” (p. 98).

Autorul extinde „sanționarea” unor termeni folosiți greșit și la alte realități istorice. De pildă, numirea unui partid: Partidul Umanist, îmbinare potrivită ca nuca-n perete, fiindcă *umanist* are alte sensuri decât cel de *umanitar*. Nu putem abuza să vorbim de Partidul Clasic, Partidul Impresionist etc. De fapt, și seria *clasic*, *clasicism*, *clasicist* este, azi, bulversată (pp. 105-107). La fel, *reformă*, *religie* și *confesiune*, *rit* (pp. 107-109). Un alt eseu se ocupă de moștenirea cuvântului *servus* (pp. 110-114). O adevărată comedie, cu iz de dramă, după Al Doilea Război Mondial, e disputa între numele vechi și noi ale unor localități, străzi, instituții etc. Schimbările sunt provocate fie de conjunctura politică, fie de modă, fie din alte pricini. Acum, a devenit de bonton, din snobism sincronizant, ca în loc de *prefectură* (lat. *praefectus*) să se spună „instituția prefectului”, când,

firesc, limba tinde spre economie de mijloace. După o asemenea logică, scrie ironic autorul, va trebui să renunțăm la *primărie* pentru „instituția primarului”, la *rectorat*, pentru „instituția rectorului” etc. „Garda Financiară” s-a văzut lovită frontal de prolixă „Direcția Generală Antifraudă Fiscală” (DGAF). În Italia, „Guardia di Finanza” există de două secole, dar nimănui nu i-a trecut prin minte s-o schimbe. Nu mai vorbim de numele ministerelor care se modifică, haotic, după stăpânii vremelnici ai unei guvernări. La noi, modelul șandramalei de bălci (Caragiale) este preluat după obiceiurile regimului comunist, care a rebotezat sate și orașe ș.a.m.d. Românii au cunoscut agresive schimbări de nume doar sub dominația maghiară și habsburgică (în Transilvania și Bucovina), sub regimul țarist și bolșevic (Basarabia, Bucovina). Numele înseși ale acestor provincii sunt mutilate după voința *stăpânilor limbii*. Acad. David Prodan, născut în satul Cioara, a militat zadarnic să se revină la tradiție, în loc de Săliște. Un sat din Banat, străvechi, mărturie a moștenirii latine, Capul Bouului (*Caput Bovis*), a fost rebotezat, din „pudoare”, Păltiniș, trezind protestul lui Constantin Daicoviciu. O stradă dintr-un mare oraș, cu numele lui Dostoievski, s-a transformat în „General Vasile Milea”, motivația edililor fiind că poartă numele unui „scriitor comunist sovietic”. În ignoranța lor, birocrății nu știu că prenumele se pune înaintea numelui, tratându-i pe oameni după măsura lor, iar nu după calitatea creștină de *persoană* și de *personalitate*. O carte nu este scrisă de Eminescu Mihai, ci de Mihai Eminescu. Sunt cărcotași „corecți politic” care ne dau sfaturi imperative să schimbăm imnul de stat, *Deșteaptă-te, române*, dar și data Zilei Naționale, căci la 1 Decembrie e frig și nu se poate ieși la grătar cu mici și bere! Ioan-Aurel Pop contracarează cu argumentul tradiției la națiunile puternice: *Marseillaise* și *Cântecul de război pentru Armata Rinului*. (Vezi cap. *Nume vechi și nume noi*).

