DRL

DACO
ROMANIA
LITTE
RARIA

DACOROMANIA LITTERARIA

FONDATOR: SEXTIL PUŞCARIU

CONSILIUL DIRECTOR

COMITETUL DE REDACŢIE

DACOROMANIA

LITTERARIA

Vol. III

2016

SUMAR • SOMMAIRE • CONTENTS

**Usages de la communauté. Théories et pratiques collaboratives
Uses of the Community. Collaborative Theories and Practices**

Dossier coordonné par / Edited by
Laura Pavel, Ligia Tudurachi

Documents

Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

LAURA PAVEL, LIGIA TUDURACHI

USAGES DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ.
THEORIES ET PRATIQUES COLLABORATIVES

ARGUMENT

Qu'est-ce qui fait encore communauté ? Il est légitime de se demander aujourd'hui quelle est notre définition de la communauté, vu l'intérêt contemporain pour ce thème et les nombreux déplacements politiques qu'ont subi les pratiques de sociabilité ces derniers ans. Il faut remarquer que la notion de communauté est de moins en moins liée à une réalité sociale déterminée. La simple remise en discussion actuelle de la question la communauté engage déjà un « partage » intellectuel, une mise en commun des valeurs, des protocoles et des pratiques culturelles. A cet égard, il faut reconnaître le mérite du concept de la « communauté interprétative », proposé par Stanley Fish dans un article de 1976, *Interpreting the Variorum* : il a ouvert indéfiniment le champ des « communautés » possibles et reste jusqu'à présent une source de dilemmes théoriques, de mises en débats, de ruptures et recompositions de la pensée critique en marge de la littérature, de l'art, et des phénomènes esthétiques en général. Les gestes interprétatifs dans les divers domaines de l'expression artistique produisent, sinon des communautés et des communions des idées, au moins des effets de « réseau », des dispositifs collaboratifs d'analyse esthétique et culturelle. Nombreux sont aujourd'hui les critiques et les herméneutes littéraires, ainsi que les théoriciens du visuel ou des arts performatifs, qui agissent sur une scène commune de la pensée critique. En guise d'exemple, on peut évoquer l'anthropologie de Michel Serres ou de Bruno Latour qui permettent le dialogue des interprétations culturelles, au-delà des frontières disciplinaires. Un concept comme l'*iconophilie*, formulé par Bruno Latour contre l'attitude iconoclaste et l'attitude iconodule (dans un texte de 1998, *How to be Iconophilic in Art, Science, and Religion ?*), et destiné à l'analyse commune des images artistiques, scientifiques et religieuses, est capable de ressusciter le débat sur les enjeux communs de la critique d'art, de la critique et la théorie littéraire et, également, des diverses idéologies esthétiques contemporaines qui refont une seule – et même – gesticulation interprétative.

Le troisième numéro de la revue *Dacoromania litteraria* focalise sur les communautés interprétatives contemporaines, dans et au-delà de la sphère du littéraire. Ce que nous proposons, c'est de rouvrir le débat anthropologique sur le partage communautaire, tout en l'accompagnant d'un questionnement portant sur les communautés collaboratives, qui impliquent en même temps l'anthropologie et la poétique de la créativité. En nous appuyant sur le concept de *communitas*, dans

l'acception que lui a donnée l'anthropologue Victor Turner (et qui désigne une condition privilégiée de certains membres d'une communauté qui partagent l'expérience d'un « seuil » existentiel, une condition liminale, comme dans les cas des rituels de passage), nous avons intentionné de mettre au travail une notion élargie du rassemblement communautaire. Nous avons voulu écarter – surtout pour les domaines de la création artistique – la perspective centrée sur l'auteur et sur ses mythologies de la génialité, qui domine encore l'imaginaire des études littéraires et même celui des études théâtrales. Les collaborations intra-communautaire et inter-communautaire créent des communautés alternatives à celles romantiques ; elles explorent d'autres manières d'engager les individus et la société dans la réalisation des produits artistiques. C'est une réflexion qui privilégie une perspective transdisciplinaire sur la sociabilité, l'inter-connexion des diverses formes de rassemblement, et finalement un dialogue trans-medial qui passe d'un langage à un autre. Littérarité, visuel, performativité, ces concepts qui rendent compte sur la différence spécifique à un domaine de l'expression artistique, peuvent tout aussi bien fonctionner comme des instruments d'interprétation qui viennent revigorer le discours du domaine voisin.

En même temps, il nous semble important de restituer dans une réflexion actuelle sur les communautés leur double dimension, interprétative et collaborative. La quête de sociabilité marque de nos jours non seulement la réception des œuvres, mais aussi la création proprement dite. Il s'agit, avec la formule célèbre de Nicolas Bourriaud, d'une *esthétique relationnelle*, capable à la fois de constituer des communautés et des réseaux interprétatives, et d'ouvrir leur dialogue. La sociabilité critique est, certes, un thème de débat. Mais elle peut devenir un territoire virtuel dans lequel s'articule des méthodes d'énonciation critique et des pratiques d'interprétation collaboratives.

<div align="center">*</div>

Partant de l'idée qu'une communauté constituée autour des pratiques créatrices engage en même temps des gestes interprétatifs et collaboratifs, nous n'avons pas trouvé utile d'opérer avec les typologies prédéfinies – et consacrées – de la communauté, comme les cénacles, les salons, les cafés littéraires, les groupements des revues ou celles d'avant-garde etc. Nous avons cherché d'éviter un certain « essentialisme » dans la représentation des formes d'association communautaire, qui perpétue l'illusion de la différenciation nette des enjeux et des structures de la sociabilité ; nous avons aussi voulu contourner le caractère exclusif de certaines formules de sociabilité, dont la vocation « littéraire » a été depuis longtemps déterminée par la tradition. A cette description taxonomique, nous avons préféré une approche plus flexible, capable, à la fois, de restituer le caractère protéique des communautés et de rendre perceptible leur dynamique

d'émergence et de réinvention. Comme le faisait remarquer Anthony Glinoer et Vincent Laisney dans une synthèse récente sur l'activité cénaculaire au XIXème siècle (*L'âge des cénacles*, 2013), les frontières entre les pratiques communautaires sont fondamentalement poreux. Une communauté n'est pas essentiellement différente par sa composition, par son programme et par ses pratiques, ni ne garde pas en toute « pureté » son caractère. Sociologiquement, elle est un instrument au service de ceux qui la constituent, une structure changeante, dont la destination et le caractère dépend de l'usage. La communauté se définit par ce que les gens veulent faire avec : elle justifie la pluralité des perspectives qu'on peut lui appliquer par la diversité des situations dans lesquelles les gens engagent et exploitent leur pratique du *commun*. Les nombreuses formules de sociabilité littéraire qui, le long de la modernité, ont engendré des vocations politiques ou des projets sociaux à grande échelle (à ne rappeler que les groupements des surréalistes ou les communautés romantiques) montrent qu'il n'y a pas, à strictement parler, des communautés littéraires ou politiques, mais plutôt des définitions provisoires, littéraires, politiques ou sociales, d'une action commune.

Le fait que l'activité d'un seul groupe peut être concernée à la fois par l'histoire littéraire, par l'histoire politique ou par l'histoire des arts est déterminé par la mobilité permanente des formes et des possibilités d'association, et par la diversité des contextes qui justifient l'engagement communautaire. Cette réalité est d'autant plus visible dans la situation contemporaine des communautés virtuelles, organisées – de manière temporaire – autour d'une fonction, d'un usage ou d'un enjeux social. Il est moins important dans un tel cas de figure de cerner l'infrastructure communautaire, sa composition stable ou son programme inaugural, que les plateformes et les dispositifs qui assurent dans un intervalle limité de temps la constitution d'une micro-société provisoire autour d'un but commun. Ce sont ces mécanismes de rassemblement virtuel qui suscitent la réflexion de Andrei Doboş et de Chris Tănăsescu dédiées à la constitution des communautés créatrices en-ligne ou, dans une perspective sociale plus large, l'analyse faite par Roxana Patraş, Camelia Grădinaru et Sorina Postolea d'un événement récent qui a engendré un mouvement vif dans l'espace public roumain, l'incendie qui avait eu lieu en 2015 dans le club bucarestois « Colectif », et de ses effets « communautaires », reflétés dans l'activité de dialogue et de commentaire sur les forums et sur les réseaux sociaux.

Nous avons voulu mettre l'accent sur les usages et les fonctions que remplit la communauté dans des situations historiques déterminées, sur ses modes d'emploi et c'est cette orientation vers les « utilisateurs » des communautés qui s'est illustrée dans les axes qui organisent le sommaire. Visant l'utilisation créative de la communauté, la première section s'ouvre avec la réflexion de Chris Tănăsescu (MARGENTO), qui envisage la communauté comme un processus de « communisation » (*commoning*), pour la situer au carrefour de l'action politique, de l'art participative (*performance*) et de la poésie « du lieu ». Dans une

perspective historique et culturelle, l'article de Alex Ciorogar discute les formes de collaboration mobilisées par l'acte de l'écriture et tente de saisir le moment de rupture par rapport à une définition de l'auctorialité fondée sur la multiplicité. Dans ce cadre, Andrei Doboş s'appuie sur le cas particulier de la plateforme www.clubliterar.com pour s'interroger sur la structure de sociabilité et le fonctionnement des communautés de poètes qui se forment dans le milieu virtuel roumain après l'an 2000.

Le deuxième régime d'usage de la communauté implique les actes d'interprétation et leurs pouvoir de rassemblement social. La section est ouverte par l'article de Laura Pavel qui observe l'effet puissant sur les gestes interprétatifs contemporains des « tournures » qui ont marqué la culture théorique de l'Occident depuis les années 1970 (the « Pictorial Turn », the « Literary Turn », the « Performative Turn », the « Ekphrastic Turn », the « Rhetorical Turn »). Ce sont ces tournures qui assurent notamment des cadres méthodologiques privilégiées pour les sciences humaines et le support de toute communauté constituée autour des protocoles interprétatifs. Les autres textes réunis dans cette section, approchent des différentes formes de sociabilité s'appuyant sur des gestes de représentation commune du monde et de la réalité, de la communauté ethnique jusqu'à la communauté juridique. L'anthropologue Alina Branda y publie les résultats d'une enquête de terrain sur la communauté juive de Cluj, s'intéressant à la manière dans laquelle, à travers l'identité de groupe, on y fait la gestion de la mémoire traumatique et de l'anxiété post-guerre. Dans un tout autre espace de socialisation, le spécialiste en droit Olivier Tholozan analyse les formes d'attachement des juristes par rapport à une communauté unique d'interprétation. Doris Mironescu et Andreea Mironescu réfléchissent sur des communautés pour lesquelles la représentation commune devient un acte fondateur, un acte légitimant ou un acte mémoriel. Ainsi, Doris Mironescu cherche dans l'œuvre des deux auteurs roumains (Radu Cosaşu şi Ion Luca Caragiale) les figures d'une « communauté textuelle », terme qu'il reprend de Kuisma Korhonen. C'est l'occasion de projeter dans l'interaction entre le lecteur et le texte une coopération ouverte et virtuelle, qui reste étrangère à l'essentialisme des communautés politiques et religieuses. En s'appliquant à la littérature roumaine après la chute du régime totalitaire et à son imagination sociale, Andreea Mironescu envisage le communisme comme catalyseur d'une certaine communauté interprétative, entrée en crise après la Révolution de 1989.

Enfin, la troisième section du dossier thématique concerne les utilisations politiques de la communauté. Plusieurs articles essayent d'y saisir la réorientation des formes de sociabilité littéraire et artistique, les manières multiples dont les énergies littéraires sont captées et engagées au service des enjeux politiques. Il ne s'agit pas des communautés constituées autour d'un programme ou une plateforme politique, mais plutôt de la réinterprétation et l'infléchissement politique de certains projets esthétiques. Dans ce sens, les réflexions de Thomas Franck et de

Adrian Tătăran concernent les échanges entre l'imagination politique radicale et la sociabilité culturelle. Le premier surprend la genèse des attitudes radicales au sein des deux groupements de revues, *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique*, à la fin de la deuxième Guerre mondiale, tandis que le deuxième commente les multiples formes de partage entre les communautés littéraires et les communautés anarchistes-terroristes. Dans la gamme des attitudes politiques modérées, Ligia Tudurachi poursuit la naissance d'un projet social d'une communauté dans l'ambiance d'un cénacle littéraire roumain de l'entre-deux-guerres.

CHRIS TĂNĂSESCU (MARGENTO)

COMMUNITY AS COMMONING, (DIS)PLACING, AND (TRANS)VERSING: FROM PARTICIPATORY AND 'STRIKE ART' TO THE POSTDIGITAL

The issue of community is remarkably relevant to that of contemporary art in general and poetry in particular, especially given the recent trends in art and/ as performance that dissolve the latter in the (radical) (re)shaping of communities and commons, to the extent to which there is no border left between art and political action or community (re)formation.

But who are the members (if distinguishable) of this community, what is its structure and/ or processuality (if any) – in case we adopt the art-as-community-as-event angle –, and what kind of potential commonalities and (re)positionings can they trigger? If we think of the ways in which the "Occupy" type of actions and phenomena have related themselves and/ or have been perceived in relation to the issue of communities we will be sometimes presented with two different (and potentially conflicting) facets. On the one hand, the way in which such events are framed by the participants or activists themselves sends out a certain kind of messages related to the community they want to address, shape, or activate. The idea of the "complacency of 99%" sometimes targeted in such actions, for example, is symptomatic of a potentially totalitarian view of the 'masses' which, at the same time, in indistinctly 'rallying' against the 1% does not actually escape the "naïve togetherness" that certain movements or philosophies[1] indulge in. This brings us to the second aspect of such a phenomenon, the way in which it is perceived and further articulated by the criticism and theory they prompt during the action or "occupation", as well as post factum. For Yates McKee, for instance, such actions, events or movements along with what he terms "strike art" speak of and reshape 'our' (post)human condition, what he actually calls the "post-Occupy condition", and it is that condition that informs the ways in which we (could) rearticulate our (sense of) community. Community is therefore the action itself, and consequently, collective art, where art gets to mean (new forms of) life in common[2].

---

[1] See below, for instance, the discussion on Mark Nowak and Kaya Sand's political poetries in the context of "relational aesthetics" versus "relational antagonism".

[2] Yates McKee, *Strike Art: Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition*, London – New York, Verso, 2016, p. 5.

There are several concurrent or sometimes conflicting aspects involved by this emerging (if not prophetic or apocalyptic) paradigm of community as art. First of all art has to be liberated itself, from itself – as it is stated more than once in the book by quoting[3] and then appropriating once again[4] a notorious MTL statement from "#OccupyWallStreet: A Possible History" – as well as from the art system. The latter is actually not fundamentally 'evil' but still, "[t]apping their [the institutions'] potentials and organizing their resources requires its own tactical art of cunning"[5].

Second, there is the crucial involvement of artist and their art in radical movements and campaigns as part of Occupy and post-Occupy. Here the subject under discussion becomes paradoxically both ethereal and down-to-earth, as radicalness remains a strong imperative and social and political change is expected to address and hopefully solve specific issues while the art of and for that purpose maintains an aura of ineffability that keeps it (and the movement) safe from any categorical, formulaic, prescriptive, or 'established' (and therefore potentially in collusion with the establishment) stasis[6]. Art – while being liberated from "the enclosures of the art system" – is therefore embedded in "the living fabric of collective political struggle"[7]. This embedding consists of ways of action in which art *is* political struggle and radical action *is* art. Occupy is seen as art, while collective resistance is redefined as collective invention which involves art as a new form of life in common.

Thus militant action both addresses certain contemporary issues and involves a processuality and performativity aimed at, if not a "coming community" (in Giorgio Agamben's terms further discussed below) then at least a commons or collectivity that cannot and would not be rooted in compromise, conformity or

---

[3] *Ibidem*, pp. 1, 34.

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 242.

[5] Paul Chan quoted in Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 242.

[6] In fact not only art, but radical political movements may characteristically refrain from any discursive articulation or dialog. Here is for instance what Peter Fleming wrote on the issue: "And yet… so much silence. Why would we want to theorize it, practice it, conserve it, use it, strategize it, share it, enrich it or occupy it? I want to experiment with the idea that silence might be suggestive of an emergent kind of sub-commons, no doubt transitory, but crucially collective. Its commonality is founded on the shared misgiving that the neoliberal project now gains sustenance from any kind of communicative participation between it and 'the 99%'. In its last dying stage of development, corporate hegemony even welcomes critical discourse into its language game, as long as it abides by prefixed rules. Accordingly, I want to propose that the silent commons is anything but reserved quietude or fearful seclusion. At the present juncture at least, in which a myopic economic formalism has colonized so many modes of social representation, mute opacity in the face of an invitation to 'participate' might tilt towards something transversal, truly communal and classless (Peter Fleming, "Common as Silence", *Ehemera. Theory and Politics in Organisation*, XIII, 2013, 3, p. 629.

[7] Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 238.

complacency, and not even in self-idealization[8]. This processuality/ performativity of action rubs off on the art that contributes to the coming into existence or simply is identical with this coming and continuously (re)shaped and questioned collectivity. In "strike art" and within the post-Occupy condition the issue of community turns into one of emerging collectivity, and in the context of action and occupation (of public spaces), the latter approaches the sphere of "multitude" – in Hardt and Negri's terms – and even crowd[9]. In *Declaration*, Hardt and Negri describe occupation as "a kind of happening, a performance piece that generates political affects"[10], further encouraging this overlapping of collective action and art[11].

Still, however this "new" (post-Occupy) condition and its attendant collective action as art may be, it has been brought about and made possible, as McKee himself points out, by the history of traditional avant-gardes, and then by the "neo-avant-garde" – the Situationist International (on the heels of Dada and Surrealism), and, in the US, the Yippies, the DIY of Guerilla Television, the New York Radical Women and the San Francisco Diggers, the Art Worker's Coalition, ACT UP, etc., and the New Anarchism of the 2000s. While, as McKee argues, Occupy "took the avant-garde dialectic of 'art and life' to a new level"[12], a statement backed up by quotes from artist Thomas Gokey (co-initiator of the post-Occupy Rolling Jubilee debt-abolition project) – "[the] wild collective creativity of the park"[13] and "[w]e need an affirmation to be paired with this negation. We need to start articulating and building the alternative way of living and being that we want"[14] – the specific relevance and potential novelty identified by the author may sound if not disappointing at least nothing of a new hat: "Occupy and its afterlives would be unthinkable without a certain proximity and entwinement with the art system and its attendant tensions and contradictions"[15].

---

[8] Cf. Slavoj Žižek's address to Zuccotti Park in which he urged "don't fall in love with yourselves!" (quoted in Yeats McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 238).

[9] The term has been replaced in 21st century sociology by the more nuanced one of "gathering." Sociologist Clark McPhail for instance has written that: "The most characteristic feature of human behavior during […] all gatherings I have observed, is not the unanimity or continuity of "the crowd". It is ongoing variation in the proportion of individuals alternating between acting alone and acting with or in relation to others" (Clark McPhail, "Crowd", *Contexts*, VII, 2008, 2, p. 79).

[10] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Declaration*, Argo Navis Author Services, 2012, p. 18.

[11] In terms of outdoor collective encampment, Tahrir Square took all previous movements to an unprecedented scale and level of intensity. "It functioned simultaneously as an aesthetic spectacle, a mode of physical self-defense against the state, a living infrastructure of social reproduction for its participants, and a prefigurative zone of common life at odds with the oligarchic and authoritarian order it was opposing" (Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 89).

[12] Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 32.

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 31.

[14] *Ibidem*, p. 32.

[15] *Ibidem*.

The assumption behind the statement above comes indeed from a substantial tradition of performance/ participatory/ radical art in that it advances the idea that contemporary condition can be described and consequentially affected by social engagement and community triggered art. And indeed, to map the diversity of interrelations between the two – art (and the art system, as in the quote above, or not) and society/ community – and their potential relevance to present and future movements, one needs to revisit the art history related to these approaches. A telling analysis in that respect could involve for instance the commonalities and (critiquing) distances between the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV) and the Situationist International (SI). Claire Bishop argues that although GRAV deployed a "situation"-related terminology and borrowed consistently from SI's political rhetoric while their own methods of spurring viewer participation proved "experientially somewhat pedestrian"[16], "GRAV's artistic propositions aimed to engage with the general public in a far more generous fashion than the SI's cliquish events" (idem), as the latter were predicated by the intolerant condemnation and exclusion of those working for/ with the established art institutions. What at a first glance could pass for a Situationist advantage on GRAV and even post-Occupy – the movement's preference for social action and relevance against or beyond institutionalized art – can actually turn out to be nothing else but an instance of crippling dogmatism and intolerance. On the other hand, as Bishop points out, in spite of GRAV's wider coverage of the general public, they also qualify as sad illustration of a widely spread paradox with participation, namely that a work opened to viewers' manipulation and alteration becomes a "highly ideologized convention in its own right, one by which the viewer in turn is manipulated in order to complete the work 'correctly'"[17].

What is in our opinion of most consequential importance in both movements commented above is the participatory quality of the art involved and its socially engaged performance/ action. Participatory art is actually Bishop's book's main focus and an important part of her argument is that the participatory is the most salient feature of (as well as best term for) all contemporary art "in which people constitute the central artistic medium and material"[18]. The participatory comes in the western world as a reaction to (in Debord's situationist terms) the society of the spectacle by disrupting its fetishism and commodification and by opposing its (economic and political) departmentalization and atomization with a collectivizing or community-based approach. What follows from this is the dismantling of the individualist/ personal/ 'original'/ 'genius' author and its disintegration/ reassembling into collaborative/ collective teams, groups or even masses, and

[16] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, New York, Verso, 2012, p. 93.
[17] *Ibidem*.
[18] *Ibidem*, p. 2.

therefore the (ideal/ complete) fusion of the latter with their viewer(s)/ reader(s) (and in contemporary digital space related contexts, users). But significant elements of this paradigm can be dramatically mutated in different political, cultural, and artistic contexts. Here are two examples in this respect, one from the Soviet Union of the 1970s (provided by Bishop herself) and the other from the Vienna of the 1960s.

Let us start with the latter, as this may facilitate a smoother transition in our argument from west to east. *Wiener Spaziergang* (Vienna Walk) by Günter Brus (1965), although not included in the city's comprehensive municipal program for art in public spaces, otherwise a remarkably rich resource on the subject, has been recently revisited as "one of the seminal performative works in Viennese urban space"[19]. The walk/ performance took place in an age in which, as VALIE EXPORT[20] points out, the galleries and museums were impracticable for innovative artists and therefore the urban space became a necessity while also making addressing new different audiences possible in the context. Brus's performance consisted, as the self-explanatory title indeed specifies, of no more than a walk around downtown and particularly in historically and artistically significant areas of Vienna, but a walk that was nevertheless – just as the artist expected – ended by the police who took him into custody. Why did that happen – Brus was actually wearing a suit painted white with a dark line down the middle of both front and back, deviating from the waist down and following the right leg in the front while the offset line went down the back of his left leg; the line also divided his face, as well as the top and back of his head. Brus later on explained that he concentrated everything on himself and thought of his body (within the performance) as "intention, event, and result" altogether[21].

What is participatory about this performance? As Neuburger elucidates, Brus's outfit has a complex and layered significance, and so is his bearing, alluding among other things – even if sometimes by contrast – to both the public order of the time and various avant-garde and performance traditions. Although silent he actually hints at previous Dada and Surrealist public "literary walks" in Vienna expressing a "conscious otherness"[22], and, although showing little psycho-geographical interest in the city, his thus being in contrast to the flâneur or Situationist[23], is a subtle way of referencing other locale-, politics-, and history-

---

[19] Susanne Neuburger, "Performing Vienna". Translated by Tim Sharp, in Carola Dertnig and Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein (eds.), *Performing the Sentence. Research and Teaching in Performative Fine Arts*, Vienna, Sternberg Press, 2014, p. 35; see also the bibliography in Neuburger's footnotes.
[20] Quoted in *Ibidem*.
[21] Quoted in *Ibidem*, p. 36.
[22] *Ibidem*, pp. 36-37.
[23] A significant distinction here is the one between "stroll" and "walk," the latter being a (post-)minimalist device described by Thomas Bernhard as taking the protagonists from "special Viennese situations to those with a heterotopian character" (*Ibidem*, p. 37).

focused demonstrations having a special significance to the Viennese community/ ies and various more or less locally related episodes in art history.

Is this participatory art? Definitely not in terms of face value, since Brus not only does this on his own and does not try at all to get any reaction or participation from the passersby, but also declares afterwards that he focused strictly on himself. Yet, as we have just seen, his performance is profoundly and relevantly community oriented, and is also part of an ongoing tradition while also eliciting to this day continual interest and (re)assessments. Community-relevant (or even - coagulating) art is not necessarily (explicitly) participatory, but it may still involve a subtly different kind of participation. That is, Brus himself participates in various artistic legacies and trends indeed, and does so quite in the manner of a (not actively participating) viewer; he is ('just') a passerby who observes both the psycho-geography and the art history of the place without much of a(n apparent) response, and his outfit is reflective of this ambivalence – performer and viewer, shrewd chronicler and indifferent street-walker (without the artistic/ ideological panache of the flâneur), both cutting a shocking figure and blending in (while in the car that brought him to his point of departure he ducked at every crossing[24]), mirroring the place (and its politics) while also setting foot in the city as if on a stage[25], etc.

This takes us to our second example, the performances/ actions of the Collective Actions Group (CAG) – *Kollektivnye Deistvia,* or *K/ D* – of the late 1970s and early 80s. These actions followed a somewhat standard format, a group of 15 to 20 people were invited by telephone[26] to take a train to a place outside Moscow and then walk to a field where they would attend, after waiting around for an indeterminate amount of time, a minimal, mysterious, and most of the times hard to identify event. On their return to Moscow the participants would write an account and their interpretations of the event, which would become the topic of further discussion and debate among the 'performers' and their 'audience'[27]. Andrei Monastyrsky, the foremost theorist of the group, would write sophisticated theoretical articles on the (semiotics of the) events that would be collected together with the others' accounts, interpretations, and discussions alongside schemas, photos, and even lists of videos, in volumes coming out in both Russian and

---

[24] *Ibidem.*

[25] *Ibidem.*

[26] In an age in which the phones in communist countries were universally tapped one can only wonder (in amusement) what the secret police did to follow up on these communications – did they run stakeouts in the field, were they as confused as the participants, and what did their reports on the performances look like? On the other hand, the group's books themselves may be read as collections of informant's reports, the KGB could have simply purchased those ones for the record. "Boris Groys has observed how CAG's performances were 'meticulously, almost bureaucratically, documented, commented on, and archived'" (Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, p. 159).

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 154.

German every 3 to 5 years, the latest of which (the eleventh) was being assembled a few years ago, as recorded by Bishop[28].

There are a few aspects related to these actions relevant to our discussion. First, the audience is not the 'masses', the "99%" or the wide/ random crowd/ collectivity/ community [as (re)generated/ coagulated] around the performers, but a small number of strictly selected participants that are actually part of the artists' circle. Second, the participants were not invited to get involved in the performance in a way that blurred or even did away with any social distinctions/ divides and fostered a collective experience (as is generally typical of western participatory/ community-oriented art), but quite on the contrary, were allowed or sometimes even asked to do something of their own choice in response or as contribution to the event, and also asked afterwards to reflect individually and write on the experience and its (speculative) meaning(s). And third, the artist's authority or authorship is disrupted through the latter's own attitude towards the event as something they witness too, which occasions a special switch in places between the artists and the participants.

While Günter Brus focused strictly on himself, which turned him into a one-of-a-kind spectator, CAG carefully selected and considered their 'audience' and focused mostly and consistently on the latter's freedom (of reaction and interpretation) and the creation of "that 'inner' level of perception"[29], which turned themselves as well into spectators of the participants' unwitting actions or "appearances". At one of the group's actions, *Appearance* (1976), the 'performers' appear somewhere in the distance and start approaching the 'audience' that could not tell whether something was happening or not, and when the figures approached the group they assured the latter that the event had taken place. Monastyrsky later explained that what happened in the field "was not that they (the organizers) had appeared for the participants, but rather, that the participants had appeared *for them* [author's emphasis]"[30], a concept which was further developed and complexified in *Ten Appearances* (1981).

What links CAG's actions to Brus's *Wiener Spaziergang* is the reshaping of the author/ organizer as (performer-)spectator, and a pronounced emphasis on the individual/ personal/ subjective (body and/ or experience) as collectively relevant. This commonality between the Austrian artist and the Russian collective is probably so much more worth noting in the context of the divide that Claire Bishop notices between western and eastern participatory art (eastern here meaning Eastern European and Russian under communism, from the mid 1960s to the late 1980s). Whereas the former was positioned as "constructive and

---

[28] *Ibidem*, p. 159.
[29] Monastyrsky quoted in Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, p. 155.
[30] *Ibidem*.

oppositional response to spectacle's atomization of social relations", the latter was rather "existential and *a*political, committed to ideas of freedom and the individual imagination" while "framed as *shared* privatized experience [author's emphasis]"[31]. While the goal of these notes is not to challenge Bishop's subtle and much needed distinction, this comparison may turn out useful in getting a more nuanced picture of east-west differences and commonalities, while helping in approximating the concept of community in a contemporary (cross-)art(form)/ (social-political) action contexts.

We are particularly interested here in exploring the existential "qualifications"[32] involved, one of which is the subjectivity of the performer/ organizer and the spectator (sometimes one and the same or interchangeable), a subjectivity that is not the 'original'/ essentialist one of the genius/ creator but an interactive, other-oriented, participatory, processual, performative, improvized one. When the performer/ organizer is a writer there is a particular kind of subjectivity involved, and there is also a special kind of relationship between the community that writer conceives of or writes about, and the community they live in and/ or articulate around them.

Milo Sweedler has a relevant and intriguing approach in that respect in his book *The Dismembered Community*: he looks into the communities certain authors – Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, Michel Leiris, and Laure (Colette Peignot) – writing major works on community, lived in, and the way in which their relationships (to each other and not only) shaped (and in fact dismantled/ dismembered) both their philosophy of community and their community per se. In his funeral sermon, as it were, to the College de Sociologie (which was dissolved in 1938), for instance, Bataille, argues Sweedler, significantly alludes to his relationship with the also recently deceased Laure. Both the College and Bataille's lover Laure have been disintegrated, torn apart, by the one who sought (to build) a community with(in) them. What happened to them both is described by the term Bataille himself used for torn apart or dismembered communities – *dechirement*. But this tearing apart also involves Laure's manuscripts and correspondence with Bataille from which the latter borrowed her concept of communication and then used it in order to refashion his vision of community, and as a result, he switches from seeing communication as a means to the end of community to considering community a means to the end of communication. And thus, Sweedler concludes, "Bataille sacrifices community – be this the community of brothers (the College de Sociologie) or the community after which that community is modeled (lovers) – to 'communication'"[33].

---

[31] *Ibidem*, p. 129.
[32] Giorgio Agamben's term which we will look into more closely a bit later.
[33] Milo Sweedler, *The Dismembered Community. Bataille, Blanchot, Leiris, and the Remains of Laure*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2009, p. 131.

Communication cannot therefore prevent community from *dechirement*, quite on the contrary. In fact, if Jean-Luc Nancy writes – Sweedler reminds us – that "[t]he gravest and most painful testimony of the modern world is the testimony of the dissolution, the dislocation, or the conflagration of community", in the sentence opening *The Inoperative Community*, for Bataille – I as revisited by Nancy – community is all about dissolution, dislocation, and conflagration. "What unites people?" asks Sweedler quoting Denis Hollier who in his turned quoted Goethe. "That which tears them apart, one would be tempted to respond, paraphrasing Bataille"[34].

While in the case of Bataille, the negative or anti-communal nature of community can be traced in its being modeled after the most private society of lovers, other radical depictions of the dismembered (or… dismembering) community go even deeper into the private sphere in search for premises of certain specific (political) commonalities in the very foundation of subjectivity. Those are areas in which, in various ways, radical and (post-)Marxian thought recycles, concurs, overlaps or conflicts with Christianity. Alain Badiou has written about the "community effect" (via Freud and Lacan) belonging to communist militant activity whereby intense participation of the subjects transforms them into members of the "glorious body", an obviously theological formulation occurring alongside equating the communist "we" with the Christian concept of the "invisible church"[35]. References to the Bible and the saints are not uncommon in such an author – he shares for instance the reference to Francis of Assisi with Antonio Negri, another major name in communist theory. The language of militantism and that of prophecy or messianism (in the footprints of Walter Benjamin but not only) mix naturally in these philosophies, as Slavoj Žižek for instance (the celebrated editor of the two volumes of *The Idea of Communism* cited hereafter, the first volume co-edited with Michael Hardt) speaks of "divine violence" (again via Benjamin), while the communist "idea" and the leaders as incarnated projections of the people's powers unfortunately lead Badiou to endorse Leninism and even Mao's personality cult, (which he deems preferable to that of Stalin…)[36]. In the same train of thought, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri employ the term "exodus" to describe a sort of line of flight taken by the suddenly uncontrollable multitude escaping from the domination of "Empire" inside the Imperial territory itself[37]. There is also ("Christian"?) love in communism and,

---

[34] *Ibidem*, p. 13.
[35] Cf. Etienne Balibar, "Communism as Commitment, Imagination, and Politics", in Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *The Idea of Communism 2: The New York Conference*, New York, Verso, 2013, p. 20.
[36] *Ibidem*.
[37] *Ibidem*, p. 26.

moreover, there is desire[38], "communist desire"[39]. The anatomy of the latter is also messianic and eschatological. Jodi Dean has identified two major kinds of communist desire, the first one being described by Negri's "Spinoza- and Deleuze-inspired emphasis on the productive desire of the multitude of singularities", while the second is "the desire of the philosopher", which tags "Badiou's emphasis on the eternity of communism"[40].

A perhaps most interesting and intriguing response to such Christian-Marxian/ Communist commonalities comes (in the same volume edited by Žižek) from Bruno Bosteels. Bosteels revisits Marx's "On the Jewish Question" and draws on the ideas of the Argentine philosopher Léon Rozitchner to reach a number of quite radical conclusions. While Marx has pointed out that there is still a Christian foundation that lives on in the secular state – since the dualism of the latter involving the private and public spheres (and even the separation of Church and State in America) prolongs Christianity's dualism of celestial and worldly[41] – Rozitchner went on to stating that "The Christian Spirit and Capital have complementary metaphysical premises"[42]. This is not just saying, alongside Max Weber, that there are significant affinities between capitalism and Protestantism, but that "capitalism simply would not have been possible without Christianity […]"[43].

This allows Bosteels to 'unmask' reference names such as Badiou, Negri, and Žižek as being "deeply entangled in the political ideology of Christianity" and therefore "unable to illustrate the militant communist subject except through the figure of the saint"[44]. What actually lies behind Christian theology – Bosteels argues via Rozitchner – is nothing else but mere terror and domination masquerading as grace and freedom, and these ingredients make up not only the fabric of capitalist society, but even (western) societally constituted subjectivity,

---

[38] Love and desire actually play a significant role in Giorgio Agamben's conception of community (as we have seen they do in Bataille) as well, see below.

[39] Communism originally shares this with surrealism, but one could identify possible Christian connections here as well, as grace represents a (both superior and overwhelming) manifestation and fulfillment of desire; the Eastern Orthodox term for that is "charisma" (Romanian derivative, "har"), a word whose ancient Greek root ("favor," "grace," "to rejoice at"), can ultimately be traced back to the PIE root *gher, "to desire." Also, in Agamben's "coming community", the key concept of "whatever being" "has an original relation to desire" (Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*. Translated by Michael Hardt, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 1).

[40] Jodi Dean, "Communist Desire", in Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *The Idea of Communism 2*, p. 90.

[41] Bruno Bosteels, "On the Christian Question", in Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *The Idea of Communism 2*, p. 44.

[42] Quoted in Bruno Bosteel, "On the Christian Question", p. 49.

[43] *Ibidem*, p. 52.

[44] *Ibidem*, p. 54.

and therefore, genuine communist revolt would start by "turning the power of the subject against the domination of constituted subjectivity"[45].

But is "constituted subjectivity" still there nowadays, as deeply and traditionally structured by political/ religious manipulative patterns? And what relevance can the notion of capital as secularized Christian metaphysics – seducing as it may sound in its paradoxical formulation – still hold in a global, multicultural, nomadic, migrant, and transnational world?

Such theory seems to be unaware of models of community – and subjectivity – like the one developed by Giorgio Agamben. Agamben dismisses any attempt to constitute (the "coming") community in terms of common features, projects, or identity/ ies. In fact, in Agamben's view, such potentialities and processes nullify substantive identities, making possible, for the first time, a community of pure singularity without exclusion.

Still, for all these advantages, Agamben has been criticized – along with Jean-Luc Nancy – for modeling his theories on Heidegger and the latter's notion of community as destiny[46]. In fact, it is perhaps interesting to note that although a possible solution to the question posited by the above cited Marxian authors (equating of capital with culturally constructed subjectivity in western Christianity) may come from Agamben's concept of whatever being and the community of singularities, it is precisely the theorists of political resistance that reproach the latter with this very solution. Agamben is seen in such approaches as failing to provide a convincing account of collective resistance to oppressive power, a failure stemming from "a prioritizing and over-valorizing of the figure of passivity" and resulting in "the conspicuous absence of any plausible model of collective praxis"[47].

We need to observe though that the author's allegedly messianic stance (the one in the *coming* community) as well as his emphasis on destiny are by far more nuanced than they would appear according to such criticism. In a world whose paradigmatic stance he sees to be the concentration camp, the "single destiny" of "all nations"[48] is – in a one-of-a-kind revamping of Guy Debord's "society of spectacle" – the "transformation of politics and of all social life into a spectacular phantasmagoria"[49]. On the one hand, therefore, destiny is an ambivalent notion whereby pervasive dissolution and the society of phantasmagoria can be turned

---

[45] *Ibidem*, p. 55.
[46] Brian Elliott, "Community and Resistance in Heidegger, Nancy and Agamben", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, XXXVII, 2011, 3, p. 259.
[47] *Ibidem*, p. 260.
[48] Jessica Whyte, "«A New Use of the Self»: Giorgio Agamben on the Coming Community", *Theory & Even*, 2010, 13, online publication, unpaginated. Pro Quest Database, accessed September 5th 2016.
[49] Agamben quoted in Jessica Whyte, "«A New Use of the Self»".

into the actual opportunity for the coming community to emerge, while on the other, the realization of such destiny is possible specifically due to the whatever being's freedom from any communal destiny:

> ["Whatever being" is seen by Agamben] as marking the possibility of a human community free of any essential condition of belonging, *common destiny* or work, or principle of inclusion and exclusion – a being-together of existences, rather than a community of essence, as Nancy describes it [emphasis mine][50].

Moreover, what we actually learn to be remarkably characteristic of Agamben's whatever being is its place beyond both destiny and chance, in the common passage between ontology and ethics, in its manner of being, of making "free use of the self", and its (in medieval Latin terms) *maneries* that engender it as our second, happier nature:

> The being that does not remain below itself, that does not *presuppose* itself as a hidden essence that chance or destiny would then condemn to the torment of qualifications, but rather *exposes* itself in its qualifications, *is* its *thus* without remainder – such a being is neither accidental nor necessary, but is, so to speak, continually *engendered from its own manner* [emphases in the original][51].

What are the qualifications such being – as part of the community of whatever singularities – exposes itself in; and what is that characteristic *manner?* As Whyte elucidates, a key yet largely unexamined concept in Agamben's theory is the one of "use", as "whatever being" "makes use" of itself in escaping politicized identity and the "hold of sovereign power"[52]. Agamben draws on Paul here and on verses in the apostle's epistles such as, "Art thou called being a slave? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather"[53], where, as Whyte explains,

> While it would be possible to read the phrase "use it rather" to signify a use of freedom, Agamben argues that what is to be used is the condition of slavery itself, which is nullified by the messianic vocation, stripped of meaning while remaining factually unchanged[54].

---

[50] Although we find in Jessica Whyte's article part of an accurate possible response to the criticism on Agamben from authors like Brian Elliott, we should also note here that Whyte in her turn criticizes the Italian philosopher for not considering the kind of identities that can still endure or emerge in a post-capitalist world. "While Agamben's account of the spectacle enables us to see possibilities for a transformative relation to our own time, and to avoid nostalgic attempts to return to past certainties, I suggest it is inadequately attentive to the differential temporality of spectacular capitalism, in which the post-modern co-exists with a resurgence of social forms, identities and classes that, in the heady days of progress, were believed to have been consigned to the past." (Jessica Whyte, "«A New Use of the Self»").

[51] Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, p. 28.

[52] Jessica Whyte, "«A New Use of the Self»".

[53] I Cor., quoted in *Ibidem*.

[54] *Ibidem*.

The "qualifications" that Agamben talks about pertain to "being a slave" or to any other kind of political/ized identity that "whatever being" both annihilates and accepts (in the sense that is does not change "factually"), thus escaping controlled fixity while also exposing itself in those very qualifications. For whatever being therefore, qualifications also represent its own self, and another source for the idea and even the phrasing is identified by Agamben himself to be Plotinus, "it ['the one' in Plotinus, or 'whatever being' in Agamben] does not remain below itself, but *makes use* of itself as it is [emphasis mine]"[55], further interpreted by the author as "the free *use of the self* [Agamben's emphasis]"[56].

In this context, the "coming community" and the ways in which it "exposes" the "whatever singularities" that are its members remain rather impervious to that kind of criticism that reproaches Agamben's theory with "the conspicuous absence of any plausible model of collective praxis"[57]. It is precisely in the absence of a "plausible model" that the praxis resides – in resisting any pre-established or prescribed program – that a community of singularities can come into being and escape sovereign power's political hegemony. The post-Occupy condition just as post-Occupy art significantly confirm this, in that it "can be characterized in the most general sense as an extended process of learning, a 'training in the practice of freedom', as MTL calls it, but one that is immersed directly in the risk and contingency of movements as they unfold"[58]. Post-Occupy militancy is thus also a method to investigate the current situation and discover while enacting – through (as Agamben would have it) its "manner of being" – possible future ways of collective life and viable community/ commoning.

This specific kind of community in which decisive is "the idea of *inessential* commonality, a solidarity that in no way concerns an essence [emphasis in the original]"[59], is, in Negri and Hardt's terms, a 'multitude', and the various types of members of the latter can be read, by applying Agamben's theory, as whatever being's possible 'qualifications'. And since there is no essential commonality, community (as engendered by multitude) can only be founded and kept functional by non-essentialist 'manners of being' and non-preestablished *maneries*, that is, by spontaneous 'freewheeling' action; or, in today's radical action terms, by turning even community and commonality into action – by 'commoning'.

Let us indulge here in a brief digression on – and an anticipation of the hereafter analyzed relationship between poetry and community – a certain possible implication of commoning, namely that this translation of common into action could be applied to place as well. Place plays in a way relevant to this topic an

---

[55] Quoted in Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, p. 28.
[56] *Ibidem*, pp. 28-29.
[57] Brian Elliott, "Community and Resistance in Heidegger, Nancy and Agamben", p. 260.
[58] Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 239.
[59] Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, pp. 18-19.

important albeit more philosophical role in Agamben's theory. In revisiting Amalric of Bena's late medieval heresy that purported that the apostolic description of God as "all in all" is a continuation of the platonic doctrine of the *chora,* an all-inclusive all-bearing *topia* of every entity, Agamben concludes that "God or the good or the place does not take place, but is the taking-place of the entities, their innermost exteriority", and therefore, salvation is "the coming of the place to itself"[60]. This com(mon)ing of place may gain unexpected significance if we revisit it after borrowing and repurposing the concept of "placing poetry" from Ian Davidson[61]. In his development and exemplification (by analyzing George Oppen's poem "Route") of the concept of "placing poetry", Davidson seems mostly preoccupied with "circulating entities" which represent or bring about the "place of travel [that] becomes place", such as the car (or the invading Nazi tank in Oppen's poem) "continually placing its occupants in different contexts"[62]. While journeying and movement are obviously major and recurrent figures in place poetry, I find more relevant to our discussion a question that Davidson asks a bit later in relation to placing: "Is it possible to conceive of a language that is on the move, which users are always placing, but is never placed?"[63]. This latter direction is perhaps more useful in examining contemporary place poetry – and not only –, but it still needs to be taken to the next level, particularly with a further emphasis on "placing" read as an action expressed by an intransitive verb, place-in-progress, place-as-process, and specifically, place-as-performance, especially if corroborated with studying the dynamism and processuality instilled and explored by poetry in (and as) place/ing.

Communing is yet instrumental not only in redefining placing, but in analyzing displacement and its relevance to contemporary acceptances of community as well. According to Yates McKee the practices of commoning involve a creative reinvention of democracy whereby "democracia real YA!" can be indeed articulated in terms of commoning, communization, or even communism in recent theory "provided we understand democracy as being at odds with current forms of state power as well as fantasies of 'the people' as an all-inclusive harmonious consensus"[64]. The theorists McKee draws upon are Siltrin and Azzelini and, of course, Hardt and Negri. From the latter he takes over the way in which they read Occupy as a declaration of independence by (in their own terminology) the "multitude" that has opened onto correlative commoning

---

[60] *Ibidem*, p. 15. One could perhaps not irrelevantly rewrite this as "the com(mon)ing of place to itself."

[61] Ian Davidson, "Introduction", in Ian Davidson, Zoë Skoulding (eds.), *Placing Poetry*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2013.

[62] *Ibidem*, p. 13.

[63] *Ibidem*, p. 7.

[64] Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 20.

processes and practices. Hardt and Negri describe four "subjective figures of the crisis"[65], the represented, the mediatized[66], the indebted, and the securitized, to which, interestingly enough and quite relevantly to our discussion, McKee adds a fifth category: "the displaced (those dispossessed of the territorial bases of subsistence by foreclosure, gentrification, privatization, colonization, and environmental disaster)"[67]. It is not for no reason that an author researching the commonalities of art and radical collective protest/ (post-)Occupy underscores the importance of displacement, which could actually be translated in the above discussed classical community related terms into Bataille's and Nancy's "dislocation".

Displacement is relevant in this context as it delineates a number of undecidabilities related to performative/ participatory art qua radical action as involving (non/ multi-)place or being site-(un)specific. Why undecidability – because as we have seen in the cases of Brus and the Russian CAG there is an ambivalent relationship to place in such performances/ events, and this is actually part of a much wider contemporary context that acutely conditions issues of community, collective initiative, and commoning. In the case of the Situationist International for instance, Guy Debord's fold-out map *Psychogeographical Guide to Paris* (1957) is a non-topographic discontinuous network of various places that cannot serve either as a proper Parisian guide – and so much the less, as Claire Bishop notes, as a record or a report of a state of affairs[68] – or an insight into Debord's own subjective perception of the cities (and in this it critically differs from the Surrealist *Map of the World*, 1929)[69]. Another more recent and in certain respects similar example is the electronic archives of 16 Beaver and specifically the transcribed notes of Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri from the open seminars and report-backs given there (in person or via livestream) by friends involved with the "movement of the squares" in Europe and North Africa[70].

What links these two examples is not only the (elusive/ disruptive/ idiosyncratic) site-specificity, but the ways in which place or site (we will return a bit later to this distinction) both disintegrates and rearticulates as a – gapped yet ever-expanding or dynamically processual – network of more places and/ as events or "evental sites", and therefore a radically relevant if conventionally

---

[65] Quoted in Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 19; see also Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Declaration*.

[66] In a review of the book, Nikos Sotirakopoulos criticizes that in presenting this category the authors never took into account the possibility for computational apps and tools – be them (corporate) products of Empire – to be used by multitude for radical purposes, which is as we will see a bit later quite relevant to our topic (Nikos Sotirakopoulos, "A Review of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Declaration*", *Contention: The Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Protest*, I, 2013, pp. 101-103).

[67] Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p.19.

[68] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, p. 85.

[69] *Ibidem*.

[70] Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, pp. 90-91.

dysfunctional map. Place itself – even beyond psychogeography or the radical movements ("of the squares" and not only) – has actually been (re)defined in contemporary theory along quite similar lines.

In *Ideas of Space in Poetry* for instance, Ian Davidson has reviewed such definitions and closely examined their relevance to and instantiations in modern and contemporary verse. In these approaches, space is a "dynamic simultaneity… constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales from the global reach of finance and telecommunications […] to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household, and the working place"[71], while places are, consequently, "moments" and "particular articulation[s] of those relations"[72]. The latter – and thus also the communities they underlie – are implicitly charted and ostentatiously disrupted in Situationism, as seen above, and/ or escaped, displaced, and relocated-refashioned in new revolutionary contexts and networks generating different, larger communities of choice, as in the case of 16 Beaver.

The resulting 'incomprehensible' maps actually display an unavoidable, anatomic obscurity stemming from a non-categorical logic of negation and disruption. What is perhaps most relevant about those 'maps' is not so much the 'realities' or social relations they purposefully mis-chart, distort, or attempt to replace, but the processuality and performativity they enact. What Deleuze and Guattari have written about maps in general is apparently even more accurate about these particular graphs: "The map is open and connectible within all of its dimensions. It is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, […] reworked by an individual, group, or social formation"[73]. And as already seen in the 16 Beaver transcribed meeting notes, such maps or graphs potentially contain what Deleuze and Guattari call "lines of flight", ways of escape as well as ways of living under the specific "territorialized" circumstances thus freeing up (psychoanalytical but not only, also political and social) "blockages" and encouraging flows (psychic again, but involving "revolutionary energies" as well[74]. Davidson aptly employs these concepts in revisiting for instance Olson's *The Maximus Poems* and breaking down the complex and layered meanings of "projective verse" with its crucial geographical and spatial poise while also observing how the poet's denial of the subject signals a rhizomatic approach "implicit in the poem as a 'field' made up of various flows and energies"[75].

---

[71] Doreen Massey quoted in Ian Davidson, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 29.
[72] *Ibidem*.
[73] Quoted in Ian Davidson, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry*, p. 64.
[74] Cf. Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, p. 91.
[75] Ian Davidson, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry*, p. 69.

But since in contemporary theory space and place are, as we have seen, themselves fluctuating and intersectional, from creating and experiencing the poem as a field of energies to drawing an even closer connection between poem and place there is only one more step left. While analyzing Alice Notley's poem "Go In and Out the Window", Davidson realizes that the ways in which the poem goes back and forth between various places refusing to embrace any fixed identity or locality for the speaker makes the poem acquire certain features of place and that is how, moreover, "the poem itself becomes the place, albeit one that is conceptual rather than physical"[76]. As we have seen above, in community-driven action and participatory art place is already an iterative, processual, and performative network of places, and therefore, a poem having the same characteristics, working as a network of places, is a place in itself. Davidson does not go that far, but advances a very useful working hypothesis: "I am however suggesting that to think about the form of the poem as having some of the qualities of a place, as well as a representation of place in its content, allows a broader range of responses to place within a broader range of poetries"[77].

The connection between poem and place may in fact go beyond the content of the latter and beyond representation (through the former). More recently, authors like Neal Alexander and David Cooper have elucidated how after more than two decades since the spatial turn in literary studies, criticism examines not only how a literary text describes or interacts with a place – and more interestingly perhaps, how the latter conditions the language and form of the former – but also how it contributes to the (re)generation and articulation of its meaning(s). A poem of place is [(part of what) generates] that place while the place and the landscape can be in their turn 'read' as poems and (literary) texts. "Literary geography thus interests itself variously in the spaces of the text and with texts in space"[78]. The authors therefore provide a more refined taxonomy of the poetry of place and, although their analysis as well as the contributions to their book all focus on post-war British and Irish poetry, these classes can prove very useful in dealing with poetries of place elsewhere as well.

The first category is the poetry employing toponymy as integral part to the lyrical practice of emplacement, with two subclasses (based on a distinction borrowed from poet and critic Peter Barry), involving the use of setting and geography respectively, the former dealing with generic places (or "non-places") and the latter being more "loco-specific". The second category is defined by the "imaginative importance given to the spatial practices of walking, witnessing, and

---

[76] *Ibidem*, p. 32.
[77] *Ibidem*, p. 33.
[78] Neal Alexander, David Cooper (eds.), *Poetry & Geography: Space & Place in Post-War Poetry*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2013, accessed through online subscription privileges, no page numbers.

mapping which occur within place", and the third involves "a self-reflexive preoccupation with the relationships between material landscapes, linguistic signifiers, and poetic forms"[79]. The sections of the book roughly follow these distinctions, and it is quite relevant to our topic that the first of them is titled "Placing Selves: Identity, Location, Community", although issues of community are also addressed (sometimes even more pertinently) in the other sections as well; and although one would have wished for the conceptual and speculative level of the argument in Anderson and Cooper's introduction to be maintained throughout the other contributions as well, which is not always the case, and the poets illustrating the editor's place poetry categorizations to be further analyzed in the book, which again happens only in a few cases, the collection represents a really significant contribution to the topic.

If the poem and the place are either one and the same, or significantly enmeshed as interactive and converging networks that involve, (re)dis/ un/ re-cover, (re)shape, (re)generate communities on various levels and in various senses, what is the place *of* the poem in the equation of place, community, participatory art, and radical action that we have explored above. Jules Boykoff has written about poets as "experimental geographers" and their role in re-composing the political-historical space[80], and, interestingly enough, he places the discussion in the context of site-specific artistic practice. After drawing on Miwon Kwon's description of three dominant paradigms (that quite often actually overlap) – the art-in-public-spaces model, also derisively referred to as "plop art", the art-as-public-spaces approach in which site-specificity is a key feature (sometimes also involving use-value), and the art-in-public-interest model, characteristically featuring "a collective, collaborative spirit across a wide range of media"[81] – the author argues that, while critics have applied these categories and particularly the last one to visual arts solely, they should be widened to include certain poets as well, namely the poets "working with and through spatial politics"[82].