De pomină a devenit preferința „deșteaptă” pentru *locație* față de *loc*, moștenit direct din latină (*locum*), noua achiziție din franceză având alte sensuri (p. 131). Fenomenul, valabil și pentru alte exemple, este decriptat astfel de Ioan-Aurel Pop: „De ce să se prefere *locație* și să nu se folosească tradiționalul și obișnuitul *loc* este greu de spus. A recurge la un termen lung și nou în locul unuia scurt și vechi este contra naturii limbii, dar este în spiritul dorinței de a epata, de a te arăta interesant, informat, șic sau *cool*” (p. 132). În aceeași categorie intră parazitarea *ca și*, folosit mai ales cum nu trebuie (p. 157-158), cu efecte dezastruoase de snobism și prostie, în numele evitării cacofoniei, încât cacofonia obsedează și acolo unde nu există („ca și profesor”, de pildă, zice până și împăunatul profesor). Moștenirea căderii în ridicol a Coanei Chirița e la mare preț și azi (p. 135). Abuzurile se extind la termeni precum *manager*, *director*, *șef*, *rector*, *ranking* (pp. 136-141), dar la lipsa diacriticelor, apoi la *fortuit*, la pleonasm, la abrevieri, la *a realiza*, la accentuarea greșită a cuvintelor, la limbajul teologic și bisericesc (pp. 187-

199), la noile cuvinte aduse de pandemia Coronavirus (pp. 220-225) și la multe altele.

Domnul acad. Ioan-Aurel Pop știe că o carte despre cuvinte rămâne, fatalmente, neîncheiată și o spune chiar în *Încheiere*, căci „limbile sunt creații fără sfârșit, în veșnică schimbare, în primenire continuă, în transformări abia perceptibile petrecute chiar sub ochii noștri” (p. 226). Cu toate acestea, legile organice ale unei limbi trebuie respectate: „Limba română deține gramatici sistematice încă din secolul al XVIII-lea, ceea ce înseamnă că scrierea și vorbirea limbii literare au tradiții foarte serioase. Regulile ortografice, ortoepice și de punctuație ale limbii române se stabilesc de către Academia Română și devin obligatorii prin lege. A nu le urma reprezintă o sfidare la adresa acurateței limbii române și a rolului său de instrument unic de comunicare din sânul poporului român”. O carte ca *Veghea asupra limbii române* se dovedește mai necesară ca oricând în haosul răsturnării valorilor, al sporirii numărului stricătorilor de limbă în mediul virtual, dar și în instituțiile publice, începând cu școala și terminând cu Parlamentul și ministerele. Pe urmele lui Nicodim Monahul (1320-1406), Eminescu<sup>5</sup> a scris poema *Pentru păzirea auzului*, pentru păzirea simțurilor, în genere, având legătură tainică și cu păzirea limbii, pentru el aceasta fiind *casa ființei, stăpâna noastră*, într-un sens care-l anunță pe Heidegger. Literatura română este sanctuarul care teaurizează bogăția uneia dintre cele mai frumoase limbi de pe mapamond. Dar, în mod straniu, „curricula” (ignoranții din minister vorbesc de *curricule!*) celor care decid structura învățământului românesc au uitat rolul extraordinar al predării limbii și literaturii române, transformând-o în „*limbă și comunicare*”, un concept fad, aplicabil doar la însușirea unor limbi străine. În sintagma aceasta halucinantă, observă d-l acad. Ioan-Aurel Pop, zace un pleonasm, căci menirea centrală a limbii este realizarea comunicării: „Sintagma (așa de iubită de unii) «limbă și comunicare», din școlile noastre, mai păcătuiește prin ceva: elimină adjectivul «română», ca și cum ne-ar fi rușine de el. Evident, trăim într-o epocă a globalizării – pe care unii o vor împlinită în cea mai mare grabă – învățăm cu toții engleza și alte limbi străine, dar limba română are numele ei, statutul ei, rostul ei și nu este una care trebuie obturată, exilată sau ocolită” (p. 231). Ca și literatura română, obturată odată cu limba română. Consecințele sunt catastrofale, recunoscute, parțial, chiar și de „managerii” învățământului: sporul neîngrădit al „analfabeților funcționali”. Nu mai vorbim de faptul că tinerii, „deși au trecut prin școli considerate bune, nu mai știu cum s-ar cuveni puse semnele de punctuație, nu mai cunosc ortografia, au dificultăți în conjugarea verbelor etc. Mulți observatori spun că nu se mai deține astăzi simțul limbii” (p. 232). Care, altădată, era moștenit de la mamă, din familie, din studiul gramaticii, din lecturi literare devenite, acum, o *rara avis*: „Soluția nu este alta decât studiul serios. Limba română și ulterior Limba și literatura română trebuie să rămână discipline

fundamentale în școala românească de toate gradele și de toate profilurile, alături de alte discipline care formează cultura generală precum sunt istoria și geografia” (pp. 232-233). „Managerii” „deșcolarizării României” însă se arată întotdeauna grăbiți să rupă ore tocmai din aceste discipline. În schimb, „Foarte mulți – chemați și nechemăți – doresc în școlile noastre materii ca Protecția mediului, Educație sexuală, Șah, Igienă, Nutriție sănătoasă, Educație financiar-bancară etc.” (p. 233). Se uită însă că „disciplinele cu câte o oră pe săptămână nu au nici un rost, devenind aproape inutile”.

Și încheierea: „Câtă vreme mai locuim în limba română – «ca un fagure de miere», cum scria Poetul – înseamnă că avem încă o patrie română, oriunde ne-am afla” (p. 235). Condiția e să recunoaștem că limba română e *stăpâna noastră*. Acesta este Adevărul veghii asupra limbii române.

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Mircea Platon, *Deșcolarizarea României. Scopurile, cârțile și arhitectii reformei învățământului românesc*, București, Editura Ideea Europeană, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Mihai Eminescu, *Fragmentarium*, ediție după manuscrise, cu variante, note, addenda și indici, de Magdalena D. Vatamaniuc, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1981, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Pentru cei care nu cunosc textul cioranian din 3 aprilie 1989 (Paris), îl reproduc integral: „În acelele de deznădejde, singurul recurs salvator este apelul la o deznădejde și mai mare. Nici o alinare rezonabilă nefiind eficace, rămâne să te agăți de o rătăcire care să rivalizeze cu a ta, ba chiar s-o depășească. Superioritatea pe care o are negația asupra oricărei forme de credință izbucnește în momentele în care pofta de a scăpa de ea este foarte puternică. Toată viața mea, în tinerețea mea mai ales, *Rugăciunea unui Dac* m-a ajutat să rezist ispitei de a renunța la tot. Poate că nu este inutil să semnaliez aici că ultima pagină din *Manualul de descompunere*, prima mea carte scrisă în franceză, este, prin ton și violență, foarte aproape de excesele Dacului. Nu doar un occidental a descoperit în literatura română o notă sumbră, ciudată la un popor cu reputație de frivol. Această notă există indiscutabil și este atribuită, în lipsa unei motivații precise, condițiilor istorice, încercărilor neîntrerupte ale unei țări la cheremul cutărui sau cutărui imperiu. Fapt este că în pagina în chestiune totul se termină rău, totul avortează, și că eșecurile sunt puse pe seama destinului, instanță supremă a celor învinși. Ce popor! Cel mai pasiv, cel mai puțin revoluționar care se poate imagina, cel mai *înțelept*, în același timp în sensul bun și în sensul rău al cuvântului, și care dă impresia că, înțelegând totul, nu poate nici să se ridice și nici să se coboare la o iluzie. Cu cât trăim mai mult, cu atât ne spunem, chiar trăind ani și ani departe de el, că nu vom scăpa niciodată de un nenoroc original, de un legat funest care distruge orice velleitate de speranță. *Rugăciunea unui Dac* este expresia exasperată, extremă, a neantului valah, a unui blestem fără precedent, lovind un colț de lume sabotat de zei. Acest Dac, evident, vorbește în numele său, dar deznădejdea sa are rădăcini prea profunde pentru a putea fi redusă la o fatalitate individuală. Ce-i drept, noi ne tragem cu toții din El, noi perpetuăm amărăciunea și mânia sa,