Boykoff actually focuses on the work of poets Mark Nowak and Kaia Sand and relevantly enough, he frames their poetics quite in the terms our discussion has gravitated around so far – collaborative approaches and participatory art/ performance/ processuality, the artistic/ aesthetic enlarged and/ or translated into political action, the interplay/ convergence of interrogated/ reshaped/ subjectivities within collective initiative or (non-essentialist) community/ commoning:

---

[79] *Ibidem.*
[80] Jules Boykoff, "Poets as Experimental Geographers: Mark Nowak, Kaia Sand, and the Re-Composition of Political-Historical Space", in Ian Davidson, Zoë Skoulding (eds.), *Placing Poetry*, 2013.
[81] *Ibidem*, pp. 224-225.
[82] *Ibidem*, p. 225.

Both Nowak and Sand use poetry to jumpstart collaborative, dialogical relations that invite reflexivity and refashion subjectivities in ways that enable participation not only in aesthetic intervention but also in larger political processes aimed at social change[83].

What Nowak for instance does significantly, in Boykoff's assessment, is employ "art theft" and (poetry/ discourse) "sampling" in his projects across all sorts of borders while targeting and involving the "displaced" and the "dispossessed"[84]. Nowak thus "*draws contour lines between sites* of labor exploitation [emphasis mine]"[85] both on the page and on the stage, but as the critic shrewdly remarks, the poet moves beyond that textual and performance-oriented framework when for instance doing creative writing workshops with the Ford autoworkers in Minnesota and their coworkers in Ford factories in South Africa, thus initiating (in the poet's words) "transnational poetry dialogues" between "workers in these seemingly disparate, discrete locations, allowing workers to *infer connections* and realize *common interests* [emphases mine]"[86]. The subversive interactive and processual networks – between places and people and (emerging) communities – already explored above are also copiously present and active in this case as well, and they are perhaps so much the more relevant to poetry in as wide a genre-related context as possible since in Boykoff's analysis they proliferate and operate even beyond both the textual and performative[87] dimensions of verse while still remaining fundamentally informed by poetry.

And yet one may not for no reason suspect there is still more to the poetry-art-place/ site constellation than (literally or not) meets the eye. In *Fieldworks. From Place to Site in Postwar Poetics,* Lytle Shaw analyzes how the poetry of place has evolved towards site poetry in postwar America while refining and developing both concepts by internalizing approaches typical of site-specific art. Place as coherent, stable, unitary is opposed and gradually reworked or integrated into the more fluctuating, volatile, and inter-discursive notion of site (with its

---

[83] *Ibidem*, p. 226.

[84] Concepts borrowed from Homi Bhabha (see *Ibidem*, p. 233), but as we have seen also extremely relevant, especially the former, to the "strike art" documented by Yates McKee.

[85] *Ibidem*, p. 238.

[86] *Ibidem*.

[87] Daniel Kane has significantly written about the role of performance (and) poetry in both tapping into and establishing a (sense of) community in the Lower East Side of the 60s (cf. Daniel Kane, *All Poets Welcome. The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, University of California Press, 2003). An arguably opposite approach to the societal and communal role of performance is presented by Sabeth Buchmann and Constanze Ruhm who explore the potential of (ongoing) rehearsal in uncovering and deconstructed established relations of power and imposed social identities (cf. Sabeth Buchman, Constanze Ruhm, "Subject Put to the Test". Translated by Karl Hoffmann, in Carola Dertnig, Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein (eds.), *Performing the Sentence. Research and Teaching in Performative Fine Arts*, Vienna, Sterberg Press, 2014).

interconnectedness and ever larger scales), while the vertical history and the "digging" in Williams's *Paterson* and Olson's *The Maximus Poems* (and the 'specific place' thereof, Gloucester) were replaced in the case of certain New American Poets by ambiguous "places", either "empirical locations or the bodies of the poets who brought these exterior locations and their social formations into focus"[88]. More significantly, Shaw assesses poet-artist Robert Smithson's work as essentially instrumental and influential in the shift from place to site and the complex continual refashioning and enmeshing of the two in poetry to the present day. It is particularly relevant how the analysis unveils the crucial role of language (along with the linguistic turn in the humanities) in developing the aesthetics of site-specificity in art and how Smithson – in his writings on Donald Judd's art and his own cross-genre work, while for instance significantly stating that "language 'covers' rather than 'discovers' its *sites* and situations [emphasis mine]"[89] – redefined site as not necessarily physical but, more consequentially, discursive, as relevant to the "'immanent' relationship between art objects and the discursive fields with which they want to be in dialogue"[90]. This, argues Shaw, has contributed to the emergence of a wide range of contemporary practices among the poets recently influenced by the younger artists engaging in "discursive site-specificity"[91], particularly the Flarf poets, urban(ist) (post-)conceptualists like Rob Fitterman, and absurdist archeologists (or as Shaw terms them, "overcoders") of architectural/ urban discourses like Lisa Robertson[92].

Poetry (contemporary poetry at least) is therefore proved to be ('genetically') integral part of the art-action-community-cross-artform paradigm, and not just occasionally – even if in the most fine-tuned fashion – examined with the tools of (politically charged) visual and site-specific art criticism, as was the case in the above cited book chapter by Jules Boykoff. But what is perhaps most intriguing about this trans-genre commonality is the intricate genealogy it comes with, namely the fact that the simultaneous complication and refinement of poetry at the intersection of place and site was originally triggered by the site-specificity in art, and particularly by *discursive* specificity, which was itself brought about by the linguistic turn (as well as by the cross-genre and cross-disciplinary work of certain artists-poets) in the humanities. Hence it was ultimately language and discourse – and thus the 'traditional'/ distinctive matter and medium of poetry – that effected the paradigm-shift in poetry…. Poetry thus underwent a fundamental transformation through its trans-genre and cross-artform porousness made manifest

---

[88] Lytle Shaw, *Fieldworks: from Place to Site in Postwar Poetics*, Tuscaloosa, The University of Alabama Press, 2013, p. 9.
[89] *Ibidem.*
[90] *Ibidem*, p. 8.
[91] *Ibidem*, p. 233 et infra.
[92] *Ibidem*, pp. 248-255.

by the inextricable congruence (if not identity) with place and site as catalysts of the com(mon)ing community.

<div align="center">*</div>

We have seen so far what happens to poetry and/ as place of commoning when (its transition to) site is framed by discourse, but what if space itself undergoes a similar metamorphosis, turning into a(n) *n*(on)-space of sites, not of places? What kind of discourse informs that space, how does it (if it does) frame the sites thereof, and how are communities generated/ modeled by those sites?

This space could be none other but digital space as accounted for in recent theory by authors like Stephen Kennedy. Kennedy describes digital space as going beyond the real-virtual binary opposition, and the digital as pertaining to a non-representational paradigm in which the traditional visual bias of western culture is no longer operational since the realities and environments involved function according to the laws of sonic economy. Sites in this space, as *web*sites and not only, become dislocated places and floating locations[93] and experiencing these realities is significantly different from place and site as discussed so far, which deeply affects the ways in which both communities and the powers-to-be operate and interact as well:

> [The government] present themselves as subject to technological effects. But this was not the case: they were neither inside nor outside but remained and still remain an important player in a network of statements and practices that combine to form technological discourses that are *inhabited, constructed and responded to simultaneously* [emphasis mine][94].

This different way of inhabiting bears upon the nature of place, which becomes fundamentally if not totally qualitative (as opposed to traditional quantitative representations of place within space), and what happens in digital space is that the qualitative characteristics of place are translated onto the space itself. This radical shift makes possible a dramatically different, expanded experience of the real which comes with its own reformed ontology:

> The argument being made here is that having highlighted the qualitative nature of place in order to challenge Descartes' position of volume as space, Leibniz then retreated to the relative safety of place as a fixed point. So 'place' for him is that fixed point. But what happens if we amplify the qualitative characteristics, not to counter Cartesian logic but to affirm the uncertainty surrounding the fixed nature of place, or to put it better, to extend qualitative thinking from place to space itself – so that now even space is not quantifiable? *This is what digital space is: not a realm separate from the*

---

[93] Cf. Stephen Kennedy, *Chaos Media. A Sonic Economy of Digital Space*, London – New Delphi – New York – Sydney, Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 35.
[94]*Ibidem*, p. 64.

real but a qualitative aspect of the real that mediates spatio-temporal relations [emphasis mine][95].

This is the theory of relativity for the cultural-political universe, and one would expect a revolution of similar magnitude in discourse (be it technological as in the previous quotation or not) as well. In the site-oriented poetries analyzed by Shaw, as we have already seen above, there was a transition and mix between the rather static and fixed qualities of place and the dynamic processual characteristics of site, but then site was also, as part of its distinction from place, framed by discourses, and those frames were rather static in themselves [a perception actually implicitly shared by the author himself since he describes "ourselves", that is, the practitioners of discursive site poetics, as "soft architects"[96]]. Even when a specific discourse or discursive frame is seen in its processuality it still remains an exterior reality that the poem absorbs and 'recodes', since no poet actually contributes (even subversively) to the actual development, societal negotiation, or disciplinary domain of that given discourse (say the one of urbanism). In digital space, on the other hand, there are radically different kinds of settings, environments, and interactions – discourses are, as already quoted above, inhabited, constructed, and responded to simultaneously.

Rather than framing we are therefore dealing with a perpetual reverberation, contamination, and propagation of discourse in a space that not only goes beyond the apparent fixity and representationality of place, but even does away with extensibility itself, with spatiality in its conventional (Euclidian) sense, and thus with any spatio-temporal limitations: "The digital world is, unlike Descartes' objectively extended world, non-extended and not susceptible to spatio-temporal restraints; it is self-organizing and self-perpetuating"[97]. Discourse in this world is uncontained and contaminating, flighty and mercurial, fragmented and echoic, made up of echo[ing] statements, or, in Kennedy's own terms, "echostates"[98].

Echostates and sonic economy are for Kennedy also the best instruments to tackle the issue of community. By applying non-linear acoustic thinking and "deep listening" (a concept borrowed from Pauline Oliveras) as a way of following both the sound and the political economy of the urban environment, he identifies and explores a novel connection between Coventry and Detroit, two motor cities physically far away from each other but very close on other levels made available by digital space and technology and their spatial-temporal mediations working with qualitative features and parameters. What is perhaps most relevant to our discussion about this approach is that the specificities of each place and their

---

[95] *Ibidem*, pp. 45-46.
[96] Lytle Shaw, *Fieldworks*, p. 257.
[97] Stephen Kennedy, *Chaos Media*, p. 43.
[98] *Ibidem*, p. 74 et infra.

respective communities are maintained in the analysis (Coventry and Detroit are each dedicated a subchapter titled "The importance of place"[99]) and at the same time integrated into the more recent "expanded communities of interest"[100] uniting the two cities. Place is thus (both maintained and interactively) translated into site, while the latter starts to float across a qualitative non-representational space spanned by coherence and resonance:

> The collision [of punk and reggae] occurred in a particular spatial context as people, objects, money, materials, emotions, configured, dispersed and reconfigured as part of a sonic economy, as the industrial practices that formed around large-scale manufacturing and the fusion of related social forces and population flows were discontinued and cleared, to be superseded by new practices that were beginning to emerge. Such collisions were contiguous […] in spatio-temporal terms, common to time and place: in this case, Coventry in the 1980s. But they also occurred in a noncontiguous space, demonstrating common defining characteristics 'inherited from one another' and by so doing demonstrate how coherence and resonance can be identified in a non-representational manner. It is in this way that Coventry and Detroit cohered – at the quantum level – as echoes of each other…[101].

These coherences and resonances across digital space (re)configure various kinds of communities, of which the post-industrial sonic/ musical one(s) connecting Coventry to Detroit represent just one possible example. But as part of the digital space environment, the general issue of online communities has been approached in the more specialized fields of Natural Language Processing and Machine Learning as well. Such studies are by definition more pragmatic than the ones we have mentioned so far, aiming to produce computational applications and tools for assessing various characteristics of those communities and help make predictions about them, such as, for instance, how long a member will stay active in a community or what would be a user's future level of activity in a community or across a number of communities. All of these evaluations and predictions are based on computationally processing the language (alone or alongside other elements, such as feedback received or various online histories) of users in various communities. "Vibrant online communities are in constant flux" starts for instance an article on user lifecycle and linguistic change in online communities[102], already employing some key words in our discussion so far, the resonance across digital space along with the fluctuating, processual nature of the latter and of its places

---

[99] Cf. *Ibidem*, pp.138-142 for the former and 143 et infra for the latter.
[100] *Ibidem*, p. 137.
[101] *Ibidem*, pp. 141-2.
[102] Cristian Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, Robert West, Dan Jurafsky *et al*, "No Country for Old Members: User Lifecycle and Linguistic Change in Online Communities", in *Proceedings of the 22nd international conference on World Wide Web*, 2013, pp. 307-318, http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2488416, accessed September 5th 2016.

and (web)sites. The applications developed by the authors analyze and classify linguistic change at both user and community level and can measure user's distance from the language of the community while also employing linguistic change as a predictor of user lifespan. Among the benefits of the research listed towards the end of the article there is a substantial section of implications for sociolinguistics.

Another even more recent publication argues that while intra-community has received consistent attention in the last years' research, multi-community engagement has been rarely approached although "people usually interact with *multiple* communities both on- and off-line [emphasis in the original]"[103]. Among the most appealing findings is the fact that, in terms of multi-community engagement "[u]sers post to less similar communities over time, but relatively speaking, departing users prefer more similar ones"[104]. In terms of language evolution the authors employ cross-entropy with vocabulary-varying language models to reach a very interesting conclusion: while in single-community settings, users right after passing through the "adolescent" stage (in which they learn the linguistic norms) suddenly "grow old", refusing to adapt to the evolving language of the community, in multi-community contexts, quite on the contrary, users "stay young", consistently adjusting and growing closer to the community's language.

Such brilliant conclusions – which are not surprisingly in keeping with Kennedy's idea that to experience the digital space is to inhabit, construct, and respond to it simultaneously – would be extremely useful in studying poetry in that space[105], so much the more so as these results are arrived at by dint of language-based automated analysis. Yet poetry computational analysis is still in the inceptive stage in which the machine learning part focuses on processing elemental features such as meter and rhyme, and there is still little concern for the data's magnitude and consequently barely any data-intensive and/ or comprehensive approach to the genre. *The Graph Poem Project*[106] is one of the few initiatives that tries to do that (while also developing computational apps and classifiers for all

---

[103] Chenhao Tan and Lillian Lee, "All Who Wander: On the Prevalence and Characteristics of Multi-community Engagement", in *Proceedings of the 24th International World Wide Web Conference*, 2015, p. 1. https://chenhaot.com/pubs/multi-community.pdf, accessed September 5th 2016.
[104] *Ibidem*, p. 5.
[105] A tie-in (of this research on multi-community engagement) with the concepts of convergence and polymediation in recent media studies (cf. Art Herbig et al, *Beyond New Media. Discourse and Critique in a Polymediated Age*, Lanham – Boulder – New York – London, Lexington Books, 2015) may have led to a wider and very interesting discussion, but here we need to regretfully note the gap that seems to be there quite often between researchers and authors working in the fields of Digital Humanities or Media Studies, NLP or Machine Learning, and E-Literature or Digital Art.
[106] See MARGENTO, *Nomadosofia/ Nomadosophy*, Bucureşti, Max Blecher, 2012; MARGENTO, *Poetries and Communities*. http://artsites.uottawa.ca/margento/en/sample-page/, 2015. Retrieved September 4th 2016; MARGENTO, *The Graph Poem*. http://artsites.uottawa.ca/margento/en/the-graph-poem/, 2016. Accessed September 5th 2016.

poetic features) by applying graph theory in both poetry computational analysis[107]as well as poetry generation (and creative and digital writing[108]). The network (weighted multi)graphs in which the vertices are poems and the edges are (feature-related) commonalities between the vertices, are developed in ways compatible to the already discussed chaos media's categories of coherence and resonance, with the caveat that the "echostates" in this case (include but at the same time) go beyond the discursive echo statements described by Stephen Kennedy, as they also involve qualitative – poetic and textual – as well as quantitative (statistic and wider digital) features. Also, the concept this approach is based on – graph – has been a recurrent notion in our criticism and the way in which networks for instance have already proved notably useful in this writing is part of that same constellation of interests, explorations, and experiments.

The *Graph Poem* is also developed on the same platform and in close concomitance with another initiative titled *Poetries and Communities*[109], which speaks to if not their codependence then the way they consistently complement and fuel each other[110]. But if through this connection the (graph) poem touches on place or site-specificity and radical action/ political resistance as well[111], what about the opposite line of inquiry? That is, when the issue of community in/ across digital space is examined in close correlation with those of place/ site and resistance[112], where does poetry stand, is it relevant to the issue in its own right?

If we take the same example of chaos media, the answer is a yes that may prove really relevant in quite a few respects. The very economy of digital space actually displays that in a fractal way: the atomic level of the echostates is informed by an elemental poetic reality, as the "echo" in the term stems from

---

[107] Cf. for instance Chris Tănăsescu, Bryan Paget, Diana Inkpen, "Automatic Classification of Poetry by Meter and Rhyme", in *AAAI Publications, The Twenty-Ninth International FLAIRS Conference*, 2016, http://www.aaai.org/ocs/index.php/FLAIRS/FLAIRS16/paper/view/12923, accessed September 5th 2016.

[108] Cf. MARGENTO, *Nomadosofia/ Nomadosophy* and the experiments beyond.

[109] MARGENTO, *Poetries and Communities*, 2015. http://artsites.uottawa.ca/margento/en/sample-page/. Retrieved September 4th 2016.

[110] Mathematical models have been employed before in the study of community, for instance by Dyke and Dyke (cf. Chuck Dyke, Carl Dyke, "Identities: the Dynamical Dimensions of Diversity", in Philip Alperson (ed.), *Diversity and Community: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2002) who use the Mandelbrott set to establish a fractal non-linear model for communities.

[111] In fact there is skepticism that DH in general or specific projects in the area really do that, and suspicion that they actually play into the neoliberal and corporate economic and political hegemony; see below.

[112] Although not specifically addressed here, the topic of resistance has been allotted a full chapter in Kennedy's book (Stephen Kennedy, *Chaos Media*, pp. 49-72), before also playing a significant role in the one dedicated to the Coventry-Detroit connection.

Gaston Bachelard's poetic of space[113], while on the macro level the overarching model is again the one of the poem now conjoined with that of the wunderkammer/ cabinet of curiosities, or indeed the curiosity shop in "a sonic economy of unpredictable but nonetheless patterned and rhythmic harmonies that form, disperse, and return as echoes in the 'curiosity shop' that is the lived digital environment"[114]. This store is the Balzacian ocean of (every)thing(s) that make up an endless poem assembled (or we should perhaps add, more likely navigated) not by the genius Byron but by Cuvier the naturalist (in an argument drawing on Jacques Rancière's considerations on the multi-temporality of contemporary art to describe digital space[115].

This idea of digital space as the grand all-inclusive poem is consonant with how certain digital and/ or internet-based poetries have been critically assessed as being characterized by boundlessness, excess, and limitless inclusion and fragmentariness. The particular case of digital poet Alan Sondheim is for instance exemplary in that respect, since Sondheim publishes (or used to published until a few years ago) monstrous quantities of text in various venues to the dismay, despair, or revulsion of certain readers or fellow (electronic) poets. But his work has been highly evaluated by at least as significant other critics and poets and located somewhere symmetrically to other (Jewish or not) major avant-garde and/ or exilic writers such as Walter Benjamin. Although not an actual refugee like the latter, Sondheim's work has been read – by Maria Damon – as fundamentally 'diasporic' in its most characteristic features, its blended impure mix of ('broken') languages (not only natural ones, since he is among other things the father of codework) and styles, his "diasporic heteroglossia or quick-witted though disfluent polyglot bricolage"[116], the "boundarilessness that makes people uncomfortable" (idem) and amounts to…

> [a] message in a hundred million washed-up bottles of faded sting, and a touch of Whitman's "Look for me under your bootsoles" with all the s/m undertones implied when the clause is transplanted into a technologically mediated, contemporary sexual/ textual landscape[117].

One of the most significant traits of such diasporic[118] (e-)poetries is their way of not only employing but also internalizing (digital) technologies, and indeed their

---

[113] *Ibidem*, pp. 74-77.
[114] *Ibidem*, p. 91.
[115] Cf. *Ibidem*, pp. 73-74.
[116] Maria Damon, "Alan Sondheim's Internet Diaspora", in Carrie Noland and Barrett Watten (eds.), *Diasporic Avant-gardes. Experimental Poetics and Cultural Displacement*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 58.
[117] *Ibidem*, p. 66.
[118] Another substantial and more general – although not as relevant to our particular discussion here – connection between poetry and diaspora has been developed by Christopher (Kit) Kellen, who also

way of becoming technologies in their own right. As Barrett Watten has observed, Walter Benjamin "never really surrenders intention, even as he is lost in the quotable archive"[119], whereas Sondheim does not choose texts but "techniques that generate texts"[120]. Sondheim's work – along with the poetry of other digital poets, and especially what C.T. Funkhouser has termed "poems of the Web, by the Web, for the Web"[121] – thus acquires certain salient features of digital space itself, in that its principles of expansion and development (through codework, hypertext, and beyond) are 'chaotic', machine-based, and algorithmic[122].

Yet in writing on Sondheim's diasporic digital poetry Damon also acknowledges the difficulties involved by not dealing with an actual exilic condition. The heralded abolition of the real-virtual divide (and actually the

---

advances an opposition between literary canon and community (Christopher Kellen, *Poetry, Consciousness and Community*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2009). A more articulate and relevant inquiry into a particular case of poetry communities is carried out by Lytle Shaw in *Frank O'Hara. The Poetics of Coterie,* where he argues that "[t]hrough its sense of real or imagined social infraction, coterie introduces a self-reflexive component to the study of community" (Lytle Shaw, *Frank O'Hara: The Poetics of Coterie*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 2006, p. 7).

[119] *Ibidem*, p. 63.

[120] The issue of non-intentionality is of crucial importance in digital poetry since the age of John Cage's first experiments in the field (even before he got to actually employ computers besides computation in his conceptual pieces) and would deserve a separate discussion. Suffice it to say though that even major figures such as John Mac Low have taken it with a grain of salt and refrained from or have been ironical of any single-minded attitude. Mac Low for instance once said that even if there is no intentionality in the poem there the intention to put together the algorithm that generates it (cf. O'Driscoll, "By the Numbers: Jackson Mac Low's Light Poems and Algorithmic Digraphism", in J. Mark Smith (ed.), *Time in Time. Short Poems, Long Poems, and the Rhetoric of North-American Avant-Gardism, 1963-2008*, Montreal & Kingston – London – Ithaca, McGill – Queen's University Press, 2013, p. 109 et infra).

[121] C.T. Funkhouser, *New Directions in Digital Poetry*, New York, Continnum, 2012, p. 179 et infra.

[122] We need to note though that Sondheim's works – like most digital poetry projects actually – still source certain texts or corpora, which bares the imprint of the author's selection. In our view (and that is what we try to accomplish with the *Graph Poem* initiative) the mission of (post/ trans)digital poetry is not to extract but to dive into the database and perpetually expand it, which is mandatory if one wants to construct poetry projects that acquire the basic features of digital space itself, namely to be self-generating, "self-organizing and self-perpetuating" (Stephen Kennedy, *Chaos Media. A Sonic Economy of Digital Space*, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney, Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 43), it should not breach the coherence and resonance by establishing itself as something different, autonomous, and/ or standing on the outside. Also, to the diasporic we need to add the nomadic to make sure no fixity, frozenness, or (de)limitation gets in the way of the sonic freedom and its unstoppable lines of flight – since "[t]he days of anything static, form, content, state are over […and] [a]ll revolutions have done just that: those that tried to deal with the state as much as those that tried to deal with the state of poetry." (Pierre Jorris, *A Nomad Poetics*, Middletown – Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 2003, p. 25) The nomadic bears in it both the idea of unimpeded mobility and sharing/ using in common, since etymologically the word means "[roaming to find] pasture, pasturage, grazing", from an Indo-European root *nem-,* "to divide, distribute, allot," (cf. *Online Etymology Dictionary*) hence it involves sharing [pastures, goods, lands], and therefore… commoning.

irrelevance of that binary opposition) within digital space does not seem to work here, a concern which is also relevant to a current academic conversation regarding the place and scope of Digital Humanities (DH) after a publication made speculations regarding the ways in which DH makes room for an alleged takeover of academia by neoliberal forces[123]. The polemic is not necessarily of interest in terms of this article's investigation, but some of the responses to the allegations above definitely are. Brian Greenspan's article "Neoliberalism, Virtual Collectivity, and Digital Humanities" for instance opposes such claims by looking into the evolution of DH and arguing that the shifts that have taken place in the field over the past decade brought on new practices and approaches that elude such narrow categorizations and accusations.

What Greenspan does though consider should be indeed reformed are certain current approaches and practices that make up, with a term borrowed from Richard Grusin, the "dark side" of DH. Among them, crowdsourcing as has been articulated and implemented so far is one of the main culprits. Greenspan elaborates, while also quoting from a Jodie Dean 2012 article: "The ideology of open access and participation regulated through crowdsourcing platforms and accessibility protocols allows digital humanists to indulge in 'a fantasy of multiplicity without antagonism, of difference without division'"[124]. Participatory ethics in DH raises similar concerns and in fact surprisingly involve similar formulations as those deployed in participatory-art criticism, an area in which Claire Bishop in the above cited book has also warned about the pitfalls of (Nicolas Bourriaud's) "relational aesthetics" and advocated in exchange for "relational antagonism", "predicated not on social harmony, but in exposing that which is repressed in sustaining the semblance of this harmony"[125].

Greenspan argues that there are DH initiatives that avoid those pitfalls and to this effect he presents in the article a number of projects developed by him and his team in the Hyperlab at University of Carleton, projects that "develop new ways of *sourcing the crowd* [author's emphasis]", and do so by "using mixed reality media to explore images and representations of collective belonging, and to engage with crowds of *real* people gathered together in *real* places [emphases mine]"[126].

Is this a step back from the conflation of the real and the virtual into digital space? Not really. Just as the post-digital does not entail the end of the digital or (simply and only) a return to the analog, the returning preoccupation for the 'real real' is far from representing a weakening of the interest in or importance of the digital and of digital space. To the extent to which post-digital represents the

---

[123] Quoted in Brian Greenspan ("Neoliberalism. Virtual Collectivity, and Digital Humanities", Forthcoming, 2016) along with a resource of published responses.
[124] *Ibidem*, p. 3.
[125] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, p. 79.
[126] Brian Greenspan, "Neoliberalism. Virtual Collectivity, and Digital Humanities", p. 3.

advent of an age in which digit(al)ization has actually become ubiquitous and thus involves various forms of integrating and/ or repurposing the analog and older media[127], this concern (that does not indulge in idealization)[128] regarding real people in real places is also symptomatic of a stage in which the digital is being or attempts more and more consistently to be immunized against (virtual-reality-or-not sanctioned) escapism or solipsistic narcissism. And it is particularly relevant that such preoccupations and their attending DH projects gravitate around issues of community, collectivity, and place.