înconjurați pentru totdeauna de nimbul înfrângerilor noastre. / Să nu uităm că poetul era tânăr când a scris această extraordinară și înflăcărată problematizare a existenței. O asemenea apoteoză negativă nu putea avea un sens decât dacă ea degaja o vitalitate intactă, o plenitudine care se întoarce asupra ei înseși. Un bătrân dezamăgit nu intrigă pe nimeni. Dar a fi blazat încă de la primele uimiri constituie o trecere bruscă la înțelepciunea care te marchează pentru totdeauna. Că Eminescu ar fi înțeles totul încă de la început ne-o dovedește această rugăciune a sa, cea mai clarvăzătoare, cea mai necruțătoare care a fost scrisă vreodată”.

<sup>4</sup> Acestui cuvânt autorul îi rezervă un întreg capitol: „Ciobanul este păcurar toată ziua”.

<sup>5</sup> Eminescu era în posesia traducerii din greacă (1819) a monahului Nicodim de la Sfântul Munte: *Cărticică sfătuitoare pentru păzirea celor cinci simțuri și a nălucirii și a minții și a inimii*.

THEODOR DAMIAN

## Dan Toma Dulciu *Eminescu: Fascinația prezentului*

Cercetătorul român Dan Toma Dulciu din Viena, specialist în orientalistică, în istoria culturii române și în eminescologie, vice-președinte al Asociației Scriitorilor Români din Austria dar și al altor importante organizații culturale din țară și din străinătate, membru al Uniunii Ziariștilor Profesioniști din România, autor a numeroase volume în domeniile amintite, face cadou culturii române un alt volum, rod al recentelor sale cercetări, *Eminescu – fascinația prezentului* (tipărit în regie proprie, Viena, 2020, 244 pp.).

Volumul se deschide cu o analiză a unui tablou de C. Jiquidi intitulat „O sută de tipuri de România!”, în care îl identifică, între numeroși politicieni și oameni de cultură români, pe Grigore Ventura, cel ce trimitea rapoarte și note informative despre Eminescu serviciilor secrete austro-ungare.

Aflăm din volum că în cadrul unei consfătuiri secrete a societății „Carpații” unde Eminescu era membru, el a propus ca studenții transilvăni de naționalitate română care frecventau instituții de învățământ din România, la întoarcerea în vacanțe în Transilvania să pregătească formarea opiniei publice în favoarea Daciei Mari și că Austro-Ungaria era neliniștită de posibilitatea unui Imperiu Daco-Român, fapt ce justifica activitatea de spionaj a Vienei în Transilvania și în România asupra celor care promovau



această idee, Eminescu fiind în acest sens o voce însemnată, fără însă ca el să fi fost ținta principală (p. 29).

Detalii interesante sunt oferite despre contextul politic al epocii cu o bogăție de nume și date pe care Dan Toma Dulciu le interpretează și explică atât logic cât și istoric.

În capitolul următor autorul vine în actualitate și, pornind de la mișcările care urmăresc demolarea și profanarea statuiilor istorice și a simbolurilor reper în Statele Unite, în Anglia și în alte țări, ajunge la situația din România unde deja de mai mulți ani profanarea simbolurilor naționale, incluzând aici pe Eminescu, a devenit o plagă pe care nimeni, mai ales guvernele de după 1989, se pare, nu poate să o oprească.

Lista acestor simboluri naționale vandalizate, incluzând statuii de scriitori, artiști, domnitori, eroi de război, cimitire și altele este pe cât de impresionantă pe atât de tragică.

Autorul este precis informat despre acest fenomen diabolic, venind cu date exacte despre ce statuie, când și în ce loc a fost profanată, și indignarea sa și a cititorului crește pe măsură ce realizează că acest lucru s-a întâmplat și se întâmplă, nu izolat, nu ocazional, ci pe tot teritoriul României și Basarabiei ca într-un plan bine organizat și executat.

Într-o documentată secțiune a cărții autorul demonstrează apoi faptul că în presa, cataloagele și dicționarele literare ale vremii – chiar din tinerețea lui Eminescu – acesta era extrem de apreciat de critici și considerat „un clasic în viață”, adevăr despre care s-a scris forate puțin sau deloc în unele aspecte ale acestor considerații, și care, iată, acum sunt redade publicului și puse în largă circulație.

Într-o altă secțiune a volumului Dan Toma Dulciu, studiind în detaliu Codul Ocupațiilor din România cu cele aproape 4000 de înregistrări conținute, ajunge la concluzia că polivalența și expertiza lui Eminescu în mai multe domenii de activitate a fost subestimată până în prezent. Autorul identifică nici mai mult, nici mai puțin de 39 de domenii în care Eminescu s-a implicat în mod activ, de la actor și analist politic, la bibliotecar, jurnalist, traducător, și multe altele... până la 39, de unde reiese admirabila și incredibila implicare a lui Eminescu în viața timpului său pe multiple paliere de activitate.

De aici Dan Toma Dulciu revine în actualitate analizând pandemia ce bântuie lumea în care trăim pentru a demonstra cum Eminescu a studiat istoria epidemiilor lumii și a scris în detaliu despre acestea dovedind solide cunoștințe despre acestea și devenind astfel un veritabil precursor al cunoștințelor epidemiologice din țara noastră (p. 140).

O altă descoperire pe care autorul a făcut-o, în colaborare cu eminentul jurnalist Miron Manega, este legată, și explicată pe larg în volum, de un titlu suveran bancar pe numele lui Eminescu, necunoscut până în prezent eminescologilor noștri, titlu care implica o dobândă perpetuă de 5%

pe an dintr-o sumă de 5000 lei – mare la vremea aceea – și despre care încă se mai fac cercetări pentru a se afla numele celui care a beneficiat de această importantă sumă de bani.

În ultima parte a volumului, pornind tot de la criza legată de pandemia prin care trece lumea curentă, Dan Toma Dulciu porcede la examinarea atentă a „Dosarului medical al lui Mihai Eminescu” și la interpretarea lui într-o nouă perspectivă. Autorul discută cauzele bolii lui Eminescu, etiologia, patogenia, simptomatologia, evoluția și tratamentul specific ce leagă acestea de ceea ce s-a numit mai târziu Encefalită letargică, boală cunoscută și sub denumirea „Sindromul dr. von Economu”.

Această boală, necunoscută de specialiști în vremea lui Eminescu, nu a putut fi detectată, deși despre ea s-au pronunțat în total nu mai puțin de 64 de medici (p. 184), fapt pentru care a existat atâta confuzie în diagnosticarea și tratarea sa de către specialiști.

Totuși Dan Toma Dulciu, în baza documentelor cercetate (scrisori ale lui Eminescu, mărturii ale altor persoane și atestate medicale) stabilește o legătură vizibilă între simptomele, manifestările și efectele sau consecințele acestei boli și cazul lui Eminescu.

Și pentru că suntem în epoca măștilor, autorul își încheie volumul cu un interesant excurs în istoria măștii la nivel cultural, sociologic și filosofic, începând cu etimologia cuvântului, oferind considerații istorice de ordin general dar și legate de folclorul românesc și ajungând la literatura universală și, desigur, română, pentru ca în final să discute sensul măștii în opera lui Eminescu.

## *Concluzii*

Dan Toma Dulciu este un cercetător de vocație. Cu pasiune pentru detaliu, cu un har special pentru observație, analiză și interpretare, dar și de a vedea legăturile – uneori ascunse – dintre lucruri și apoi de a le explica, el răscolește bibliotecile Europei pentru a merge pe urmele lui Eminescu, găsind documente pe lângă care alții au trecut fără să le vadă, dar și lucruri cu totul noi, devenind o voce care vorbește cu autoritate și de care cultura română, mai ales în contextul actual în care simbolurile semnificative ale noastre sunt atacate cu totală impunitate, are în mod imperativ nevoie.

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