For Greenspan is far from being the only one expressing such concerns and exploring possible ways of dealing with them through new and unconventional digital apps and tools. In a book from 2012 N. Katherine Hayles was already arguing in favor of combining radical or unrepresentational digital approaches to place and mapping with the already existing (be they conventional, corporate, and monopolist) tools (thus turned around) for the sake of precisely that radical/ subversive purpose[129], while in a very recent publication, Marie-Laure Ryan looked closely into digital maps as narrative generators and into various recent ways of connecting stories to real space through digital technology[130] while also, just like Greenspan, examining the relevance of computer games to issues of space, narrative, and digital media[131]. Ryan draws relevant parallels to the world of poetry and literature in general while speaking of digital projects dealing with place and narrative, such as conceptual poet Kenneth Goldsmith's *Soliloquy* and novelist Georges Perec's *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien*, both referenced in analyzing the generative cartographic project Les Trucs as a tool for narrating through real-time updating of the map[132]. Issues of community and collectivity are in their turn examined especially while critiquing [murmur] and other locative narrative apps and exposing their potential setbacks in delivering the 'spirit' of a place in a collective memories and people's stories packaging and thus obscuring the ways in which the latter are continually negotiated or "fashioned by

---

[127] Cf. for instance David M. Berry and Michael Dieter (eds.), *Postdigital Aesthetics. Art, Computation, and Design*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, particularly Florian Cramer's chapter.

[128] Greenspan acknowledges that "[w]hile none of these projects is likely to transform our user base into viable long-term communities, they can at least allegorize that process by mixing virtual networks with embodied crowds in the streets (Brian Greenspan, "Neoliberalism, Virtual Collectivity, and Digital Humanities", p. 9).

[129] Katerine N. Hayles, *How We Think. Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012, p. 175 et infra.

[130] Marie-Laure Ryan, "Space, Narrative, and Digital Media", in Marie-Laure Ryan, Kenneth Foote, and Maoz Azaryahu, *Narrating Space/ Spatializing Narrative. Where Narrative Theory and Geography Meet*, Columbus, Ohio University Press, 2016, pp. 115 et infra, 127 et infra.

[131] *Ibidem*, p. 103 et infra.

[132] *Ibidem*, p. 125.

each of us individually"[133], and interesting predictions are made about how the future advancement of for now "rudimentary previews" of customized maps such as Memory Maps will bring into existence smaller communities or "groups" of (private) users rather than having any relevance to a general audience[134].

This recently growing interest in the 'real real' and in physical places as interacting with or being performed in digital space has also spurred significant research into the issue of the hyperlocal. A more specialized recent article in DH focusing on hyperlocality tries for instance to fill a gap in the current computer science work in ways extremely relevant to our topic. Dissatisfied with the "homogeneous clusters of fixed entities that erase the particularity of a singular place"[135] the authors want to account for "the dynamic, temporal aspects" of locales as "performed" in social media, while trying to explore "the relation between *physical places* and their social media *hyper-local representations* [emphasis mine]"[136]. Robert Smithson and site-specificity get referenced once again as they help to distinguish between two kinds of visual data on the internet: "native", that is, "contemporary geotemporal digital image (the image which has spatial coordinates and a time stamp)"[137], and "nomadic", images stripped away from their original source.

Performance in such an approach actually comes to mean two different but concurring things. First, it is performance (as) site-specific art, as in for instance the actual street art of Banksy in various public places in New York in 2013 along with the correlated "dispersed real-life and online events that mirrored each other"[138], and second, the performance of place as hyper-locality, namely "the ways in which the physical place marked by him [Banksy] is communicated via social media platforms".

The nagging dilemma of such an approach involves the authors' paradoxical preference for "native" digital imagery (as corresponding to the neo-avantgarde's desideratum of site-specificity) and their inevitable conclusion that in social media the visual is always "nomadic", and therefore redolent of the passé modernist paradigm of (ideally) non-local and non-temporal art. Therefore, although the objectives – such as bringing back specificity and the temporal dimension, if not processuality to place as site – along with the computational methods and results of the research are remarkable, the conclusions are not entirely convincing or

---

[133] *Ibidem,* p. 136.
[134] *Ibidem*, p. 137.
[135] Hochman Nadav, Lev Manovich, Mehrdad Yazdani, "On Hyper-locality: Performances of Place in Social Media", *Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence*, 2014, 2, http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/081-on-hyper-locality-performances-of-place-in-social-media/onhyperlocality.pdf, accessed November 22nd 2016.
[136] *Ibidem*.
[137] *Ibidem*, p. 3.
[138] *Ibidem*, p. 4.

consistent with the premises and the operational procedures. The visual bias of western culture, for instance – critically exposed as we have seen above by authors like Stephen Kennedy and others –, reigns here unquestioned, which prevents the authors from exploring the echoic nature of repurposed/ shared images/ memes on the internet, or the sonic economy of digital space, whereby reverberation and noise render the concept of origin groundless and irrelevant.

Place turned into site becomes actually nomadic itself in digital space, and is therefore far indeed from being stripped of its specificity and (temporality/) processuality; quite on the contrary, it is precisely nomadism (and the qualitative, floating nature of locality) that plays an instrumental role in performing the specificity and performativity of place, site, and space altogether. Furthermore, focusing strictly on the visual and on visual art prevents one from distinguishing between contemporary nomadism and modernist alocalism and atemporality. Cross-artform poetics and politics as foregrounded above may prove their utility here once again, for if one balanced the visual data and visual art bias in Hochman, Manovich, and Yazdani's article with the anatomy of nomadism in contemporary poetry – in particular the way in which Pierre Joris has outlined nomadic poetics as radical disruption of the modernist aesthetics of fragmentariness and collage[139] – the conclusions regarding the nomadicity of the hyperlocal in social media would be more nuanced and pertinent.

The simultaneously strong and subtle connection between community, participatory/ performance art/ poetry/ action, and place/ site as explored in this article continues therefore in the post-digital age, but continues to be as always negotiated in ways that consistently refashion each of these terms while fundamentally informing digital space and our mediated experience of reality.

---

[139] Cf. Pierre Joris, *A Nomad Poetics*, Middletown – Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 2003, p. 39.

WORKS CITED

AGAMBEN, Giorgio, *The Coming Community*. Translated by Michael Hardt, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

ALEXANDER, Neal, David COOPER (eds.), *Poetry & Geography: Space & Place in Post-War Poetry*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2013.

BALIBAR, Etienne, "Communism as Commitment, Imagination, and Politics", in Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *The Idea of Communism 2: the New York Conference*, New York, Verso Books, 2013, pp. 13-36.

BERRY, David M., Michael DIETER, "Thinking Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design", in David M. Berry and Michael Dieter (eds.), *Postdigital Aesthetics. Art, Computation, and Design*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 1-11.

BISHOP, Claire, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, New York, Verso Books, 2012.

BLANCHOT, Maurice, *The Unavowable Community*. Translated by Pierre Joris, Barrytown, Station Hill Press, 1988.

BOSTEELS, Bruno, "On the Christian Question", in Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *The Idea of Communism 2: the New York Conference*, New York, Verso Books, 2013, pp. 37-56.

BOYKOFF, Jules, "Poets as Experimental Geographers: Mark Nowak, Kaia Sand, and the Re-Composition of Political-Historical Space", in Ian Davidson and Zoë Skoulding (eds.), *Placing Poetry,* Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2013, pp. 223-256.

BUCHMANN, Sabeth, Constanze RUHM, "Subject Put to the Test". Translated by Karl Hoffmann, in Carola Dertnig and Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein (eds.), *Performing the Sentence. Research and Teaching in Performative Fine Arts*, Vienna, Sternberg Press, 2014, pp. 200-207.

CRAMER, Florian, "What Is 'Post-digital'?", in David M. Berry and Michael Dieter (eds.), *Postdigital Aesthetics. Art, Computation, and Design*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 12-26.

DAMON, Maria, "Alan Sondheim's Internet Diaspora", in Carrie Noland and Barrett Watten (eds.), *Diasporic Avant-gardes. Experimental Poetics and Cultural Displacement*, New York, NY Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 51-76.

DANESCU-NICULESCU-MIZIL, Cristian, Robert WEST, Dan JURAFSKY, Jure LESKOVEC, Christopher POTTS, "No Country for Old Members: User Lifecycle and Linguistic Change in Online Communities", in *Proceedings of the 22nd international conference on World Wide Web*, 2013, pp. 307-318, http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2488416, accessed September 5th 2016.

DAVIDSON, Ian, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

DAVIDSON, Ian, "Introduction", in Ian Davidson, Zoë Skoulding (eds.), *Placing Poetry,* Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2013, pp. 1-17.

DEAN, Jodi, "Communist Desire", in Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *The Idea of Communism 2: the New York Conference*, New York, Verso Books, 2013, pp. 77-102.

DYKE, Chuck, Carl DYKE, "Identities: the Dynamical Dimensions of Diversity", in Philip Alperson (ed.), *Diversity and Community: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 65-87.

ELLIOTT, Brian, "Community and Resistance in Heidegger, Nancy, and Agamben", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, XXVII, 2011, 3, pp. 259–271.

FLEMING, Peter, "Common as Silence", *Ephemera. Theory and Politics in Organization,* XIII, 2013, 3, pp. 627-640.

FUNKOUSER, C.T., *New Directions in Digital Poetry*, New York, Continuum, 2012.

GREENSPAN, Brian, "Neoliberalism, Virtual Collectivity, and Digital Humanities" Forthcoming, 2016.

HARDT, Michael, Antonio NEGRI, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, New York, The Penguin Press, 2004.

HARDT, Michael, Antonio NEGRI, *Declaration*, Argo Navis Author Services, 2012.

HAYLES, N. Katherine, *How We Think. Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012.

HERBIG, Art, Andrew F. HERMANN, Adam W. TYMA, *Beyond New Media. Discourse and Critique in a Polymediated Age*, Lanham – Boulder – New York – London, Lexington Books, 2015.

JEON, Heecheon, *Subjectivity of Différence: A Poiesis of Deconstruction of Subjectum, Deus, and Communitas*, New York, Peter Lang, 2011.

JORIS, Pierre, *A Nomad Poetics*, Middletown – Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

KANE, Daniel, *All Poets Welcome. The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, University of California Press, 2003.

KELEN, Christopher (Kit), *Poetry, Consciousness and Community*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2009.

KENNEDY, Stephen, *Chaos Media. A Sonic Economy of Digital Space*, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney, Bloomsbury, 2015.

MARGENTO, *Nomadosofia/ Nomadosophy*, București, Max Blecher, 2012.

MARGENTO, *Poetries and Communities*. http://artsites.uottawa.ca/margento/en/sample-page/, 2015. Retrieved September 4th 2016.

MARGENTO, *The Graph Poem*. http://artsites.uottawa.ca/margento/en/the-graph-poem/, 2016. Accessed September 5th 2016.

McKEE, Yates, *Strike Art: Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition*, London – New York, Verso Books, 2016.

McPHAIL, Clark, "Crowd", *Contexts*, VII, 2008, 2, pp. 78-79.

NADAV, Hochman, Lev MANOVICH, Mehrdad YAZDANI, "On Hyper-locality: Performances of Place in Social Media", *Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence*, 2014, 2, http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/081-on-hyper-locality-performances-of-place-in-social-media/onhyperlocality.pdf, accessed November 22nd 2016.

NEUBURGER, Susanne, "Performing Vienna". Translated by Tim Sharp, in Carola Dertnig and Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein (eds.), *Performing the Sentence. Research and Teaching in Performative Fine Arts*, Vienna, Sternberg Press, 2014, pp. 34-40.

O'DRISCOLL, Michael, "By the Numbers: Jackson Mac Low's Light Poems and Algorithmic Digraphism", in J. Mark Smith (ed.), *Time in Time. Short Poems, Long Poems, and the Rhetoric of North-American Avant-Gardism, 1963-2008*, Montreal – Kingston – London – Ithaca, McGill – Queen's University Press, 2013, pp. 109-131.

RYAN, Marie-Laure, "Space, Narrative, and Digital Media", in Marie-Laure Ryan, Kenneth Foote, and Maoz Azaryahu, *Narrating Space/ Spatializing Narrative. Where Narrative Theory and Geography Meet,* Columbus, Ohio University Press, 2016, pp. 101-137.

SHAW, Lytle, *Frank O'Hara: The Poetics of Coterie*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 2006.

SHAW, Lytle, *Fieldworks: from Place to Site in Postwar Poetics*, Tuscaloosa, The University of Alabama Press, 2013.

SOTIRAKOPOULOS, Nikos, "A Review of Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri's *Declaration*", *Contention: The Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Protest*, I, 2013, pp. 101-103.

SWEEDLER, Milo, *The Dismembered Community. Bataille, Blanchot, Leiris, and the Remains of Laure*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2009.

TAN, Chenhao, Lillian LEE, "All Who Wander: On the Prevalence and Characteristics of Multi-community Engagement", in *Proceedings of the 24th International World Wide Web Conference*, 2015. https://chenhaot.com/pubs/multi-community.pdf, accessed September 5th 2016.

TĂNĂSESCU (MARGENTO), Chris, Bryan PAGET, Diana INKPEN, "Automatic Classification of Poetry by Meter and Rhyme", in *AAAI Publications, The Twenty-Ninth International FLAIRS*

Conference, 2016. http://www.aaai.org/ocs/index.php/FLAIRS/FLAIRS16/paper/view/12923, accessed September 5th 2016.

WHYTE, Jessica, "«A New Use of the Self»: Giorgio Agamben on the Coming Community", *Theory & Event*, XIII, 2010, 1, ProQuest Database, accessed September 5th 2016.

COMMUNITY AS COMMONING, (DIS)PLACING, AND (TRANS)VERSING:
FROM PARTICIPATORY AND 'STRIKE ART' TO THE POSTDIGITAL
(*Abstract*)

The article examines the concept of contemporary community as commoning, at the intersection of action, performance or participatory art, place, site-specific, and (post)digital poetry. This involves a brief review of traditional avant-gardes, 20th century engaged art, and recent political-art movements. In the process of this analysis, the participatory emerges as a subtler, more nuanced, and less predictable phenomenon than usually accepted. Also, performative subjectivity is traced as either the source of anticommunal community (in French theory), or mere Christian-capitalist construct (in communist philosophy). Agamben's theory of the coming community is therefore examined as possible response to both these stances, with its relevance to contemporary movements, including post-Occupy. Commoning – paralleled to placing in poetry – turns out to be of critical importance in present-day community especially with correlatives such as displacement and undecidablility. Place, space, and map(ping) are therefore radically redefined in the context, and contemporary poetry appears to be indissolubly related to the process: the poem of place is the place, and poetry becomes the site of the com(mon)ing community. Site (and discourse)-specificity in poetry occasions a shift in focus to digital space, its sonic economy, and the communities and floating locations/ sites thereof. Site and discourse fluidity have brought about a paradigm in which the poem and its related apps tend to expand and turn into digital space itself, while in more recent postdigital evolutions, a new political concern for the 'real' reshape community, site, and performance/ participatory art or poetry in a continuous interactivity and interdependence.

Keywords: community, commoning, participatory art, performance studies, poetry of place, site-specificity, digital space, digital humanities, e-literature, the postdigital, GSI, NLP.

COMUNITATEA CA ÎN-COMUN-ARE, (DIS)LOC-ARE ŞI (TRANS)VERS-
ARE: DE LA ARTA PARTICIPATIVĂ ŞI "STRIKE ART" LA POST-DIGITAL
(*Rezumat*)

Articolul examinează conceptul de comunitate ca proces de *comunare (commoning)*, la intersecţia dintre acţiune politică, performance sau artă participativă şi poezia locului, cea specifică unui sit, sau (post)digitală. După o scurtă trecere în revistă a avangardelor tradiţionale, a artei angajate din secolul XX şi a recentelor mişcări politic-artistice, în cadrul analizei, participativul se profilează ca un fenomen mult mai subtil, nuanţat şi imprevizibil decât e perceput în mod uzual şi, în plus, subiectivitatea performativă este identificată ori ca sursă a comunităţii anticomuniale (în teoria franceză), ori drept construct capitalist-creştin (în filosofia comunistă). Teoria lui Agamben privind comunitatea care va veni este examinată ca posibil răspuns la ambele perspective de mai sus, odată cu relevanţa ei pentru anumite mişcări contemporane, inclusiv cele post-Occupy. *Comunarea* – asemuită cu *locarea* (placing) din poezie – se dovedeşte de o importanţă capitală în comunitatea contemporană,

mai ales alături de corelative ca dislocarea şi indecidabilitatea. Locul, spaţiul şi harta/ cartarea [*map(ping)*] sunt în consecinţă radical redefinite, iar poezia contemporană se arată indisolubil legată de acest proces de redefinire: poemul locului e locul, iar poezia devine situl comunităţii comune, (de)venind [*com(mon)ing*]. Specificitatea legată de sit (şi discurs) în poezie prilejuieşte o schimbare a registrului spre spaţiul digital, economia sonică a acestuia şi comunităţile sau siturile şi locaţiile flotante aferente. Fluiditatea de discurs şi cea a siturilor a determinat instalarea unei noi paradigme, în care poemul şi aplicaţiile computaţionale circumscrise lui tind să se extindă până la identificarea cu însuşi spaţiul digital, în timp ce în evoluţiile postdigitale mai recente, o preocupare de natură politică pentru „real" reformulează comunitatea, situl – şi arta sau poezia performativă/ participativă printr-o neîntreruptă interactivitate şi interdependenţă.

Cuvinte-cheie: comunitate, comuniune, artă participativă, performance studies, poetica spaţiului.

FROM SINGULARITY TO MULTIPLICITY.
THE POWER CYCLE OF AUTHORSHIP,
BETWEEN SUBMISSION AND SUBVERSION

The present article is dedicated to the guiding theme of "Collective Authorship" in its diverse contexts and notional meanings. Mapping the intellectual stakes and conceptual propositions of recent scholarship represents one of the main aims of my paper. I've selected only those works which elegantly combine empirical research with strong theoretical reflections. Focusing on two important junctures (the 17th century and the 1960s), the historical perspective is complemented by a state of the art review covering several disciplinary fields: I will examine sociological investigations concerning the history of collective authorship; analytical philosophy papers dealing with action theories and authorial agencies; studies from the fields of rhetorics and composition; and, last but not least, I will briefly probe some of the most pressing issues pertaining to copyright and/or intellectual property[1]. It is also important to note that I will not be covering electronic or digital forms of collective authorship. As I will hopefully demonstrate, *authorship studies* are undergoing major changes today, marking the shift from the romantic understanding of the author towards the construction of what I've called an authorial ecosystem which, in its turn, can be understood as being part of a larger (and circular) dynamic entity.

Ryszard W. Kluszczynski justly observed that "collaboration, participation, and community are currently becoming the central categories of reflection on art, culture and social organization"[2]. The reasons behind why recent scholarship has focused on creative collaboration or collective work are twofold. In the last three decades, academics working in far-flung fields have spent an enormous amount of time and effort investigating contemporary artistic practices which, by and large, are relational[3]. Understandably, this movement has had an important impact,

---

[1] The research domains have been selected from the generous list compiled by Marjorie Stone and Judith Thomspon in *Literary Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, pp. 3-35.

[2] Ryszard W. Kluszczynski, "Re-Writing the History of Media Art: From Personal Cinema to Artistic Collaboration", *LEONARDO*, XL, 2007, 5, p. 471.

[3] For instance, one only needs to take a glance at Nicolas Bourriaud's rather successful books: *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods and Mathieu Copeland, Les presses du réel, 2002; *Postproduction*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2005; *The Radicant*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2009; Claire Bishop (*Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, New York, Verso, 2012; *Participation*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2006), Grant H. Kester (*Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*,

influencing the main research trends in literary studies, which, as we will see, are bent on rethinking the idea and history of collective authorship[4]. Moreover, recent epistemological turns[5] have greatly modified the interests and practices of scholars. The overwhelming powers of technological advancements and, consequently, the new forms of collaborative research in the Humanities are both equally responsible for this renewed passion for multiple authorship in the Academia[6]. Last but not least, the poststructural critique of the self and its pervasiveness is – in some measure – responsible for a left-wing, postmodern resurgence of collectivity and anonymity.

The Premodern Understanding of Collective Authorship

Ancient thinkers valued authors, first and foremost, for their didactic and social functions. Creativity was never assigned to one individual alone: inspiration was possession and the source of inventiveness was always relocated beyond the individual subject into full transcendence[7]. The plea for the mythological identity of the author (as Isabelle Diu and Elisabeth Parinet define it[8]) can be reinterpreted as the admittance of the fact that nobody can create anything without the help of *the other*[9]. Thus, the implicit realization that one cannot fully assume authorship – one does not or cannot compete with divine creation – is an indirect confession of the fact that literary production will always be collaborative (the gesture of infinitely pointing to another source or origin being highly suggestive of this).

A similar conception dominated the written culture "du Moyen Âge, qu'il s'agissant de textes théologiques, ou d'ouvres de fiction, se caractérise donc par la

---

Oakland, University of California Press, 2004) and Charles Green (*The Third Hand. Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism*, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2001) are also worth mentioning here.

[4] Richard Badenhausen*, T.S. Eliot and The Art of Collaboration*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

[5] Hastily heading towards new forms of positivism, rationalism, materialism, and pragmatism: *world literature studies*, *quantitative analysis*, *literary Darwinism*, *digital humanities*, *ecocriticism*, or *the Anthropocene*.

[6] See Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence. Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*, New York – London, New York University Press, 2011.

[7] Paul Bénichou, *Le Sacre de l'écrivain. 1750-1830. Essai sur l'avènement d'un pouvoir spirituel laïque dans la France moderne*, Paris, NRF Éditions Gallimard, 1996, p. 12.

[8] Isabelle Diu, Elisabeth Parinet, *Histoire des auteurs*, Paris, Éditions Perrin, 2013, p. 14.

[9] Jean Starobinski, *Gesturile fundamentale ale criticii* [*The Fundamental Gestures of Criticism*]. Translation and preface by Angela Martin, foreword by Mircea Martin, București, Art, 2014, p. 97: "Ancient tradition, at least since Homer, has attributed a capital role to the poet's friend: he is the first to see the text which was forged during a long period of time. He has the right to make observations regarding its form, he will be the first to recognize its beauty, he will mark its defects and demand they be corrected: at need, he will counsel the poet that the work should not be published. He becomes not only the first reader of the work but its downright co-author".

prédominace de l'anonymat ou de la pensée collective"[10]. Indeed, Jean Starobinski identified it as the "ritualistic phase" of literature: collective creation where one cannot clearly distinguish between creator and public. Although he was mainly referring to Classical Antiquity, the realization that "no one owns the function of actual *author*", as Starobinski rightly noted[11], is also valid for the medieval stage in authorship history. Likewise, it has been recently argued, for instance, that the corporate element of writing existed from medieval times up until the Renaissance[12] (the 16th century).

Investigating written documents and manuscripts, Grace Ioppolo has demonstrated that early modern dramatists "collaborated in various ways and degrees in the theatrical production and performance of their plays, and that for early modern dramatists and their theatrical colleagues, authorship was a continual process, not a determinate action"[13]. It is important to appreciate that, far from belonging to a logic of distinction, the attention and the importance *the other* receives in the process of creation represents an authentic lesson of true literary humbleness. Most importantly, we can conclude that both the construction and identity of authorship are constituted through the ritualistic negotiation between *the self* and *the other* as they engage eachother in the ongoing process/ conversation of text-production.

The Sociological Perspective on Collective Authorship

Alain Viala, in his seminal book published in 1985, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique*, examines the French literary scene by retracing the steps in the concrete formation of what the sociologist has coined as *the first French literary field* (the middle of the 17th century): "Je le désigne comme le premier champ littéraire". Viala showed that the genesis and the processes which led to the field's empowerment were strictly social in nature (no exceptions) or, in Thomas Wynn's simple yet illuminating words, "collaboration marks the emergence of the author". The appearance, for instance, of the Academy, this "ensemble of personalities", as Viala calls it, represented one of the base elements which facilitated the birth of the professionalized author-writer. Being responsible for providing spaces of sociability, dialogue and collective reflection, the Academy quickly became the symbolic "factory" of Authors, maintaining a series of processes dedicated to the continual formation of its

---

[10] Isabelle Diu, Elisabeth Parinet, *Histoire*, p. 30.
[11] Jean Starobinski, *Gesturile*, p. 34.
[12] Martha Woodmansee, "On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity", in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006, p. 17.
[13] Grace Ioppolo, *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood. Authorship, Authority, and the Playhouse*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 1.

members[14]: mutual recognition and support through advice, counsels, and critiques[15].

The researcher further develops his argument showing that, in the 17th century, two different conceptions of literary property coexisted: one that advantaged the editor, while the other predictably favoured the author[16]. The adoption of an institutional stance (determining the relations between the literary field and the overall society), transforms Viala's archeological effort into a descriptive catalog of the first (French) literary organizations: the press, literary saloons, the academies. His investigation becomes truly revealing when distinguishing between two sets of hierarchical principles governing the social dimension of the literary field: heteronomous ranking principles (the ways in which the newly formed general public influenced the processes of creation) and autonomous ranking principles (the extra-literary constraints: mainly political and religious)[17]. In spite of its hegemonic structure, the mechanism behind the social dimension of the literary field was finally influenced by two other remaining factors: the personal relations criteria and geographical repartition[18].

It appears that the 17th century marked a crucial moment in the history of authorship, a paradoxical moment when literature – as an institution and socially valuable field of practice – became one of the many public phenomena governed by extra-literary powers (political and religious). Gaining in prestige and popularity, the ruling class tolerated the new and relative autonomy of the literary field. Of course, this was by no means a new situation (suffice it to recall Mecena's example as a patron), but thanks to Viala's demonstration (made possible by the use of sociological instruments), the apparatus responsible for this type of control and collaboration[19] was virtually exposed: the system became – visually and metaphorically – transparent for the first time and, consequently, open to relentless-postmodern scrutiny. This is the first moment when the more or less centralized political and religious powers of France could firmly participate (alongside the newly formed general public and its preferences) to the institutional,

---

[14] Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique*, Paris, Minuit, 1985, p. 42.

[15] *Ibidem,* p. 43.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 97.

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 185.

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 258.

[19] Grant H. Kester, *The One and the Many. Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2011, pp. 1-2: "We must begin, of course, by coming to terms with collaboration itself. Its primary meaning is straightforward enough: 'to work together' or 'in conjunction with' another, to engage in a 'united labor.' It is shadowed, however, by a second meaning: collaboration as betrayal, to 'cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupation force.' This ambivalence, the semantic slippage between positive and negative connotations, is, I think, fitting".

political, and economical construction of modern authorship and literature. While the art of writing became a socially recognized social function/ role, literature emerged, in its turn, as a new commodity, an object of both symbolic and economic exchange.

The public recognition of writer-authors was unfortunately won at a great price: the underground control on which the success of several writers depended (Viala actually describes two sets of strategies used by writers: *la réussite* and *le succès*[20]) and the continuous process of individualisation proved to be the perfect cover for various hidden interests. By promoting the image of the individual writer, governmental instances (in Foucault's understanding) succeeded in overshadowing of the inner workings of real-life authorship (*i.e.* the collaborative involvement of external powers). Inauspiciously, the celebration of the death of anonymity – and the formal birth of the author – was a pretext to push the collective dimension of writing into the background, since it turned out to be unsuitable for those in high places.

Of course, an important question quickly arises. What happens with authorial anonymity and collectivity in a totalitarian regime? Or, better yet, what happens with individual forms of authorship or with the public recognition of writers when facing an extreme or radical intrusion of external/ ideological forces? Let's start by reading Katharine Holt's view on the matter, by citing her description of different types of authorship: "I will define the practice as the collaboration of a group of authors in the production of a single work or series of works and I will propose three subcategories: strong, weak, and unacknowledged. The strong form of collective authorship, in this schema, involves collaboration on multiple aspects of a work and group authorial credit, while the unacknowledged form involves unspecified amounts of collaboration and no group authorial credit. In between these two extremes, as I have defined them, is the weak form, where collaboration occurs on one or more aspect of a work and credit is divided (not necessarily equally) among the individual participating authors"[21]. She claims that the existence of avant-garde manifestoes (such as the futurists or the imagists) in the early Soviet period cannot obscure the majority of stalinist texts (altered by editors, Party officials or even Stalin himself), even though both of them staked everything on collective types of creative production.

Arguably, the collective dimension of literary composition led to the birth of the modern figure of the author but anonymity didn't entirely disappear especially if we look at repressive systems. Consequently, we can say that democratic regimes tend to view collective writing practices as revolutionary, while

---

[20] Alain Viala, *Naissance*, p. 183.
[21] Katharine Holt, "Platonov and Collective Authorship", *Russian Literature*, LXXIII, 2013, I-II, p. 58, doi:10.1016/j.ruslit.2013.01.005.

totalitarian establishments always seem to find a way in instrumentalizing collaborative authorship. Generally speaking, autonomous administrations perceive collective writing practices as threatening the legitimacy of their political institutions through effective aesthetic/ rhetorical strategies, stirring up unwanted feelings in the populace. Antithetically, authorial multiplicity typically succumbs – in dictatorial establishments – to political schemes by way of institutionally aestheticized discourses (like censorship or propaganda) which demand the imposition of certain perspectives pretending, at the same time, they were actually forged by/ through the will of the people.

The Emergence and Inner Contradictions of the Individual Author

Authorship wasn't a stable profession until the 18th century. Writers, it has been argued, still depended on the patronage system. This also meant that "the circulation of texts depended on limited production systems and an elite class of readers"[22]. One year before Alain Viala published his book, Martha Woodmansee showed that, even in the middle of the 18th century, the modern notion of the author did not exist: "If the writer appears here as only one of the craftsmen responsible for the finished product, that is because he was viewed, and by and large still viewed himself, in much the same terms as they - that is, as master of a craft, master of a body of rules, or techniques, preserved and handed down in rhetoric and poetics, for the transmission of ideas handed down by tradition"[23]. In this context, "tradition" becomes a safe-zone for the collective dimension of authorship. Collaborating with Academy members was – among other things – "an effective means by which an eighteenth-century author might aspire to social recognition and legitimacy"[24]. However, this situation will indeed alter at the end of the 19th century when rhetorics will no longer belong to the outside world, becoming a privileged method of exposing and constructing the poet's inner, original self. What's more, "the withdrawal of the state from the control of the book market and the abjuration of censorship entailed the need for new legislation restricting the principle of freedom of speech"[25]. I will further trace the contradictions between the Romantic myth of the individual author and the writing practices of professional authors within the market system of production.

The new technological developments (the steam printing press, new modes of transportation) and a new middle class commercial market (making the aristocratic

---

[22] Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative Literary Writing: Issues of Authorship and Authority*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 2.
[23] Martha Woodmansee, "On the Author Effect", p. 15.
[24] Thomas Wynn, "Collaboration and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century French Theater", *The Romanic Review*, CIII, 2012, 3-4, November, p. 466.
[25] Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility in France: From Flaubert to Sartre", *French Politics Culture & Society*, XXV, 2007, 1, March, p. 1. DOI: 10.3167/fpcs.2007.250101.

readership virtually obsolete) transformed the author's relationship to society and, most importantly, "replaced patronage with capitalism"[26]. However, an important point needs to be made here. Recently, strong voices have risen against this all pervasive state of affairs. Geoffrey Turnovsky's work[27], for instance, has been hugely influential: he "counters the argument that the rise of a commercial book trade provided writers with a welcome alternative to a court patronage system"[28]. Turnovsky also revised Bourdieu's ideas "regarding the nonautonomous and autonomous zones", redefining them as "discursive artifacts"[29]. It is true that 19th century writers rejected the technological and economic conditions that made their livelihood as authors possible, constructing the image of the Romantic artist[30]. Nonetheless, analyzing the Coleridges, the Shelleys, and the Wordsworths, Michelle Levy has shown that family authorship – which rested both on patronage and manuscript culture – reflected a political struggle in Romantic identity between private communities and public construction of individual geniuses, thus revealing the sociable nature of Romantic authorship and the collaborative nature of Romantic literary culture[31]. The inability to acknowledge cross-gendered or inter-generational authorship further reflected the ways in which the expectations of the print marketplace collided with the real practices of literary production[32]. However, as already stated, "at the very moment when the state relinquished its attempts to control the book market, writers appropriated the notion of responsibility, relieving it of its juridical meaning, in order to define their own ethical principles, their duties, and their rights towards society"[33]. Focusing on the independence from moral and political constraints (leaving Bourdieu's economic constraints behind), Gisèle Sapiro showed how these socially oriented ethical principles contributed to the emergence of an autonomous literary field, as we have already seen with Viala.

Rolf G. Renner's contribution to the debate appears to be more nuanced since he argues that the paradigm of individual creativity has been deconstructed since

---

[26] Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative*, p. 7.

[27] Geoffrey Turnovsky, *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

[28] Pamela Cheek, "Review: *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*. By Geoffrey Turnovsky. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010", *Modern Language Quarterly*, LXXIII, 2012, 4, p. 606.

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 606.

[30] Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative*, p. 12.

[31] Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 2.

[32] Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship*, p. 7.

[33] Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", pp. 2-3.

its birth by the philological analysis of collective authorship[34]. Thus, with the publication of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Goethe instated Homer as the ideal and origin of the creative genius, marking, as Renner writes, both the birth of aesthetics and the emergence of the new romantic subjectivity[35]. In opposition, Friedrich August Wolf showed, by publishing his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* in 1975, that the silence of Homer was the undeniable proof that the Homeric texts had no clear origin because they belonged to an oral tradition[36]. Supposedly, the Homeric texts are the result of a grand collective effort and, in time, their "editors" have become their rightful co-authors[37].

Although they were still searching for authorial charisma, late Romantic writers revised their accounts of agency and authorship – challenging their own high Romanticism claims for the author's singular imagination – by attributing a person's identity or a writer's imagination to a much larger organization (such as the state)[38]. The Romantic definition of the poet was partially abandoned, as Anne Fray has shown (drawing on the late works of Foucault or Benedict Anderson's *imagined communities*), in her ground-braking study, *British State Romanticisim. Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism*, published in 2010, by rethinking the visionary individual authorial agency. It was rebranded as a modest function of a "system into which he inserts himsef"[39], a system which increasingly penetrated "individual lives"[40].

The romantic author received his final blow, as Florian Vassen has convincingly shown, when the same Goethe sent a letter, in 1832, to Frédéric Soret acknowledging the existence of something that could be called the collective understanding of authorship[41]. In Goldmann's footsteps, it is safe to say that Goethe succumbed to the truth that a writer's tastes, needs, wishes or tendencies will never belong to his or her creative individuality alone, but to the general

---

[34] Rolf G. Renner, "Subversion of Creativity and the Dialectics of the Collective", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi Press, 2011, p. 3.

[35] There are, of course, other opinions. For instance, Grant H. Kester, *The One*, p. 3: "the figure of the singular, auratic artist, reinforced by notions of artistic genius first formalized by Kant, remains the bulwark of the long history of modernism, and the epistemological template for much contemporary criticism".

[36] For a full examination of the Homeric question see Walter J. Ong's *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*, London – New York, Routledge, 2012, pp. 17-20.

[37] Rolf G. Renner, "Subversion", p. 4.

[38] Anne Fray, *British State Romanticism. Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010, pp. 2-3.

[39] Anne Fray, *British State Romanticism*, p. 15.

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 17.

[41] Florian Vassen, "From Author to Spectator: Collective Creativity as a Theatrical Play of Artists and Spectators", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity*, p. 300.

public as well[42]. This move was actually preceded by an equally famous act of realization. In 1761, Voltaire relates to Charles de Fyot, as Thomas Wynn has argued, how collaboration always comes into play in the process of literary production. Here are Wynn's conclusions: "literary creation is not a unique and isolated moment. When each stage of the text's genesis is taken into account, it is clear that two seemingly opposed models of writing—singular and collective—can coexist"[43]. It is now clear that, while the social dimension of literary writing never disappeared, the subtle shift from anonymity to public recognition was responsible for the consolidation and modernisation of the literary field, even though, as we have seen, a considerable price had to be paid. The definition of authorship constantly oscillates between a "sense of social responsibility and the idea of «art for art's sake»"[44]. The latter (art for art's sake) was developed as a response to the limits that political and religious authorities tried to impose upon literary creation, while the former (the notion of the writer's social responsibility) was theorized by conservative intellectuals in order to place boundaries on the range of discourse.

More radically, Rolf Parr believes that all types of creativity are and have always been interactive and, consequently, collective. In his view, the singular author plays the role of concealing the inner contradictions and complexities of authentic authorship[45]. In fact, Margaret Chon has proved that collective authorship "is an intransigent shape-shifter"[46]. Thus, the practices of collective writing cannot even be dissociated from individual ones[47]. What we can do, Parr suggests, is to distinguish between different conceptions of authorship: "between the real process of creativity and production [...] and the staged performance of authorship on the judicial and economic fields of society"[48]. I will be examining a series of similar conceptual pairs in the last section of the paper, while also putting forward a notional distinction of our own.

---

[42] Alain Brunn, *L'auteur*, Paris, Flammarion, 2001, p. 164.
[43] Thomas Wynn, "Collaboration and Authorship", p. 470.
[44] Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", p. 6.
[45] Cf. Rolf Parr, "Autorschaft. Eine kurze Sozialgeschichte der literarischen Intelligenz", in *Deutschland zwischen 1860 und 1930*, Heidelberg, Synchron, 2008.
[46] Margaret Chon, "The Romantic Collective Author", *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, XIV, 2012, 4, p. 838.
[47] Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative*, pp. 18-19: "Within the field of literature, one of the effects of this contradiction has been a lasting tension between the Romantic ideological construction of the author as an isolated individual, and the collective practices of mechanized and commercial literary production which created the interdependent profession of authorship".
[48] Thomas Ernst, "From Avant-Garde to Capitalistic Teamwork: Collective Writing between Subversion and Submission", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity*, p. 234.

The Problems of Defining Modern Authorship

In the meantime, however, let us investigate the 20th century status of collective authorship. This is a moment when the anonymity of the author recaptures the center-stage of literary studies, due to the attacks French theory launched upon the subject's claims to originality and creativity: "l'auteur n'invente rien, il ne fait que bricoler des textes et obéir aux lois de la langue ou du genre"[49]. Although it was not publicly admitted, the institutional death of the author (and the accompanying birth of the reader) represented an essential first step in the process of restaging the relational dimension of literary production[50]. Significantly, the scope of joint artistic endeavors is, as Ryszard W. Kluszczynski has argued, the construction of avant-garde strategies oriented against the hostile environment of traditional institutions (the happenings of the 1960s, for instance)[51]. Collaboratively written texts reconstruct the power relations of production, challenging the oligarchical structure prescribed by the paradigm of individual authorship. Interestingly noted, "the revolutionary ambitions of the surrealist avant-garde, who wanted to turn poetry into a subversive arm against society, disturbed the classical division between art for art's sake and moral responsibility"[52]. It is also worth remembering that technical improvements proved crucial to authors engaged in avant-garde, innovative, experimental, and counter-cultural work, spearheading literary trends that favored "collaboration and perhaps most notably, immediacy"[53]. While Michael P. Farrell's description of the seven stages of collaborative circles (while admittedly fascinating) fails in grasping the dynamics of the cultural field within which creative work is embedded[54], it is fair to assume that Jacques Dubois's work still acts as the central theoretical framework for institutional analysis[55].

Nevertheless, after May '68, only two books succeeded in capturing the full imagination of researchers: Jack Stillinger's *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991) and Jerome McGann's *A Critique of Modern Textual*

---

[49] Maurice Couturier, *La Figure de l'auteur*, Paris, Seuil, 1995, p. 12.

[50] Grant H. Kester, *The One*, pp. 9-10: "collaborative art practices complicate conventional notions of aesthetic autonomy".

[51] Ryszard W. Kluszczynski, "Re-Writing", p. 473.

[52] Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", pp. 8-9.

[53] Kate Eichhorn, "Late Print Culture's Social Media Revolution: Authorship, Collaboration and Copy Machines", *Authorship*, I, 2013, 4, Summer, p. 6. http://www.authorship.ugent.be.

[54] Michael P. Farrell, *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001.

[55] Jacques Dubois, *L'institution de la littérature. Introduction à une sociologie*, Bruxelles, Labor, 1990.

Criticism (1983)[56]. The former didn't provide a brand new definition or theory of multiple authorship. Instead, he effectively analyzed a set of earlier writing processes[57]. The latter argued that the authority of any text lies in a systematic synergy between the author and the publisher. After a series of *close readings*, Stillinger concluded, as I have already suggested, that the myth of the solitary genius is an extremely advantageous convention for all those involved in the production and reception of books, a myth that is an integral part of our current cultural practices, especially when it comes to interpretation[58]. Intentionalists (E.D. Hirsch, Knapp & Michaels), anti-intentionalists (Wimsatt and Beardsley), and even controversial figures such as Roland Barthes or Michel Foucault – all of them, Stillinger argued, were using and abusing the same myth of the solitary author[59]. Even though it seemed to want to get rid of the myth of the solitary genius, Stillinger's argument finally settles in simply adding another point in the complex diagram of subjective creativity.

This myth continues to be invoked, as Peter Jaszi has shown, in the field of law[60]. While creative production tends to become more collective, the law invokes the figure of the romantic author even more persistently[61]. Interestingly, Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede have revealed that the judicial enactment of authorship and Stillinger's convenient convention have, in fact, completely disappeared with the bizarre exception of the Humanities[62]. One thing is certain. The illusion of autonomy is still very strong among the writers. They certainly forget that the literary field structured "itself around the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy"[63]. The bundle of agents acting in the field of literature are reticent when it comes to participating in the construction of any kind of cultural relativism: "at the heteronomous pole of the intellectual field, writers related the defense of morals to the strength of the nation state – a concern that lies at the

---

[56] Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson, "Taking Joint Stock. A Critical Survey of Scholarship on Literary Couples and Collaborations", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thomspon (eds.), *Literary Couplings*, p. 316.

[57] Unlike Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author. Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

[58] Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 187.

[59] *Ibidem*, p. 193.

[60] Peter Jaszi, "On the Author Effect: Contemporary Copyright and Collective Creativity", in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship*, p. 29.

[61] We should also draw attention to Grant H. Kester, *The One*, p. 15: "the history of artistic identity, pointing to certain fault lines in the constitution of modern subjectivity" which was constructed "around notions of property and possessive individualism".

[62] Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson, "Taking Joint Stock. A Critical Survey of Scholarship on Literary Couples and Collaborations", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thomspon (eds.), *Literary Couplings*, p. 313.

[63] Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", p. 2.

heart of the political dimension of an author's penal responsibility [...]. At the autonomous pole, «intellectuals» conceived a set of professional values to affirm their symbolic power and reconceptualize their responsibility along political lines"[64].

However, it is true that the global cultural community is constantly fighting for the legal rights of creative producers (both economically and ethically) in a hyper-capitalized world[65]. It certainly appears that the functioning of authorship is a cyclical phenomenon: whenever writing practices deem themselves subversive, threatening the autonomy of the literary establishment by staging some sort of cultural revolution, authorship instantly shifts to participatory actions and altruistic outlooks (*subversive or communal authorship*). Contrarily, acquiescent creative processes generally lead to individual forms of authorship (*submissive or private authorship*) and to a conservative understanding of literature. However, as we have seen, this only holds true inside the confines of a democractic regime.

The Analytical Perspective on Collective Authorship

As previously stated, I will review various conceptions that could account for the differences between the actual process of production and authorship personas. A cursory survey suggests that there are at least two major types of definitions: agentless and agent-based rationales (of course, agentless forms of authorship are rare to non-existent).

Darren Hudson Hick, an analytical philosopher working in the field of action theories, recently published an article provoking a small yet sturdy debate on the topic of collective authorship[66]. In his view, the author is the person responsible for the form and content of a work of art (he includes aesthetic and moral qualities). Discretely hinting to Poe's *Philosophy of Composition*, Hick defined responsibility as the power to select and arrange the constitutive elements of a given work[67]. Rather banal, Hick avers that multiple authorship can be simply identified when the work is composed of easily identifiable units. If, on the other hand, the work is naturally composed as a single unit, we may speak of co-authorship[68]. In order to further stress his position, Hick invoked the *Copyright Act of 1976* showing that the law similarly defines *a joint work* as one made by two or more authors having the intention of blending their work into a single, independent unit. Conversely, a *collective work* is composed of a number of independent

---

[64] *Ibidem*, p. 7.
[65] The SoA (*The Society of Authors*), for instance, claims that it "protects the rights and furthers the interests of all types of authors", http://www.societyofauthors.org. Accessed 01.06.2016.
[66] Darren Hudson Hick, "Authorship, Co-Authorship, and Multiple Authorship", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXII, 2014, 2, Spring.
[67] *Ibidem*, p. 151.
[68] *Ibidem*, p. 153.

contributions (an anthology, for instance). Thus, the ethical dimension of authorship (the authors' responsible behaviors) could be used as a rather illusive gauge in order to discern between genuine labor and theatrical renderings. It could also be construed as an alternative model of authorship where writers need to assume responsibility for a text, while also negotiating their differences and balancing out authority issues.

Bacharach and Tollefsen[69] have put forward a simple but well-thought reply. As we have seen, Hick used responsibility as the sole criteria for defining works of multiple or co-authorship (without attacking his conceptual distinctions, Anton Killin also published a response[70], showing that Hick's case study was a false instance of co-authorship). Bacharach and Tollefsen redefined the two categories on the basis of the type of interaction existing between those involved in a project, borrowing some of the basic principles of TPB (theory of planned behavior). Although he replies, Hick unconvincingly refashioned his former arguments[71].

Working in the fields of rhetorics and composition, Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford offer a surprising definition of multiple authorship completely devoid of any human subject: "any activities that lead to a completed written document"[72]. On the opposite end, I will recall Thomas Hines modestly arguing that multiple authorship can be identified wherever and whenever artists work "together to produce a joint creation"[73]. We need, at this point, to distinguish between cooperation (hierarchically split into non-coordinated, independent tasks) and collaboration: a coordinated, synchronous activity containing a set of cognitive processes heterarchically divided into intertwined layers, having the goal of constructing and maintaining a shared conception of a problem[74] (both of them are, however, agent-based explanations). Finally, Britta Hermann acknowledges the existence of individual and collective authorship but she equates it to the Searlian differentiation between strong (the genial, solitary author) and weak authorship (collective, anonymous authorship[75]). In this framework, both cooperation and collaboration would be articulating different forms of weak authoriality. Seth

---

[69] Sondra Bacharach, Deborah Tollefsen, "Co-Authorship, Multiple Authorship, and Posthumous Authorship: A Reply to Hick", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 331-334.

[70] Anton Killin, "Works, Authors, Co-Authorship, and Power: A Response to Hick", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 334-337.

[71] Darren Hudson Hick, "The Co-Author Is Dead; Long Live the Co- Author: A Reply to Killin, Bacharach, and Tollefsen", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 337-341.

[72] Judith Thompson, Marjorie Stone, "Contexts and Heterotexts. A Theoretical and Historical Introduction", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson (eds.), *Literary Couplings*, p. 22.

[73] *Ibidem*, p. 22.

[74] Ryszard W. Kluszczynski, "Re-Writing", p. 473.

[75] Thomas Ernst, "From Avant-Garde", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity*, p. 234.

Whidden's work could be understood as further developing this perspective of weak authorship[76]. He distinguishes between two types of collaborative writing: collaboration *in praesentia* and *in absentia*. It is true, however, that this also represents a problem: being a very ambitious project, Whidden understands collaboration as any type of intertextuality or citation: "by positing a conceptual model whose reach is so vast in its scope, a degree of precision may be lost in our understanding of that which fundamentally distinguishes a literary work of shared labor (a "collaboration" in its etymological sense), from one that considers another's work or life in a sustained literary project, such as a literary homage or an elegy, or perhaps even some forms of biography"[77]. Thomas Wynn showed how collective authorship – this technique of strategic sociability, as he called it – can occur at any moment in the process of composition (initial suggestion, joint composition, welcomed feedback), stressing that it must always be consensual (valid, voluntary, and invited), "for otherwise it is not collaboration but plagiarism or unwelcome intervention"[78].

It is worth arguing that authorship acts as an interface for the effective functioning of creative practices. Consequently, the interconnection between factual writing patterns and dramatic perpetrations of authorship hinges, as we have shown, on moral, legal, and sovereignty issues. Moreover, I would assert that the two types of authorship identified above (*submissive* and *subversive*) are also determined by the ways in which all the agents involved in the construction of authoriality relate to the legal, economic, social, and technological dimensions of the literary field. There is, as I have shown, a direct relationship between left-wing and right-wing ideologies and different forms of authorship: while the former could be described as revolutionary and, consequently, interested in corporate types of manifestation (*subversive authorship*), the latter appears to be much more conservative, focusing on individual power mongering and the cultivation of elitist modes of public expression (*submissive authorship*).

Conclusions

The socially constructed nature of human subjectivity has long been recognized as an undeniable truth. Hopefully, the recognition of multiple authorship won't cause too much turbulence either. Academics usually identify the works of Roland Barthes[79] and Michel Foucault[80] as the exclusive starting points

---

[76] Seth Whidden (ed.), *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen*, Farnham – Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2009, pp. 5-9.
[77] See Suzanne F. Braswell's review of *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen*, *H-France Review*, XI, 2010, 4, January, p. 2.
[78] Thomas Wynn, "Collaboration and Authorship", p. 471.
[79] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", in *Image. Music. Text.* Translated by Stephen Heath, New York, Hill and Wang, 1977.

in the process of investigating different aspects of authorship (even those who argue against them[81]). These routes should readily be abandoned: electing a number of authors as the founding fathers of a certain paradigm of authorship is obviously contrary to the belief that the idea of the solitary genius must be dealt away with. However, it is important to remember that, in its collective form, the author plays the same roles as the individual author (genius and arbiter – derived from the collaborative processes leading up to final products). Accordingly, Margaret Chon believes we shouldn't idealize collaborative creation. Instead, she suggests, we should de-romanticise collective authorship, because it could lead us to more inclusive and reliable forms of knowledge. Authorship would then be able to trust the shoulders of giants on which it stands[82].

As I have shown, the Enlightenment and the second half of the 20th century represent critical moments in the history of authorship. On the first hand, the modernisation of the literary field – autonomy and fame – unfortunately imposed the idea of the solitary author in the disadvantage of multiple authorship. On the second hand, the death of the author indicated a slow but definite return to older forms of authorship. Most importantly, I would stress the importance of the re-externalisation of rhetorics through the constitution of a new creative commons (conceptual poetry, post-internet movements, appropriation poems) and the reoccurrence of collectivity and anonymity (*Wikipedia* is the general example here). By analyzing the morphology of these two moments, I have clearly determined that authorial obscurity and celebrity are deeply intertwined with topics such as the formation of power discourses and the development of legitimation codes. It is safe to say that recent evaluations of collective authorship represent a necessary (yet far from timely) alignment with the post-theoretical claims of the last 15 years.

Notwithstanding, "the current moment is defined by a complex and contradictory mixture of cultural and geopolitical forces"[83]. Fashioned as a myth or as a concrete practice, authorship – an ambiguous notion, permanently hesitating between public recognition and anonymity – is undergoing fundamental changes today. Determined by the relation between the intentions or responsibilities of a certain group and their members' attitudes towards literary works, collective authorship deliberately distorts the figure of the solitary writer. Thus, the authorial

---

[80] Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?". Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in Donald, F. Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Ithaca – New York, Cornell University Press, 1977.
[81] For instance, Michelene Wandor, *The Author Is Not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else: Creative Writing Reconceived*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
[82] Margaret Chon, "The Romantic Collective Author", *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, XIV, 2012, 4, p. 848.
[83] Grant H. Kester, *The One*, p. 5.

feature of a literary work is the result of a continuous and wide gamut of interaction between creative subjects, the reading public and other third parties. Although we are witnessing "the rise of a powerful neoliberal economic order dedicated to eliminating all forms of collective or public resistance (institutional, ideological, and organizational) to the primacy of capital"[84], the authorial shift from singularity to multiplicity appears to converge with forceful transformations in the roles and structures of political powers and economic interests involved both in the literary field and the literary book market. As I have proclaimed, the displacement of authorship (from singularity to multiplicity) entails considerable adjacent-dichotomous transformations: from notoriety to anonymity, from individuality to collectivity, from myth to practice, from institutionalization to ritualization, and, finally, from submissive attitudes to subversive states of mind and action. The institutional stance of collaborative authorship is symptomatic of its borderline position. It is, as we have seen, commonly affiliated with business, technical or scientific writing. However, multiple authorship represents an alternative or adaptable model of administrating authority where habits and protocols no longer illustrate the norm. While reimagining its own history (reinveting the canon or underming generic conventions), subversive or communal authorship will always work against established literary institutions. Submissive authorship, on the other hand, cannot be described as progressive or reformist. Reactionary, I believe, is the right word to use.

In thinking about multiple or collective authorship, I was actually wondering how (do) literary communities work. Of course, several answers to this question have been already put forward over the centuries. However, my goal was, on the one hand, to see how authorship functions, from a historical perspective, in literary groups, thus adopting a functionalist approach. On the other hand, I particularly focused on highlighting the common features of collective authorship by analyzing the tactics of different investigative methods which dealt with the same phenomena. I've found that, from its birth, authorship served as a enormously productive site for the constantly negotiated boundaries between individual and communal literary practices. Its development, alongside that of other modern institutions and professions, was heavily influenced by a number of external factors (political, ethic, economic, social, and technological). In the end, it is important to remember that, while displaying several modes of allowing individual writers to artistically engage contemporary public events (in their never-ending process of elaborating authorial identities), multiple authorship always serves two types of goals: aesthetic and political. Aesthetic ideologies strive in transcending the limits that outside forces impose on literary creation by drawing attention to the symbolic power of writing, while socially engaged authors will always try to

---

[84] *Ibidem*, p. 5.

restrict other aesthetic discourses in interfering with what they believe to be the political power of literature.

Finally, what seems to emerge is not a story about how collaborative authorship could possibly take its revenge on the solitary figure of the Romantic genius. No. It is clear as blue sky that we need to focus on how different forms of aesthetic authorship carry social, political, and economic functions. In order to fully appreciate the important roles played by other forces involved in the construction and unfolding of today's globally digitized literary field, we will need to further develop an ecology of contemporary authorship.

WORKS CITED

BACHARACH, Sondra, Deborah TOLLEFSEN, "Co-Authorship, Multiple Authorship, and Posthumous Authorship: A Reply to Hick", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 331 – 334.

BADENHAUSEN, Richard, *T. S. Eliot and The Art of Collaboration*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

BARTHES, Roland, "The Death of the Author", in *Image. Music. Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath, New York, Hill and Wang, 1977.

BÉNICHOU, Paul, *Le sacre de l'écrivain. 1750-1830. Essai sur l'avènement d'un pouvoir spirituel laïque dans la France moderne*, Paris, Gallimard, 1996.

BISHOP, Claire, *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London – New York, Verso, 2012.

BISHOP, Claire, *Participation*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2006.

BOURRIAUD, Nicolas, *Postproduction*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2005.

BOURRIAUD, Nicolas, *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods, Mathieu Copeland, Dijon, Les presses du réel, 2002.

BOURRIAUD, Nicolas, *The Radicant*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2009.

BRADY, Laura Ann, *Collaborative literary writing: Issues of authorship and authority*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

BRASWELL, Suzanne F., "Review of *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors*", *H-France Review*, XI, 2010, 4, January, pp. 1-4.

BRUNN, Alain, *L'auteur*, Paris, Flammarion, 2001.

BURKE, Sean, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

CHON, Margaret, "The Romantic Collective Author", *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, XIV, 2012, 4, pp. 829-849.

COUTURIER, Maurice, *La Figure de l'auteur*, Paris, Seuil, 1995.

DIU, Isabelle, Elisabeth PARINET, *Histoire des auteurs*, Paris, Editions Perrin, 2013.

DUBOIS, Jacques, *L'institution de la littérature. Introduction à une sociologie*, Bruxelles, Labor, 1990.

EICHHORN, Kate, "Late Print Culture's Social Media Revolution: Authorship, Collaboration and Copy Machines", *Authorship*, I, 2013, 4, Summer, p. 6. http://www.authorship.ugent.be.

ERNST, Thomas, "From Avant-Garde to Capitalistic Teamwork: Collective Writing between Subversion and Submission", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity.*

Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.

FARRELL, Michael P., *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001.

FISCHER, Gerhard, Florian VASSEN (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.

FITZPATRICK, Kathleen, *Planned Obsolescence. Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*, New York – London, New York University Press, 2011.

FOUCAULT, Michel, "What is an Author?". Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in F. Bouchard Donald (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1977.

FRAY, Anne, *British State Romanticism. Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010.

GREEN, Charles, *The Third Hand. Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism*, London, The University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

HOLT, Katharine, "Platonov and Collective Authorship", *Russian Literature*, LXXIII, 2013, I-II, pp. 57-83, doi:10.1016/j.ruslit.2013.01.005.

HUDSON HICK, Darren, "Authorship, Co-Authorship, and Multiple Authorship", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXII, 2014, 2, Spring, pp. 147 - 156.

HUDSON HICK, Darren, "The Co-Author Is Dead; Long Live the Co-Author: A Reply to Killin, Bacharach, and Tollefsen", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 337 – 341.

IOPPOLO, Grace, *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood. Authorship, Authority, and the Playhouse*, New York, Routledge, 2006.

JASZI, Peter, "On the Author Effect: Contemporary Copyright and Collective Creativity", in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006.

KESTER, Grant H., *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, Oakland, University of California Press, 2004.

KESTER, Grant H., *The One and the Many. Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2011.

KILLIN, Anton, "Works, Authors, Co-Authorship, and Power: A Response to Hick", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 334 – 337.

KLUSZCZYNSKI, Ryszard W., "Re-Writing the History of Media Art: From Personal Cinema to Artistic Collaboration", *LEONARDO*, XL, 2007, 5, pp. 469–474.

LEVY, Michelle, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

PARR Rolf, "Autorschaft. Eine kurze Sozialgeschichte der literarischen Intelligenz", in *Deutschland zwischen 1860 und 1930*, Heidelberg, Synchron, 2008.

RENNER, Rolf G., "Subversion of Creativity and the Dialectis of the Collective", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.

SAPIRO, Gisèle, "The Writer's Responsibility in France: From Flaubert to Sartre", *French Politics Culture & Society*, XXV, 2007, 1, March pp. 1-29. DOI: 10.3167/fpcs.2007.250101.

STAROBINKI, Jean, *Gesturile fundamentale ale criticii* [*The Fundamental Gestures of Criticism*]. Translation and preface by Angela Martin, foreword by Mircea Martin, București, Art, 2014.

STILLINGER, Jack, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.

STONE, Marjorie, Judith THOMPSON, "Taking Joint Stock. A Critical Survey of Scholarship on Literary Couples and Collaborations", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson (eds.), *Literary*

Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

STONE, Marjorie, Judith THOMPSON (eds.), *Literary Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

THOMPSON, Judith, Marjorie STONE, "Contexts and Heterotexts. A Theoretical and Historical Introduction", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson (eds.), *Literary Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

TURNOVSKY, Geoffrey, *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime,* Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

VASSEN, Florian, "From Author to Spectator: Collective Creativity as a Theatrical Play of Artists and Spectators", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.

VIALA, Alain, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique*, Paris, Minuit, 1985.

WANDOR, Michelene, *The Author Is Not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else: Creative Writing Reconceived*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

WHIDDEN, Seth (ed.), *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen*, Farnham – Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2009.

WOODMANSEE, Martha, "On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity", in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006.

WOODMANSEE, Martha, Peter JASZI (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006.

WYNN, Thomas, "Collaboration and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century French Theater", *The Romanic Review*, CIII, 2012, 3-4, November.

FROM SINGULARITY TO MULTIPLICITY: THE POWER CYCLE OF AUTHORSHIP. BETWEEN SUBMISSION AND SUBVERSION
(*Abstract*)

The present article is dedicated to the guiding theme of "Collective Authorship" in its diverse contexts and notional meanings. Mapping the intellectual stakes and conceptual propositions of recent scholarship represents one of the main aims of the paper. Focusing on two important junctures, the historical perspective is complemented by a state of the art review covering several disciplinary fields. Finally, I will define two types of authorship: submissive and subversive. *Authorship studies* are undergoing major changes today, marking the shift from the romantic understanding of the author towards the construction of what I've called an authorial ecosystem which, in its turn, can be understood as being part of a larger (and circular) dynamic entity.

Keywords: submissive authorship, subversive authorship, collective authorship, community, collaboration, cooperation, multiplicity, anonymity, power cycle.

DE LA SINGULARITATE LA MULTIPLICITATE: DIMENSIUNEA CIRCULARA A PUTERII AUCTORIALE. ÎNTRE SUPUNERE ŞI SUBVERSIUNE
(*Rezumat*)

Articolul de faţă e dedicat „auctorialităţii colaborative". Investigarea mizelor şi propunerilor conceptuale ale cercetărilor recente reprezintă unul din scopurile centrale ale lucrării. Concentrându-mă asupra a două momente cruciale, perspectiva istorică e completată de o trecere în revistă a stadiului actual al cercetării, acoperind mai multe spaţii disciplinare. În final, propun două definiţii tipologice: auctorialitatea submisivă şi cea subversivă. Studiile despre autor suferă schimbări profunde azi, remarcabilă fiind trecerea de la înţelegerea romantică a autorului la ceea ce am numit un ecosistem auctorial care, la rândul lui, poate fi înţeles ca făcând parte dintr-un mai larg ecosistem cultural (extrem de dinamic, ba chiar circular).

Cuvinte-cheie: auctorialitate submisivă, auctorialitate subversivă, auctorialitate colectivă, comunitate, colaborare, cooperare, multiplicitate, anonimitate, ciclul puterii.

ANDREI DOBOŞ

LITERARY EVALUATION AND READING PRACTICES IN ROMANIAN ONLINE LITERARY COMMUNITIES: www.clubliterar.com

Online vs. Offline

The Internet, states the art theorist Borys Groys in one of his recent books, is a figurative space in which the "real" external world is referenced. That is to say that everything happening online is a documentation of the offline world. From this perspective, the "document" can suffer innumerable changes, because its identity (as Internet entity or phenomena) lies not in its own form, but in its external referent. For arts and literature on the Internet, this means the erasing of the boundaries between production and exhibition (or, more specifically, in the case of literature, between writing and publishing). This process (of literary production), hidden in the analogue world, is now exposed in the digital[1]. Following Groys's argument, we can say that any online community is, in fact, a digital document of a "real" offline community, or at least that its referent is placed outside of itself.

Online literary communities have similar traits to traditional forms of literary sociability, although their characterization with the aid of traditional taxonomy remains problematic. Unlike traditional literary groups that are defined primarily by a well determined aesthetic and ideological ideal (or purpose)[2], online communities are defined rather through the orientation of their interest and practice. According to Michael Farell, the life cycle of artistic and literary circles is composed of seven stages[3], including a moment of rebellion against an established authority and the appearance of well-established roles within the group (a charismatic leader, a tyrant figure outside the group, etc.). In most cases, the applicability of Farell's stages to online creative communities is problematic for two simple reasons: first, the large number of users (and their relatively random

---

[1] Boris Groys, *In the Flow*, London, Verso, 2016.

[2] Denis Saint-Amand, "Groupe", in Anthony Glinoer and Denis Saint-Amand (dir.), *Le lexique socius*, http://ressources-socius.info/index.php/lexique/21-lexique/195-groupe, accessed September 3rd 2006.

[3] The seven stages of artistic or literary collaborative circles according to Michael Farell: 1. Formation/ gathering in a "magnetic place" facilitated by a "gatekeeper"; 2. Rebellion against established authority; 3. The "quest stage", formation of group identity, the apparition of "boundary markers"; 4. Splitting into small collaborative pairs; 5. Collective action stage; 6. Separation stage; 7. Nostalgic reunion (Michael P. Farell, *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001).

connections) is inhibitory for any ideological and aesthetic atomization, and second, the status of online communities inside the literary field is ambiguous, meaning that the online practice is not received as culturally valuable by the "analogue" establishment (for example, in China, literature produced online is represented in bookstores by a new genre, labeled as "internet literature"[4]). Judged by their degree of institutionalization[5], these types of communities (with rare exceptions, as we shall see below) are de-institutionalized, with random connections between the users, and rarely semi-institutionalized (the formation of culturally coherent groups).

A common trait of all literary circles is a type of negative adaptation to the established authority, a type of revolt against the one institution or the other, followed by the institutionalization of the rebellious faction itself (as documented by the circles of 19th century or by the avant-garde movements). Both positive and negative adaptations to the established literary institutions can be seen in online communities. Although internal evaluation mechanisms and hierarchies are developed inside the community, paper reviews and books are still published in the search for institutional validation. However, internet technology transforms the material framing of the online communities in a radical way: the fluidity of space and time (users are no longer restricted by geography or specific timelines), instant access to resources, the bodiless interaction, anonymity, hyper connectivity, etc. All these material factors shift the online literary communities to a great degree of de-institutionalization and democratization.

Romanian Online Literary Communities

In the Romanian context, the online literary communities appeared around the early 2000s, www.poezie.ro [poezie = poetry] being one of the first and biggest platforms (over ten thousand members, still active today) and around it, in time, developed various other smaller communities, such as www.clubliterar.com [club literar = literary club], www.hyperliteratura.net, www.fdl.ro etc. As a general observation, it should be noted that the members of these platforms (with the single exception of www.clubliterar.com, as we shall see further) were mostly amateurs, skipping the traditionally established evaluation filters, and finding here an open platform for their works.

---

[4] Michael Hockx, "Virtual Chinese Literature: A Comparative Case Study of Online Poetry Communities", *The China Quarterly*, "Culture in the Contemporary PRC", 2005, 183, September, pp. 670-691, JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20192514, accessed September 5th 2016.
[5] Denis Saint-Amand, "Groupe".
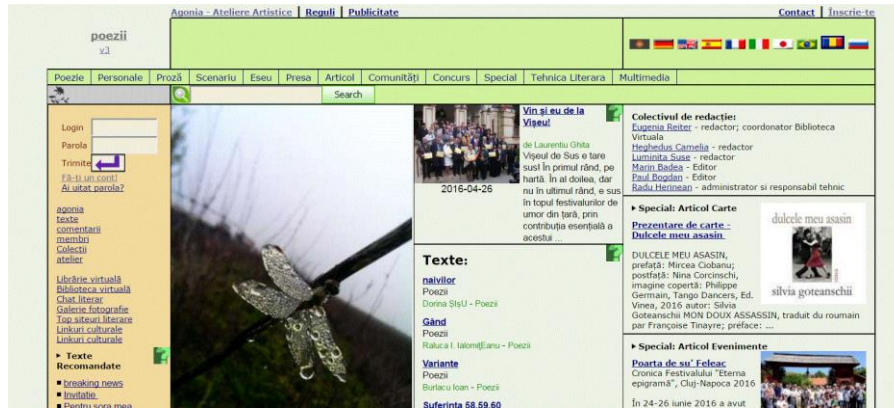
Figure 1: The interface of www.poezie.ro 26.04.2016

The majority of these communities were characterized by open access and a high degree of democratization. The interest for them slowly faded after the apparition of social media (Facebook, Twitter), but some of them are still functioning today.
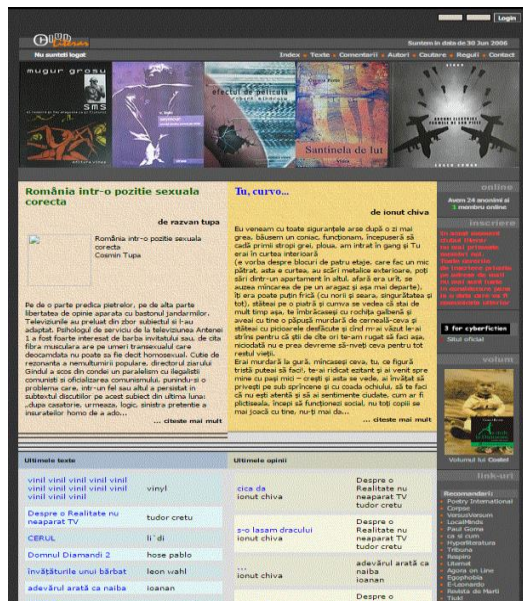
Figure 2: www.clubliterar.com interface in 2006 (with the two recommended texts in front, and the comment and text lists below).

www.clubliterar.com

In the short history of Romanian digital communities, www.clubliterar.com occupied a special position. The most important difference from the other communities being that a great part of its members were already involved in the traditional literary circuit. What at first appeared to be just an elitist movement breaking out of the giant platform www.agonia.ro transformed in short time in a digital platform for the young generation of Romanian writers, called by the critics

"Generation 2000"[6].

The site appeared in 2003, and in its first year of existence, the users were exclusively ex-members of www.poezie.ro (selected and invited from the "mother-site" by a team of "administrators" (figures 2, 3). The site's interface was somewhat similar with that of www.poezie.ro: a list of recommended texts, text list, comments list, author lists, and a forum (which, in this stage, was public) (figures 3, 4). A significant difference would be that, on the new site, the graphic marks of evaluation[7] were eliminated, a greater space was given for the recommended texts, and the membership status could be gained exclusively by invitation from the site's administrators (while on www.poezie.ro everyone could create an account).

From 2005 on, the structure of the membership changed entirely, as many of the young writers of that moment (writers with at least one book published, active in the established literary circles around the country and affiliated informally to "Generation 2000") joined the site, such as Marius Ianuş, Ruxandra Novac, Claudiu Komartin, Dan Coman and many others. The old members of the site were, with a few exceptions, excluded by the new formation. This was possible not only by means of symbolic capital detained by the new members, but also because of the group cohesion conferred by the Romanian cenacle network still functional at that time, a professional and vocational solidarity that registered the old members as exogenous. For example, in 2006, the authors listed on the site were, in great part, the same authors present in the "Generation 2000" anthology[8], an anthology edited by the literary critic Marin Mincu, which was considered the "birth certificate" of the group. However, this type of membership analysis is saddled not only by the incompleteness of the archives or by the volatility of author pages, but also by the so called "clones" phenomenon – artistic and social experiments made by the authors themselves, similar to Pessoa's heteronyms, facilitated by the web[9].

---

[6] "Generation 2000" is a notion used by the Romanian literary criticism to define the poetic movements appeared in the Romanian literature after the year 2000. The two main aesthetic orientations of this conglomerate being an explicit poetics, similar to that of the American Beats, and the other, somewhat antagonistic to the first orientation, a direction in line with the high tradition of the European modernism. See also: Cosmin Borza, "Contemporary Romanian poets. Between the Visionary and the Quotidian", *Asymptote*, 2013, January, http://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/cosmin-borza-on-contemporary-romanian-poets/, accessed September 3rd 2016.

[7] On www.poezie.ro, the evaluation marks were called "stars", and it was for the users who acceded at a certain "level" to use them.

[8] Marin Mincu (ed.), *Generaţia 2000* [*The Generation 2000*], Constanţa, Pontica, 2004.

[9] For a detailed description of the "clones" phenomenon in "Generation 2000" see: Iulia Cornigeanu, "The Clones: a new phenomenon in the literary environment", *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, I, 2010, 2, Fall, http://doctorat.sas.unibuc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Issue2_IuliaCornigeanu_Clones.pdf, accessed August 5th 2016.

Figure 3: Texts list

Virtual Elites. Strategies of Selection

In fact, from the point of view of literary history at least, this digital structure was a radical innovation: a "hyper-cenacle", a space in which the different factions of the emergent Romanian literature could debate, collaborate, socialize, irrespective of space or time limitations. "For the connoisseurs, *www.clubliterar.com* was a Mount Olympus of poetry" – wrote Bogdan Coşa in an article from *Observator cultural* literary review – "in short time it reached the status of a cult-site, because the number of users was constantly around 100, and sometimes even the established poets were rejected there. The "Generation 2000" finally found a place of its own, a place in which everybody knew everybody, and the conversations were an inside job, ignoring intrusions,

Figure 4: Authors list

ignoring plots against Euridice Circle[10] made by malicious people from inside the system, and the old writers' and literary critics' anachronisms. *Clubliterar* was a creative writing workshop, opened non-stop, where it didn't matter that you were in Arad or Botoşani, in Constanţa or Bucharest, the writers were working, proof-reading, debating or, most often, they made the dust fly, but they were doing this inside their own space. In other words, literature was made in front of us all"[11].

Many traits defining the traditional cenacle can be also applied to this new structure: a restrictive union of writers that usually denies the literary establishment of the dominant institutions. As Glinoer and Laisney noticed in the case of 19th century French circle, the formation seeks to establish its own legitimation modalities, and tends towards practices of collectivization[12]. Unlike the Romanian traditional cenacles, that were patronized by important critics (Literary Circle of Monday, Universitas, Letters, Euridice, etc.), the hierarchical structure of www.clubliterar.com was more fluid and indeterminate, but it was far from being democratic. The power was distributed by symbolical, but also by technical criteria. The owner and initiator of the site was Costel Baboş (a Romanian writer living in Canada) and his rights as administrator were intact the whole time www.clubiterar.com was active. He made use of his prerogatives (strictly technical – removing or adding new members, operating changes in the site's interface) only when the rest of the team (technical administrators and moderators) could not handle or decide upon a situation. This was the single fixed position in the site's hierarchy. The other administrator (called "technical administrator") was responsible with site maintenance and was a position occupied by many people over time. Another power structure, maybe the most important, was the one

Figure 5: Contact page, with information about the evaluation of potential new members.

---

[10] The Euridice Circle, conducted by the literary critic Marin Mincu, was one of the most important cenacles for the writers affirmed in the early 2000s.

[11] Bogdan Coşa, "Generaţia 2000 sau ultima generaţie de creaţie în literature română" ["The 2000 Generation or the last generation of creation in the Romanian literature"], *Observator cultural*, XI, 2011, 346, May.

[12] Anthony Glinoer, Vincent Laisney, *L'âge des cénacles. Confraternités littéraires et artistiques au XIXᵉ siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 2013.

held by the moderators. Their main activity was to select the "recommended texts" from the "text list", this activity being similar to an editorial process. Also, their duties were to moderate conflicts between members, and they very often could act as censors if the site's rules had been broken. In the formation stage of the circle, the moderators had similar roles to those held by the "gatekeepers" theorized by Michael Farell: "Often a group forms when a gatekeeper or a matchmaker who knows each member individually introduces them to one another. In other words, circles often begin as radial networks centered on a single person. The personality and values of the gatekeeper act as filters in the formation of a circle. When circles form in a magnet place out of the friendship network of a gatekeeper, the members are more likely to share a common language and set of values, and they are likely to possess similar levels of 'cultural capital' […], that is, they are likely to be roughly similar in their level of expertise in their disciplines as well as in their familiarity with the elite and popular cultures of their society. In short, they can talk to each other"[13]. In the beginnings of the "new" www.clubliterar.com (roughly, the year 2005), moderators were functioning less as evaluators of membership requests, but mainly as "scouts" who recruited members from the already existent offline networks of young writers and who inviting them to join the site. This gatekeeper role was played especially by Eugen Suman[14] and Claudiu Komartin[15]. Komartin was a very important actor for the group coagulation at this stage because of his extended social connections among the "Generation 2000" cenacle networks, in which he occupied a central position.

Most of the site's activity was public (texts, commentaries, authors list) with the exception of a private forum, where only members had access (similar to a chat room). The candidates for membership had to pass two filters in order to get an account: the moderators applied a first filter through a set of membership, and the members applied a second filter, through their votes for the newcomer. Another way of access to the site was by direct invitation.

Beside literary texts and commentaries, manifestoes[16], polemical reactions to different cultural events[17], debates are published. It is a case of a concrete

---

[13] Michael P. Farell, *Collaborative Circles*, p. 19.
[14] http://www.eugensuman.com/About-Eugen-Suman, accessed August 7th 2016.
[15] http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/27535/Claudiu-Komartin, accessed August 7th 2016.
[16] Radu Vancu's *Poetry and individuation* and *A letter to Dan Sociu* (https://web.archive.org/web/20071026044915/http://www.clubliterar.com/text.php?tid=4511) and Claudiu Komartin's *Performatist Manifesto* and his other writings concerning the young generation of writers (http://web.archive.org/web/20061010072551/http://www.clubliterar.com/text.php?tid=1825) or Razvan Țupa's theoretical essays (http://web.archive.org/web/20060512192852/ http://www.clubliterar. com/text.php?tid=2579), accessed August 7th 2016.
[17] For example, this virulent attack against a national colloquy for young writers organized by the Writers Union in 2006. Although the text was signed by Adrian Schiop and Ionuț Chiva, as it can be

configuration (the online community *per se*) overlapping an abstract construct ("Generation 2000", a historical and aesthetical concept).

Besides "the gatekeeper" role, another significant position in Farell's model can be identified in the history of the group: "the boundary marker". The importance of this role, according to Farell, becomes visible in the third stage, "the quest stage". The boundary markers are informal roles played by members of the community that have either radical or conservative positions, and so "by arguing about and clarifying what they reject in the work of the boundary markers, the members begin to build consensus about the kind of work they value"[18]. A "boundary marker crisis" took place on www.clubliterar.com, when the novelist Adrian Schiop published a digital installation that was considered pornographic by the team of moderators' and consequently he was excluded from the site (unfortunately, the installation cannot be found in the archives). This exclusion was followed by other members' leaving the site, solidarity with the excluded one; eventually, the moderators themselves resigned and started a debate on the site's rules and the roles of moderators and administrators, and also on the possibilities and potentialities of common actions[19].

Conclusions

For literary studies, this "document" is important from at least two perspectives: 1. It is a valuable historical resource for the study of the references that are exchanged inside a community of writers; also, the historian can easily have access to the relations of influence, to the dynamic of poetics in competition, to the writers' workshops, through which they published/ discussed/ modified their book drafts in this space for the first time, 2. For digital humanities, with the means of distant reading, quantitative research, or network analysis there can be drawn valuable results in literary evaluation, reading practices or interactions author-commentator (as done by Peter Boot on a similar community from Holland[20]).

From an online/ offline comparative perspective, internet technology is decisive by changing the material frames in which these circles function. In the

---

noted in the comments section, the other members subscribed to the attack: https://web.archive.org/web/20060620121155/http://www.clubliterar.com/text.php?tid=4116.

[18] Michael P. Farell, *Collaborative Circles*, p. 22.

[19] This debate is only partially reconfigurable in the archives. Here are a few relevant links: https://web.archive.org/web/20060620023405/http://www.clubliterar.com/text.php?tid=4371, https://web.archive.org/web/20060623055537/http://www.clubliterar.com/text.php?tid=4445, https://web.archive.org/web/20060620014216/http://www.clubliterar.com/text.php?tid=4360

[20] Peter Boot, "Literary Evaluation in Online Communities of Writers and Readers", *Scholarly and Research Communication*, III, 2012, 2. Http://src-online.ca/index.php/src/article/view/77/90, accessed June 6th 2016.

specific case of www.clubliterar.com it can be noted how for the first time in the history of the Romanian literature, the geographical barrier disappeared (this type of conditioning was, until now, insufficiently studied, although it represented a strong determination for literary groupings – best seen in the case of 80's generation, when aesthetic discourse in literary canon formation was an euphemism for geographical/ regional criteria)[21]. Online, young writers from across the country could form, for a while, a hyper-cenacle, irreverent of the center/ province dichotomy.

WORKS CITED

BAGHIU, Ștefan, "Cronologia ideii de neoexpresionism: o teorie a reacţiei" ["The Chronology of the Neoxpresionism: a Theory of Reaction"], *Euphorion*, 2015, 2-3.

BORZA, Cosmin, "Contemporary Romanian Poets. Between the Visionary and the Quotidian", *Asymptote*, 2013, January, http://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/cosmin-borza-on-contemporary-romanian-poets/, accessed September 3rd 2016.

BOOT, Peter, *Literary Evaluation in Online Communities of Writers and Readers. Scholarly and Research Communication*, III, 2012, 2, http://src-online.ca/index.php/src/article/view/77/90, accessed June 6th 2016.

CORNIGEANU, Iulia, "The clones: a new phenomenon in the literary environment", *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, I, 2010, 2, Fall, http://doctorat.sas.unibuc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Issue2_IuliaCornigeanu_Clones.pdf, accessed August 5th 2016.

COȘA, Bogdan, "Generaţia 2000 sau ultima generaţie de creaţie în literatura română" ("Generation 2000 or the last generation of creation in the Romanian literature"), *Observator cultural*, XI, 2011, 346, May.

FARELL, Michael P., *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001.

GLINOER, Anthony, Vincent LAISNEY, *L'âge des cénacles. Confraternités littéraires et artistiques au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 2013.

GROYS, Boris, *In the Flow*, London, Verso, 2016.

HOCKX, Michael, "Virtual Chinese Literature: A Comparative Case Study of Online Poetry Communities", *The China Quarterly*, "Culture in the Contemporary PRC", 2005, 183, September, pp. 670-691, JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20192514, accessed September 5th 2016.

Internet Archive. Way Back Machine, http://archive.org/web/, accessed August 7th 2016.

MINCU, Marin (ed.), *Generaţia 2000* [*The Generation 2000*], Constanţa, Pontica, 2004.

SAINT-AMAND, Denis, "Groupe", in Anthony Glinoer, Denis Saint-Amand (dir.), *Le lexique Socius*, http://ressources-socius.info/index.php/lexique/21-lexique/195-groupe, accessed September 3rd 2016.

---

[21] Ştefan Baghiu, "Cronologia ideii de neoexpresionism: o teorie a reacţiei" ["The Chronology of the Neoxpresionism: a Theory of Reaction"], *Euphorion*, 2015, 2-3. In this article, Ştefan Baghiu shows how the concept of „neoexpresionism" was in fact a regional reaction to Bucharest based postmodernism in the 80s.

LITTERARY EVALUATION AND READING PRACTICES IN ROMANIAN ONLINE LITERARY COMMUNITIES: WWW.CLUBLITERAR.COM
(*Abstract*)

Online literary communities have similar traits to traditional forms of literary sociability, although their characterization with the aid of traditional taxonomy remains problematic. Unlike traditional literary groups, that are defined primarily by a well determined aesthetic and ideological ideal (or purpose), online communities are rather defined by the orientation of their interest and their practice, forming technologically supported platforms in which users can develop conversations around specific interests, or engage in collaborative practices. In the Romanian context, the online literary communities appeared around the early 2000s. The majority of these communities were characterized by open access and a high degree of democratization. The interest for them slowly faded after the apparition of social media (Facebook, Twitter), but some of them are still functioning today. In the short history of Romanian digital communities, www.clubliterar.com occupied a special position, the most important difference from the other communities being that a great part of its members were already involved in the traditional literary circuit. What at first appeared to be just an elitist movement breaking out of the giant platform www.agonia.ro, transformed in short time in a digital platform for the young generation of Romanian writers, called "Generation 2000".

Keywords: online literary communities, www.clubliterar.com, internet literature, collaborative practices, Michael Farell.

EVALUARE LITERARĂ ŞI PRACTICI DE LECTURĂ ÎN COMUNITĂŢILE LITERARE ONLINE ROMÂNEŞTI: WWW.CLUBLITERAR.COM
(*Rezumat*)

Deşi comunităţile literare online au trăsături similare cu formele tradiţionale de sociabilitate literară, descrierea lor cu ajutorul taxonomiilor tradiţionale rămîne discutabilă. Spre deosebire de grupurile literare tradiţionale, care se definesc în principal printr-un ideal estetic şi ideologic bine conturat, comunităţile online se caracterizează prin orientarea practicilor şi a intereselor în jurul unor platforme tehnologice. În context românesc, comunităţile literare online apar în jurul anului 2000; majoritatea acestor platforme definindu-se prin acces liber şi printr-un înalt grad de democratizare. Interesul pentru aceste forme de colaborare literară a scăzut odată cu apariţia social media, cu toate că unele dintre ele îşi continuă şi astăzi activitatea. În scurta istorie a comunităţilor digitale de limbă română, www.clubliterar.com a ocupat un loc privilegiat, cea mai importantă diferenţă faţă de celelalte comunităţi online fiind aceea că o bună parte a utilizatorilor erau deja implicaţi în circuitul literar tradiţional. La începuturile sale doar o mişcare elitistă care se rupe de „site-ul-mamă" – www.clubliterar.com se transformă, în scurtă vreme, într-o platformă digitală a tinerilor scriitori români, numiţi de critică „Generaţia 2000".

Cuvinte-cheie: comunităţi literare online, www.clubliterar.com, literatură în mediul virtual, practici colaborative, Michaell Farell.

LAURA PAVEL

THE CULTURAL TURNS:
FROM CONVERGENT CONCEPTS TO
INTERPRETIVE NARRATIVES

Self-reflexive Concepts, Competing Interpretations

The many paraphrases of what Rorty has defined as the "Linguistic Turn" – the "Pictorial Turn", followed by the "Literary Turn", the "Performative Turn", the "Ekphrastic Turn" or the "Rhetorical Turn" and the "Creative Turn" – appear to encapsulate aesthetic cartographies of the cultural field and, in particular, of the humanities, rather than actual epistemes of postmodernity. Other turns in the sphere of interdisciplinary cultural analysis, such as, for instance, the "Intermedial Turn", the "Digital Turn", the "Post-Critical Turn" or the "Archival Turn", are more relevant for the multiplication of the various media of artistic and cultural creation, as well as for certain methodological and hermeneutical options emerging thereof. They may symptomatically succeed one another or appeal to researchers at one and the same time. The various interpretive communities that uphold them may come to interfere with one another or to create entire transnational networks of interpretation.

The cultural spins, mutations or, simply, the cultural "turns" of the past few decades, after the famous Linguistic Turn was coined by Richard Rorty, are, in fact, theoretical constructions and narratives of interpretation shared within various interpretive communities. Intellectual communities may emerge and persist by way of complicity with or polemical opposition against certain conducts or approaches to research methods and to styles of interpretation in the field of humanistic disciplines. How do these interpretive trends enter a dialogue, whether they are mostly aesthetic, ethical or political? To what extent can they be seen as competing or complementary trends in the context of several important contemporary cultural turns?

Various philosophical perspectives on the language, understood as the foundation of thought (see, for example, Wittgenstein, and several strands of analytic philosophy), and certain trends in linguistics, semiotics, literary theory and rhetoric outlined the emergence of a "Linguistic Turn", as Richard Rorty believed[1]. Starting from the syntagm that Rorty legitimized and that may be,

---

[1] The syntagm appears in the title of an anthology of philosophical essays edited by Rorty and published in the 1960s: Richard Rorty (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, Chicago – London, The University of Chicago Press, 1967.

ultimately, regarded as a matrix-like notion, other notions designating different perspectives of interpretation came to be proposed in the field of humanities, either inside or at the border of several intellectual, theoretical, academic communities. The art theorist and historian W.J. T. Mitchell, for instance, argues that one can gradually speak about a shift from the interstices of this watershed foregrounding of language to a new, so-called "Pictorial Turn":

> Rorty's determination to 'get the visual, and in particular the mirroring, metaphor out of our speech altogether' echoes Wittgenstein's iconophobia and the general anxiety of linguistic philosophy about visual representation. This anxiety, this need to defend 'our speech' against 'the visual' is, I want to suggest, a sure sign that a pictorial turn is taking place[2].

The focus on discursiveness and textuality in the sphere of humanities was displaced, to some extent, in the 1970s-80s, by the visual paradigm, within which the issue of representation in modernity and postmodernity was analyzed through the lenses of several humanistic disciplines (anthropology, history, social sciences, art theory, philosophy). What is symptomatic, according to Mitchell, is a certain anxiety of the linguistic perspective towards visual representation and its subversive potential. The ambivalently oppressive and liberating force of images may be revealing for an ideology of aesthetics, as well as for a politics of artistic creation and reception. In addition, for some highly-contemporary aestheticians, to mention just Nicolas Bourriaud and Claire Bishop, relational art, collaborative art and participatory art do more than focus on representation and, at the same time, do more than to operate, in however an innovative manner, at the level of the imaginary; they impregnate certain patterns of extra-artistic, social conduct, enacting forms of community aggregation, beyond the monadic world of art. Starting from Bourriaud's relational aesthetics (a concept launched by French art critic in 1998) and, at the same time, taking heed of the collaborative, "social turn", which Claire Bishop speaks about (2006; 2012), certain artistic practices (live installations, performances, community theater, applied theater, artistic practices of the DIY type, internet art, etc.) are considered to outline a politics of creativity predicated on human relations, on ways of being together (togetherness), on sociability[3]. The abandonment of the author-centered perspective and of the

---

[2] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 12-13.

[3] While devoting a consistent corpus of studies to participatory art, critic and theorist Claire Bishop points out to some "discontents" of such artistic collective projects, analyzing the intricate and sometimes difficult to assess relationship between their presupposed ethical relevance and their aesthetics: "Rather than judging art as a model of social organisation that can be evaluated according to pre-established moral criteria, it is more productive to view the conceptualisation of these performances as properly artistic decisions. This is not to say that artists are uninterested in ethics, only to point out that ethics is the ground zero of any collaborative art. To judge a work on the basis

regime of aesthetic autonomy and artistic subjectivity can also shape, as it were, various critical, interpretive communities, justifying their need to share codes and legitimizing narratives and, thus, enhancing critical sociability.

On the other hand, even the condition and status of the spectator (spectatorship) often goes against the grain of the textuality-based reception model, by deciphering, through the act of reading, a text (which may be not just literary, but also cultural, anthropological, psychoanalytical, etc.). The conceptual density and multifunctional nature of the term "text" are taken over by "picture" and the interpretive model of visuality. However, W. J. T. Mitchell, the advocate of the Pictorial Turn, insists on their concurrence and cohabitation, suggesting the existence of hybrids, such as "image-texts". Just like in the case of cultural analysis through the lenses of textuality, focusing on "picture" signals not only an ekphrastic type of displacement, an exchange of interpretive posts and hermeneutical tools, but also involves a network of inextricable relations between visual and discursive processes, or between both of the latter and the mechanisms of power, between institutions and bodies, as well as between social objects and their ability to be figured through discourse and, simultaneously, through visual representations:

> It [the pictorial turn] is rather a postlinguistic, postsemiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visuality, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies, and figurality[4].

The method by which art history and, above all, the study of visual culture pass from a position of theoretical marginality to one of centrality among the humanistic disciplines consists in investing a concept – in this case, that of "image", but also that of "picture" – with self-reflexive and metacritical potential, just as it was the case with concepts such as text and discourse. W. J. T Mitchell's statements about "picture" could function as theorems that are also valid for other terms-concepts, which acquired, successively, primacy in the field of theory:

> The picture now has the status somewhere between what Thomas Kuhn called a 'paradigm' and an anomaly, emerging as a central topic of discussion in the human sciences in the way the language did: that is a kind of model or figure for other things (including figuration itself), and as an unresolved problem, perhaps even the object of its own 'science'[5].

---

of its preparatory phase is to neglect the singular approach of each artist, how this produces specific aesthetic consequences, and the larger questions that he/ she might be struggling to articulate". See Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London, Verso, 2012, p. 238.

[4] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, p. 16.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 13.

Just like *picture*, several concepts became the objects of their own "sciences", but also transversal interpretation tools, surpassing the boundaries of several disciplines: text, discourse, representation (concepts that are central to the orientation towards discursiveness and discursivization of other disciplines and artistic practices in the poststructuralist age); figure (and the dynamics of figurality, in texts and images alike, in rhetoric strategies, or in-between the object of analysis and the interpretive subject); object, thing (within the area of philosophical interpretation, but also of cultural or aesthetic theory, called "object oriented ontology-OOO", supported mostly by the philosopher Graham Harman and derived from the Actor-Network Theory of Bruno Latour); narrative (within in the framework of the so-called "Narrative Turn"); performance (to be associated with what director Richard Schechner, the founder of the interdisciplinary domain of "performance studies", describes as a "Performative Turn"); cultural analysis (which involves bridging the gap between high culture and low culture and the interpretation of cultural objects inside the fabric of institutions, forms of power, ideological mechanisms, styles, or aesthetic posts).

Such concepts with irradiating power can be detected both in the interdisciplinary dialogue (especially in the sphere of humanities) and in their extensions into debates on aesthetics, on the ethical relevance of an aesthetic and interpretive approach, but also on the political content encapsulated in artistic practices and aesthetic sedimentations. On the other hand, there also emerge and become operational certain concepts whose hermeneutic effect is somehow derived from the first series: intermediality, the Other, otherness, *differance*, dissemination, archive, the category of the secondary, liminality, performativity, literarity, visuality, theatricality, *agencement* - assembly (*l'agencement collectif d'énonciation*, the concept launched by Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka, pour une littérature mineure*), rhizome, deterritorialization, *dispositif* (coined by Michel Foucault, reinterpreted by Giorgio Agamben, it encompasses power relations, captures and controls gestures and discourses, and involves a process of subjectification), the anthropocene (which entails, in recent years, a watershed in cultural anthropology, but also in aesthetics and artistic practice, etc.).

Convergent Theories, Hermeneutic Illusions

The analytical potential of these concepts varies depending on a series of deterritorializations, permutations and mutual contaminations, on the ways in which they are processed, expanded and re-grouped by various interpretive communities and their critical approaches. This is a ceaseless hermeneutic exercise, which sometimes appears to be targeted at itself and for itself, because it pertains to an aesthetic conduct, to the critical condition, while at other times it has ethical or political relevance. In his famous essay "Is There the Text in This Class?", Stanley Fish drew attention to the fact that, when claiming to reveal, in

oracular fashion, truths about the meaning of a text, what critics do, invariably, is interpret: "What I have been saying is that whatever they [the critics] do, it will only be interpretation in another guise because, like it or not, interpretation is the only game in town"[6]. The institution or mechanism of interpretation, in the sense of the immanent principle set forth by Fish, comes into play as a contingent hermeneutic game, dependent on the context, and encumbered by conventions, biases and community values.

I have already referred several times to the notion of "interpretive community", launched by Stanley Fish in the 1980s, as I consider it to be a working instrument whose validity needs to be brought once again into discussion. The perspective advocated by Fish is admittedly anti-foundationalist, being impregnated by a pragmatism of reading: the meaning of a text that is subject to interpretation is, according to Fish, a collective construct belonging to the members of various communities, to their rules, history and customs. The demythicizing, anti-foundationalist and disenchanting perspective on interpretive mechanisms proposed by Stanley Fish has sometimes drawn accusations that he is a relativist cynic, a "fatalist" even, or that he practices a sophistic discourse (see Martha Nussbaum's reproach against him)[7].

Yet, the space of critical discourse is, according to Fish, not so much an expression of interpretive subjectivity as the result of pre-scripted constraints. It is preset by the predecessors to such an extent that even the impulse of the new critics to disavow the vision of their precursors stems, as Fish contends, from certain conventions that are specific to the "institution" of interpretation:

> This means that the space in which a critic works has been marked out for him by his predecessors, even though he is obliged by the conventions of the institution to dislodge them. It is only by their prevenience or prepossession that there is something for him to say; that is, it is only because something has already been said that he can now say something different. This dependency, the reverse of the anxiety of influence, is reflected in the unwritten requirement that an interpretation present itself as remedying a deficiency in the interpretations that have come before it[8].

The meaning of a text straddles the border of interpretive conventions within the community, being negotiated according to the interests of fluctuating micro-groups, of "subcommunities" that are perpetually redefined:

---

[6] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge – London, Harvard University Press, 1980, p. 355.

[7] In an essay entitled "Sophistry about Conventions", Martha Nussbaum strongly denounces Stanley Fish's subjectivism and relativism, his rejection of rational arguments, as well as his "Gorgian view that there is no truth anyway and it's all a matter of manipulation" ("Sophistry about Conventions", *New Literary History*, "Philosophy of Science and Literary Theory", XVII, 1985, 1, Autumn, p. 130).

[8] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?*, p. 350.

Within the literary community there are subcommunities (what will excite the editors of *Diacritics* is likely to distress the editors of *Studies in Philology*), and within any community the boundaries of the acceptable are continually being redrawn[9].

If we are to consider a particularly relevant case for the existence of polemically divergent communities and subcommunities, which tend to assert themselves in competitive rather than complementary manner, this is to be found, for instance, in the effervescence of the American academic milieus of the 1980s. The so-called "French Theory" gained ground especially across the Atlantic Ocean, by paradoxically filtering the philosophical premises of French theorists like Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze & Guattari or Jean-François Lyotard through critical-ideological and, at the same time, quasi-literary lenses. Commenting on the implications of this intellectual phenomenon from a standpoint that simultaneously encompasses theory and academic policy, from an anthropological and a political angle (that is, by means of the relativization and politicization of literary and aesthetic interpretation, in general), François Cusset evokes an entire cast of academic celebrities in the United States, from the 1970s:

The battle over the privilege of "showcasing" on their territory such thinkers as Derrida or Foucault at conferences created oppositions between, for example, Berkeley, Buffalo, and New York University (for Foucault) or Yale, Cornell, and Irvine (for Derrida). […] As with sports teams, each university created a specialty that it wanted to broaden into the national market: Yale deconstructionists versus literary epistemologists at Cornell, Harvard psychocritics versus the postcolonials at CUNY, New Historicists at Berkeley versus Irvine Derrideans, Chicago neo-Aristotelians versus Stanford moralists, and so on[10].

If, however, we move beyond these polemics and impassioned intellectual competitions within academia, and adopt the idea of ceaseless interpretation games, whereby communities share specific interpretations, but appear not to be able to situate themselves outside them, being capable of assessing themselves solely inside their own conventions and within their conceptual schemata, then we may see that this "game" perpetuates a few illusions. In other words: constructing hermeneutic narratives of cultural analysis has fostered a few hermeneutic illusions, if I may call them so. And to what extent such illusions, *trompe l'oeuil* effects in interpretation, turn out to be beneficial for the way in which the hermeneutic practice is reflected in the critical and imaginative dialogue with the object of analysis? Concepts such as text, picture, narrative, performance (with its

---

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 343.
[10] François Cusset, *French Theory. How Foucault. Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. Translated by Jeff Fort, with Josephine Berganza and Marlon Jones, Minneapolis – London, The University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. 77.

more complex derivative, used in an interdisciplinary manner, performativity) are often given a far too comprehensive interpretive role, sometimes by extrapolating some of their meanings, at other times by overestimating their explanatory power. This illusion may be a matter of the excessive faith in their multiple functionality and semantic coverage, which may also appropriate an epistemic value. Concepts are subject to an "expansion" and re-thematization process, turning thus into points of reference and pretexts for transversal interpretations, which cross beyond the boundaries of one or another interpretative community.

But text, image, narrative, or the concept of performance and that of performativity tend to operate, at the same time, also self-reflexively, self-critically, while containing and maintaining their own dilemmas and constitutive fissures. Could this self-reflexivity represent a way out of the constraining and self-generating "institution" of interpretation? Or: could interpreters/ critics distance themselves from their own mania for self-deception?

The various narratives of interpretation carry with them the narcissistic illusions (or delusions) of those who interpret, being subjected to the pressures of the institution of literary criticism (and, by extension, that of cultural criticism). In the cavalcade of so many turns over the last few decades, there have, nonetheless, also emerged many occasions for theoretical exultation, creativity and intellectual effervescence, derived from the intersection and enmeshment of disciplinary perspectives. When the philosopher and Shakespearean specialist Stanley Cavell asked the rhetorical question – "But can philosophy become literature and still know itself?"[11] –, he ultimately opted for a kind of literaturized philosophical argument which was symptomatic of the *literary turn* of the 1990s. In turn, the philosophers Richard Rorty and Martha Nussbaum have constantly resorted to theoretical arguments and examples taken from literature. Hayden White is representative for the shift of emphasis towards a fictional-literary outlook on history and Clifford Geertz has applied to cultural anthropology mechanisms of interpretation that are specific to literature. On the other hand, the sphere of literary studies (comprising comparative literature, literary history and theory, the sociology of literature, cultural studies, poststructuralist studies, critical theory) has appropriated certain philosophical theses, resignifying them and using them in a transversal, translational manner. That is the case of the already mentioned corpus of theory of French extraction in the American academia, that is the French Theory. François Cusset notices the phenomenon of disciplinary recentering certain philosophical thesis set forth by Foucault, Deleuze & Guattari, Derrida, Lacan, Lyotard, by extrapolating and overemphasizing their literary dimensions[12].

---

[11] Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 494.

[12] "As they strayed away from the French departments, the texts by Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Lacan that had first been encountered underwent a disciplinary recentering that consisted in drawing

Literaturization enhances paradoxically, in this case, the ideological dimension and the political stakes of discourse, rather than its canonical-aesthetic component.

On the other hand, the literary becomes the focal center of ethical perspectives with the American philosophers Stanley Cavell and Martha Nussbaum, or serves as a generator of social coexistence, of behavior patterns and ways of self-relation, which pertain to the aesthetics (and ecology) of existence. Certain concepts enshrined in the literary field are reconsidered and, even if they do not entail any paradigm shifts, they have been lately expanded beyond the literary sphere and the history of aesthetics. For example, for the literary theorist Marielle Macé, style can figure out ways of being (*manières d'être*) and account for a stylistics of existence[13].

Inside the "institution" of criticism (not just that of literary criticism, but also that of aesthetic theory) and interdisciplinary cultural analysis, the mechanisms and manners of producing the specific meanings of one interpretive community or another depend on the reconfiguration of the manner of operating with concepts and, at times, of hyper-interpreting them. For example, when given discretionary interpretive power, they almost always end up contaminating several areas of analysis and can reposition or even provisionally recenter certain disciplines, emphasizing a certain epistemic authority at the expense of others. The theorist Mieke Bal laments, for instance, the way in which some concepts have come to be used in excess, to be turned into clichés that are, therefore, of too little relevance for the actual practice of cultural analysis. A symptomatic case, highlighted as such by Mieke Bal, who is dedicated to both narratology and aesthetic and cultural studies analysis carried out far beyond the boundaries of disciplines, is that of the term-concept narrative:

> It is hard to find cultural objects that cannot, in some way or other, be labeled 'narrative'. With the extension of its use, this flexible concept adapts its content to the objects that challenge it. To cite an example from my own practice, visual images are almost always narrative in some way or another. If they don't tell stories, they perform one, between image and viewer[14].

(not to say stretching) them toward literary studies, foregrounding and prioritizing their analyses of text (of or textuality), and even casting their philosophical propositions as inherently literary". See François Cusset, *French Theory*, p. 79.

[13] Stylization is, according to Marielle Macé, "cette opération générale par laquelle un individu ressaisit de façon partiellement intentionnelle son individualité, répète toutes sortes de modèles mais aussi les module, redirige, infléchit les traits" (*Façons de lire, manières d'être,* Paris, Gallimard, 2011, p. 166).

[14] Mieke Bal, "From Cultural Studies to Cultural Analysis: «A Controlled Reflection on the Formation of Method»", in Paul Bowman (ed.), *Interrogating Cultural Studies. Theory, Politics and Practice,* London – Sterling, Pluto Press, 2003, p. 35.

What may appear to be a speculative expansion of the area in which narratology operates, by placing it in connection with a domain that is most foreign to the idea of diegetic succession, that of the visual arts, is in fact a test of the limits of narrativity. Such an exploratory approach of the concept is seen by Mieke Bal as "illuminating for an understanding of those images that 'fight' narrativity, while also shedding new light on what narrativity can mean"[15]. Along with the expanded operationality of narrative structures, there comes an investigation of those images that resist interpretation through the lenses of the narrativity idea. Therefore, the concept of narrative assumes a reasonable dose of self-reflexivity, and Mieke Bal resorts to it with utmost care not to excessively deploy it or ascribe to it phenomena or objects of analysis that refuse to be deciphered through its prism.

With all the critical dimension associated to such a concept, it is, one might say, a conglobing, canon-generating concept, a focal center of analysis, which entails the convergent arrangement, in a relational framework, of several cultural objects, events and artistic creations, literary discourses and anthropological practices. Transversal analysis, beyond the boundaries of a humanistic discipline or another, also makes recourse to concepts that are "rebellious" rather than conglobing, asserting their strongly disruptive, even emancipatory nature (both in relation to the condition of the one who analyzes and in relation to the objects analyzed through these concepts). What is relevant, in this regard, is the concept of performativity, a dynamic, processual interpretive instrument, located on the border between the philosophy of language (especially in terms of speech acts theory), performing arts, live art, anthropology, sociology and literary theory, multimedia studies. Moreover, the quasi-ubiquitous concept of performativity is at the heart of the domain of Performance Studies, a cross-discipline or post-discipline[16] introduced several decades ago in the American university curriculum by the director and theorist Richard Schechner. For Schechner, one could argue that the humanities, artistic theory and practice, as well as anthropological research have gone through a Performative Turn. A convergent understanding of both performance and ritual, whereby ritual is seen in its inherent performativity, has been at the root of the collaboration between Schechner and the famous anthropologist Victor Turner. Actually, the liminal rites of passage and the liminality are experienced through their performative nature, as one's identity, as well as the communal, shared values are continuously enacted and exposed in the liminal, in-between periods. On the other hand, as far as the identity construction

---

[15] *Ibidem*, pp. 35-36.
[16] "Performance studies starts – claims Schechner – where most limited-domain disciplines end. A performance studies scholar examines texts, architecture, visual arts, or any other item or artifact of art or culture not in themselves, but as players in ongoing relationships, that is, 'as' performances" (*Performance Studies. An Introduction*, London – New York, Routledge, 2002, p. 2).

is concerned, gender theorist and cultural analyst Judith Butler argues that performativity should be understood "not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but, rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constraints"[17].

A paradoxical expansion of the meanings of performativity allows the association of this dynamic and anamorphotic concept even with visual creation. Moreover, the arguments in favor of the performativity of the visual can be brought if it we reassess the theory of the art critic Horst Bredekamp, referring to "image act"/ "Theorie des Bildakts". According to Bredekamp, images claim a right to "life" and acquiring an "image agency" takes place through their dialogue with the viewer/ receiver. The position of power (including the sometimes discretionary, abusive interpretive power) of the interpreting subject becomes relativized in relation to the "activity" of images, with their emancipation from the status of passive objects of analysis.

Despite the disciplinary boundaries of critical discourse (be it applied to literature or to visual arts, to performing arts or to "cultural objects" placed at the interface of various languages and mediums of expression), we can easily discern the common concerns of many critics and analysts belonging to fluid interpretive communities, with permeable boundaries. Underlying entire turns or mutations, with their narratives of interpretation, has been either the myth of the power or fragility of words, or that of the power or vulnerability of images, acts of language, gestuality, of the way they "speak" or look back at the beholder and participate in a process of subjectivation. Performativity, textuality or even literariness and visuality are radial notions, theoretical nuclei of various "cultural turns", which sometimes come from the specific difference of one field or another, from the claim of one language to encapsulate all others and to impose a temporary (and illusory, in fact) epistemic domination. But they are also extensive conceptual metaphors, open to permutations and reversals of meaning, or to transversal approaches. Relational aesthetics pertains, on the one hand, to the ekphrastic dialogue between arts, but especially to those daily encounters in a shared space, which can acquire the form of a performance with artistic or political stakes. Therefore, Bourriaud's comprehensive syntagm may be adopted even when we analyze somewhat similar posts and tools of interpretation belonging to critics – those who, through their interpretive exercise, establish inter-communities, co-dependencies and collaborative practices.

I will resume here, by way of a provisional conclusion, the somewhat redundant phrase of Stanley Fish: "What I have been saying is that whatever they [the critics] do, it will only be interpretation in another guise because, like it or

---

[17] See Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. London – New York, Routledge, 1993, p. 2.

not, interpretation is the only game in town"[18]. It is a self-evident statement, a truism, apparently, that highlights the perspectivism of interpretations, their relativistic, contingent character. But this maxim also appears to contain a certain dose of cynicism – the thesis that everything is just interpretation does not include the need for ethical discernment, or stakes that exceed and transfigure subjectivism or even the self-generating intellectual game of interpretation. Perhaps we should also detect here an inherently skeptical positioning of the interpretive game or, at least, the disillusioned acknowledgement of its own critical condition, which generates and proposes itself as an "institution".

WORKS CITED

BAL, Mieke, "From Cultural Studies to Cultural Analysis: 'A Controlled Reflection on the Formation of Method'", in Paul Bowman (ed.), *Interrogating Cultural Studies. Theory, Politics and Practice*, London – Sterling, Pluto Press, 2003.

BISHOP, Claire, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London, Verso, 2012.

BOURRIAUD, Nicolas, *L'esthétique relationnelle*, Dijon, Les Presses du réel, 1998.

BREDEKAMP, Horst, *Théorie de l'acte d'image* [*Theorie des Bildakts*, 2010]. Traduction par Frédéric Joly, Paris, La Découverte, 2015.

BUTLER, Judith, *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, London – New York, Routledge, 1993.

CAVELL, Stanley, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 1979.

CUSSET, François (2003), *French Theory. How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. Translated by Jeff Fort, with Josephine Berganza and Marlon Jones, Minneapolis – London, University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

FISH, Stanley, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge – London, Harvard University Press, 1980.

MACÉ, Marielle, *Façons de lire, manières d'être*, Paris, Gallimard, 2011.

MITCHELL, W.J.T., *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

NUSSBAUM, Martha, "Sophistry about Conventions", *New Literary History, Philosophy of Science and Literary Theory*, XVII, 1985, 1, Autumn, pp. 129-139.

RORTY, Richard (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, Chicago – London, The University of Chicago Press, 1967.

SCHECHNER, Richard, *Performance Studies. An Introduction*, London – New York, Routledge, 2002.

---

[18] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?*, p. 355.

THE CULTURAL TURNS: FROM CONVERGENT CONCEPTS TO INTERPRETIVE NARRATIVES
(*Abstract*)

After the famous "Linguistic Turn", labeled as such by the philosopher Richard Rorty in the 1980s, the cultural spins, mutations or, simply, the cultural "turns" of the past few decades have largely been the result of debates with aesthetic or ethical stakes, but also ways in which the political has found artistic expression and has been translated into "cultural objects", in an anthropological sense. The "Pictorial Turn" and, then, the "Literary Turn" or, no less, the "Performative Turn", the "Ekphrastic Turn" or the "Rhetorical Turn" have represented, ever since the 1970s and the 1980s, privileged methodological frameworks for research conducted in the humanities area, in which interpretative styles that are complementary or polemically pitted against one another are vying for supremacy. They may symptomatically succeed one another or appeal to researchers at one and the same time, but they most often operate with convergent concepts. The various interpretive communities that uphold them may come to interfere with one another or create entire transnational networks of interpretation.

Keywords: Linguistic Turn, Performative Turn, Post-Critical Turn, interpretive communities, convergent concepts.

COTITURILE CULTURALE: DE LA CONCEPTE CONVERGENTE LA NARAŢIUNI INTERPRETATIVE
(*Rezumat*)

După celebra cotitură lingvistică („the Linguistic Turn") statuată de către filosoful Richard Rorty în anii 80, cotiturile (sau mutaţiile, sau doar „turnurile") culturale ale ultimelor decenii sunt consecinţele unor dezbateri cu mize fie etice, fie estetice, dar totodată şi modalităţi ale politicului transpuse în creaţii artistice şi în „obiecte culturale", în sens larg antropologic. „The Pictorial Turn", apoi „the Literary Turn", dar nu mai puţin „the Performative Turn", „the Ekphrastic Turn", „the Rhetorical Turn" constituie, din anii '70 şi '80 încoace, cadre metodologice privilegiate de cercetarea în sfera umanioarelor, în care se confruntă stiluri de interpretare complementare sau aflate în contrapunct polemic unele faţă de altele. Ele se succed în chip simptomatic sau sunt uneori concomitente, operând de cele mai multe ori cu concepte convergente. Iar diversele comunităţi de interpretare care dau seama despre ele ajung să interfereze şi să coaguleze întregi reţele interpretative transnaţionale.

Cuvinte-cheie: cotitura lingvistică, cotitura performativă, cotitura postcritică, comunităţi interpretative, concepte convergente.

ALINA BRANDA

ON "DRAMAS, FIELDS AND…" INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITIES

Reconsidering Victor Turner's concept of *communitas,* my study aims to analyze its history, applicability and limits, focusing on the specific case of the Cluj Jewish group. Based on the interpretation of empirical material, collected through intensive fieldwork, my approach contributes to an anthropological understanding of "interpretive communities". The experiences of anxieties, traumatic memories, nostalgia and the ways they determine specific group coagulation strategies are topics of main interest, permanently analyzed in my study. Viewed both at the individual and communitarian levels, constituted as thresholds or liminal stages, they have an important role in the process of identity construction and representation of the Cluj Jewish group. Empirical data gathered through applying qualitative research methods (mostly life- histories, semi-structured and in-depth interviews), put in a neo-interpretive framework, structure my approach. Meanwhile, the inconveniences and limits of the mentioned theoretical frame as well as the traps of fieldwork will be identified and analyzed in the spirit of the anthropological self-reflexivity.

Historical Data about the Cluj Jewish Community

The history of the Cluj/ Kolozsvar Jewish group might be analyzed easily as a chain of crises, of liminal situations, exposing it to various challenges and thresholds, meant to be surpassed. Objective historical data facilitate the understanding of this community as one assuming and performing, at the symbolical level, rites of passages, following systematically their three phases: the separation, liminality and aggregation[1]. As other Jewish communities of Transylvania, the Cluj/ Kolozsvar one was continuously challenged and in permanent process of adaptation to unfavorable historical contexts, searching for paths to preserve its own identity, compelled to reinvent itself in various ways in different periods of time. As mentioned previously, I applied concepts from rituals studies[2] to analyze identity preservation strategies as they had been configured and promoted by the Cluj/ Kolozsvar Jewish group in the recent past and nowadays: I use the term separation, underlining that especially since the modern period this community had to face several identity threats, and as response it decided to

---

[1] See in this respect Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passages*, London – New York, Routledge Library Edition, 1960 and Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-structure*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1977.
[2] Separation, liminality, aggregation, concepts launched and approached by Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passages*.

change previous statuses, making new alliances, continuously negotiating its position with other groups, especially with the empowered ones. It faces also liminal moments, crossing over thresholds with different contents, and finds strategies to aggregate itself, adopting new forms in order to keep its cultural identity and specificities alive.

The separation, liminality and aggregation, concepts that I focus on later in this article, are used as analytical tools in the attempt to understand in depth processes of identity construction and representation configured in the focused on community. Turner's concept of *communitas* is introduced as well in order to facilitate the interpretation of deep solidarity of this group members when facing challenges and cultural identity threats[3]. The article considers only moments that are present in the interlocutors' narratives, therefore it makes references to the recent past and to nowadays contexts.

To frame it better, I am going to analyze a few historical data, meanwhile reconstructing – in brief – excerpts of the Transylvanian history. The region was an autonomous province, part of the Habsburg Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire (from 1867 to 1918), part of Romania (from 1918 to 1940). Then, between 1940 and 1944, the North-Western part of Transylvania, including Cluj, had been annexed to Hungary. In spring 1944, the area was invaded by Nazi Germans and, in autumn, by Soviet army, becoming again part of Romania only after the Paris Peace Treaty (1947). The Cluj/ Kolozsvar Jewish group shared the fate of other Transylvanian Jewish communities, systematically mentioned since the 17th century[4]. Being often treated as undesired groups, put apart, marginalized, expelled or as minority they are exposed to assimilation and other identity threats, constantly looking for preservation strategies. They differed in time, due to specific historical contexts. For instance, after 1867 when Hungary played a key role in the new form of the Empire (Austro-Hungarian), as a survival strategy derived from threats and fear, the Jews of Cluj/ Kolozsvar, adopted and internalized the Hungarian language. It was not spoken only in public but also in private, having more or less the same degree of internalization and adoption as Yiddish. Names and surnames having a Hungarian resonance or flavor became familiar among the Jews[5].

Then, after 1918, when Transylvania became part of Romania, the Jews of Cluj were determined to be more open to the Romanian language and denomination processes. As I suggested above, all these were configured as identity survival strategies and had been results of anxieties and fear, derived from identity

---

[3] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 94-130.
[4] Ioan Bolovan, "Evreii din Transilvania între 1870-1930. Contribuții demografice" ["The Jews from Transylvania. Demographic Contributions"], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie George Bariţ*, XLIV, 2005, pp. 539-540.
[5] See in this respect Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger (ed.), *The Memorial Volume for the Jews of Cluj-Kolozsvar*, New York, Memorial Foundation of Jewish Culture, 1970.

annihilation threats. Especially historical literature introduces the idea of a triple affiliation or openness (Jewish, Hungarian, Romanian), characterizing the community, culturally very mobile. A spatial peripheral position[6] described the group a long period of time, and constructed specific communitarian behaviors and also certain images and stereotypes associated to it. Matters of exclusion had been related to this community, the threat of non acceptance triggered anguishes and fear, meanwhile generating continuous self reinvention, having specific forms in different periods of time.

Related to the recent past, one can say that the historical contexts of Nazism and totalitarian communism exposed the Cluj Jewish community to anxieties of identity loss. The "Romanian Chapter of Holocaust"[7] and the Transylvanian one[8], following a period of anti-Semitic Laws[9] exposed the Cluj Jews to limit experiences. Then, the social changes in Romania (the communist regime installed and the belonging to the Soviet Block) had generated new types of individual and community threats, profiled in the new political context.

Following Liviu Rotman's opinion, community was for Jews a specific historical structure, having a protective role for its members, replacing the nonexistent state. Or, the Romanian totalitarian state, "confiscated" the social and educational functions of this structure through different Decrees, Ordinances, Laws in 1948, 1949. They aimed at nationalizing hospitals, medical centers, orphanages, Jewish schools. This process affected enormously Jewish communities all over Romania, deprived from parts of institutions, contributive to processes of identity construction and representation. Even if, apparently, the religious function was not so much challenged, the fact that after 1948 (the year of Israel state proclamation) many Romanian Jews started the emigration process and finally left the country had as a consequence a diminishing of the synagogues used for religious services[10].

The imposed unification of the neolog, orthodox and Sephardic communities in Romania[11] continued the aggressive campaign of the Romanian totalitarian state against Jewry, aiming at homogenizing these communities. The Cluj Jewish

---

[6] Between 1784 and 1842 the Jewish community could settle, with substantial difficulties, only in marginal places of the town.

[7] Liviu Rotman, "Evreii din Romania. Final de istorie" ["The Jews from Romania. End of History"], in Lucian Nastasa, Andreea Andreescu, Andrea Varga (eds.), *Minorităţi etnoculturale. Mărturii documentare. Evreii din România (1945-1965)* [*Ethno-cultural Minorities. Documentary Testimonies. The Jews from Romania, 1945-1965*], Cluj-Napoca, Ethno-Cultural Diversity Center, 2003.

[8] Transylvania was under Hungarian occupation; the Jews from Cluj were deported in 1944. The Jews of Cluj/ Kolozsvar are exposed to the same tragic fate; gathered in a ghetto, they are deported in May-June 1944. According to sources, 8% survived. See in this respect Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger (ed.), *The Memorial Volume for the Jews of Cluj-Kolozsvar.*

[9] Both in Romania and Hungary, several anti Semite laws and decrees are voted and applied. 14 documents in Romania, between September 1940 and January 1941). Since March 1944, in Hungary, under German occupation, ghettos are constituted and deportations prepared.

[10] 363 synagogues.

[11] 11.08.1949.

community shared the same fate with other Romanian Jewish communities. The tension between them and the totalitarian state was permanently present, State was seen as a nontrustful mechanism, subject of complain and the main generator of anxiety and identity threat. Another important topic related to the Romanian Jewish communities (including the one in Cluj) was emigration to Israel[12] or to other destinations (stress and anguish related to the problem of obtaining visas had been on the agenda and then, feelings of rupture, of being derooted through emigration caused anxieties as well).

The post totalitarian period configured other specific problems: the emigration to Israel and other countries continued, the property restitution disadvantaged the Jews and, in general terms, non citizens and non residents of Romania[13] etc. The process of transition to a market economy caused financial problems to certain disadvantaged groups. Anxieties are now connected to the difficulty to adapt and adjust to new decades and perspectives, the Cluj Jewish community, according to the most recent census, totalizes 158 persons – the age average being quite high – while in the interwar period, according to 1930 census, it totalized 18.353 persons.

The above mentioned historical data, offering a perspective on the community's recent past are correlated with the interpretation of the empirical material, as result of the anthropological fieldwork.

Methodological Clarifications

This research was a long term one, being conducted in Cluj-Napoca. It developed gradually, having different search phases and interrogation levels. Besides classic anthropological methods (participant observation, non-structured, semi-structured, in-depth interviews and also life-histories that had been of great help), I was determined to analyze archives materials, laws, decrees, ordinances published in Monitorul Oficial[14], statistics (National Institute of Statistics or the World Jewish Restitution Organization reports) and to consult also historical texts.

One of the research problems derived from a lack of anthropological approaches specifically on this topic (both an advantage and a disadvantage). Another one is linked to the simultaneous advantages and limits of practicing anthropology at home[15].

---

[12] See in this respect Liviu Rotman, "Evreii din Romania. Final de istorie".
[13] Emigrating, they lost Romanian citizenship and residence; members of other ethnic communities faced the same problem.
[14] Publishing official acts.
[15] The advantages of being familiar – to certain extents – with your own field (the analyzed issue is not totally new and unfamiliar; the disadvantages of a virtual omitting of something relevant for interlocutors).

On Liminality and Communitas

In the following excerpt of my study, I aim at analyzing the concepts of *communitas* and *liminality*[16], framing my interpretation of the empirical data. Following Van Gennep's perspective[17], Victor Turner defines the rites of passage as "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age"[18]. Each rite of passage implies the overpassing of three stages – the separation, the threshold/limen and the aggregation/coagulation. According to Victor Turner, the limen/liminality refers to the second stage, of the confrontation with a threshold: in this stage a social entity (a person or a group) assumes an experience of passage, abandoning a certain social status in order to obtain another one. On the other hand, *communitas*, in Turner's understanding, defines a specific inner state, shared by the members of a certain group, determining the change of their social status. The distinction *communitas/* community is introduced by Victor Turner in order to distinguish this modality of social relationship from an "area of common living"[19].The distinction between structure and *communitas* is not "simply the familiar one between secular and sacred, or that, for example, between politics and religion"[20]. In *communitas,* the social structure with all its component elements and ramifications is dismantled, the power relations, the social hierarchies are dissolved, the individuals are equal, assuming and sharing the same experience of passage. The state is not permanent, it is the one defining the above mentioned limen or threshold, assumed by individuals in order to get into a new stage of their social life, due to the fact that "social life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality"[21].

But how in particular the topics of liminality, *communitas* and interpretive communities are introduced in a social/cultural anthropological approach focusing on the Jewish community in Cluj? To frame an answer to this question, it is necessary to give a few details on my research. As mentioned previously, it developed gradually, in a few layers or stages. First, its main goals were to find appropriate paths to conduct research in this Jewish community of present-day, to understand and interpret the current process of identity construction and representation, as it is traced by community members. During the course of this research other issues arose: according to what specificities do they define their feeling of belonging? To what extent the anxiety of overpassing certain thresholds influences or even configures nowadays group perspectives? How, after

---

[16] Victor Turner's perspective on *limen* and *communitas*.
[17] See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passages.*
[18] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 94.
[19] *Ibidem*, p. 96.
[20] *Ibidem.*
[21] *Ibidem,* p. 97.

experiencing repeated traumas did the community members manage to cope with the present and imagine the future? The first research question concerned the current forms of identity construction and representation: in Turner's terms, I attempt to focus on the vectors of liminality and how specifically *communitas* is configured or built (what are the terms of this experience of surpassing a threshold, how the experience is consumed), which are the follow-ups of the state of *communitas*?

In the process of doing fieldwork, especially when interviewing people (either through collecting life histories, or semi-structured interviews), I noticed that most of the interlocutors invoked the Past as the main criterion to define their current status. Empirical data reveal that they make reference recurrently to this temporal category and the comparative frame: past/ present is very important in the current forms of identity construction and representation.

I have identified some specificities of this sequence: time is not a standard, linear one; the perceived and conceptualized past includes certain breaks and discontinuities and all these specific representations of time are present in the interlocutors narratives. The reference is always made to the period *before* limit experiences, to that of the limen and to what comes next. It is a conscious perception of overpassing these stages. The liminal experience is represented by the common suffering, a shared experience dismantling social structure, the social hierarchies, differences and, making sense of suffering, *communitas* is configured.

In objective historical perspectives, disasters (representing the limen at the symbolic level) are associated with the recent past, particularly to Nazism and the totalitarian form of communism, installed in Romania after the Second World War. Personal and community experiences related to these periods are accumulations of anguishes and the elliptical, blurred attitudes regarding these time frames[22] have to be seen as normal responses given as such to overpass traumas and to try to reestablish a sense of identity continuity. Identity threats had been attested in the recent history of this Jewish community: the 1944 deportation of the Jewish community members to extermination camps during the Nazi occupation of Northern Transylvania – more specifically, between spring and autumn, 1944. According to the interviews, the limen is associated also to other traumatic experiences consumed in the totalitarian period; recurrent references are made to the nationalization of industry, to the confiscation of private properties. It is particularly interesting that the deep, tragic experience of facing the limen is not articulated in narratives; it is not verbalized by my interlocutors, the members of this community. As I have mentioned above, they make references to the periods before and after, deeply conscious of the passage of three stages: the separation from a certain status, the passage itself and the aggregation, exactly as in a rite of

---

[22] Interlocutors do not name them as such; the reference is somehow hidden and put under cover through the term *disasters*.

passage. Unwilling to verbalize these passage/ limit stages, the interlocutors refer mostly to an atmosphere created in the Jewish community of Cluj – references are made to certain parts/ areas of the town, inhabited by Jews, to buildings, to experiences associated to these places, to a calm, quiet period before liminal experiences. A mental map is possible to be reconstituted on the basis of the interviews data. I have identified, through fieldwork techniques, a few layers on which the community atmosphere is reconfigured.

The first layer concerns the Jewish communitarian space. It has much to do with perspectives and verbally reconstructed images of material goods: individual, family properties- houses, house objects that remind interior decorations, small factories and also, community properties- synagogues, Ritual Bath, official buildings "There were several synagogues in former times here: on Paris and Horea street, also one near the river (river Someş, crossing Cluj). All of them served as synagogues" (Judith, interviewed on 22nd of May, 2010).

A second layer, connected to the first mentioned one, refers to a distinct atmosphere of Cluj in former times, to daily practices, community life, intercultural connection. Recurrently, interlocutors relate emotionally histories on cultural exchange, on the role of Jews as mediators in different situations, being fluent in Hungarian and Romanian, on habits, customs, on ways of assuming religion. I identified recurrently in in-depth interviews relevant excerpts in what concerns the role of linguistic mediators certain community members had (this issue is a recurrent one in the interviews): "My husband had a small shop at the corner of the street, he had many customers, Romanians, Hungarians. Everyone felt there at home. My husband talked in Romanian to Romanian customers, and in Hungarian to Hungarian ones" (Gyongyi, 16th of September, 2010, Cluj); "I got sick once and I went to see a doctor. Seeing my Hungarian name, he started to speak to me in Hungarian. I answered him in Romanian, fluently, he was a Romanian doctor. He continued, you must be then a Jew if you speak both Hungarian and Romanian so well" (Erno, 5th of August 2010, Cluj). The first layer challenges mostly visual memory, being still connected to real, nowadays identifiable designates – in the sense that one can still recognize those buildings, objects etc. The second layer triggers more other senses, having, in a symbolic way, much to do with the taste, touch and smell and, because of that, the narrated atmosphere is not to be found any more, in the absence of clear designates. It is all produced somehow only at the level of these narratives. A third layer, where these categories are present, is, apparently, related to a specific cultural diversity, recounted with reference to Cluj. Also a quite recurrent issue in my interlocutors' statements, the idea of cultural diversity appears on many levels; the internal cultural diversity: "in former times, there were a Sephardim, a Neolog, an Ashkenazi communities, here, downtown, living peacefully" (Marcus, 6th of July, 2012, Cluj); the role of Jews as mediators, due to their linguistic skills and cultural openness: "I used to translate texts in Romanian for my Hungarian Colleagues, and in Hungarian for my Romanian

colleagues" (Jeno, 15th of June, 2012), the general ethnic and cultural diversity in Cluj.

These three layers describe all a stage placed before the threshold/ limen. The narrated time in the interviews is certainly placed in the past but it is difficult to be found in very precise, historical years.

In the interlocutors narratives, time is blurred, reconstructed under the form of memories, basically *acts of testimony, of confession*[23] and nostalgia is a form of bringing them to the present, at the level of discourse, soliciting senses, and reconstituting an atmosphere in a vivid way. References to these periods before catastrophes are determined by the anxieties of not losing these sites of memories, as a follow-up of the desire to incorporate them in the individual and community cultural identity, as relics of past that have strong roles in current processes of identity construction and representation.

The narrated time is one associated mostly to the interlocutors childhood and early youth.

In Victor Turner's terms, the separation is from such a social reality or state and the liminality and *communitas* are generated and produced paradoxically in the same moments with the process of assuming and living the disasters (in precise, historical terms – 1944, the year of deportation, and then, in certain periods of the totalitarian time). It was a recurrent attitude of the interlocutors to avoid the narration of these limit experiences, although they make vague references to them, triggering emotional reactions. The follow-up of the liminality is a coagulation of identity, its deeper articulation and self-representation. A profound meaning of community, as a traditional social organization is configured, the feeling of belonging to the cultural group is present and affirmed. As a consequence, one can identify easily, on the basis of the interviews and broadly, of the empirical data, the three stages – the separation, the liminal one and the coagulation/ aggregation. The separation is from a state of harmony, reconstructed mentally and restituted as such in narratives, perceived as a painful stage, a diffuse recent past – according to the interviews, placed before 1944, before deportation. Liminality and *communitas* – a threshold and a moment – a tragic one, dismantling the initial order of community creates a total solidarity of its members, assuming deep suffering (nazism and communism). The final state, aggregation, (in terms of the rites of passages) is characterized by a more profound feeling of belonging to the community, by the affirmation and public representation of identity, surpassing the extreme suffering. One can see this community as an interpretive one, underlining that its members share the same perspective on history and memory. A deep consensus could be

---

[23] See Uli Linke, "Anthropology of Collective Memory", in Neil Smelser, Paul Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Amsterdam – Paris – New York – Oxford – Shannon – Singapore, Elsevier, 2001.

identified at the level of collected narratives, the same perspectives being shared by interlocutors of different educational background, gender and age.

On Interpretive Communities

Following the same idea of common responses to different historical triggers, challenging the community aggregation and solidarity of its members, I have identified a topic that has been much debated by my interlocutors in the course of my research. Indeed, the problem of property restitution/ recuperation plays the role of a coagulation factor for the community; it proves that it is very much alive and able to reinvent itself, despite unfavorable circumstances generated by different state institutions and their arbitrary decisions. I aim at introducing the concept of interpretive community with respect to the Cluj Jewish group, focusing on, in particular, the problem of property restitution/ recuperation, analyzing how specifically it has created a particular type of solidarity, a common way of perceiving a threat and a challenge, a shared perspective on the institutional lack of functionality, a mistrust in the blurred entity of the post-socialist state. In general terms, one can speak about an interpretive community, using the case of the Cluj Jewish group, as its members make and share the same sense of history, of contemporaneity, projecting in a similar way the future. Meanwhile, it is equally relevant to underline subjective, specific responses when confronting with these temporal categories and stimuli.

Theoretical Frame

Theoretically, I approached the topic of restitution-recuperation, considering especially the understanding of property as a "cultural construct by which persons are linked to one another and to values through culturally specific idioms"[24]. Meanwhile, the idea that property restitution aggregated substantial parts of society is underlined, depicting a more general situation, being relevant for all social, cultural articulations of the system.

The approaches belonging to other disciplines paradigms (especially law and economics) are of great help, when focusing on such a complex issue. The first one analyzes property relations on the basis of juridical aspects, deriving from legal praxis, the other perspective underlines the role of property ownership, the socio-economic advantages deriving from it.

Post-1989 property restitution laws have had the effect of generating new anguishes, being thought and articulated to create new forms of private properties. They do not allow the reconfiguration of the interwar ones but encourage their redistribution. It is absolutely obvious that in general terms, the post-1989

---

[24] Katerine Verdery, "The Property Regime of Socialism", *Conservation & Society*, II, 2004, 1, p. 191.

legislation was not one with the goal to compensate or to correct historical guilt on one level and traumas on the other.

Historical and Juridical Contextualization.
Totalitarian and Post-Totalitarian Periods

In my whole approach, I made reference to the communist/ totalitarian legislation that had negative effects on the Jewish communities in Romania. All these official papers; Laws, Decrees, Ordinances (emitted or adopted between 1948 and 1989) had a huge, negative impact on the community life and generated identity loss fears, and deep traumas. Through nationalizing Jewish hospital and other places for social support such as asylums and medical centers, built through the efforts of the community, certain important identity levels are much affected and brought in the hands of a blurred entity, the State (in 1949). Meanwhile, the Jewish confessional and community schools are nationalized (1948) and a very important factor in the process of identity configuration and representation, education, is threatened.

The Jewish communities, diverse initially by origin and religion[25] had been homogenized, communities oriented institutions with their structures, functions- forbidden by the totalitarian state, their establishments – confiscated[26]. The identity loss threats continuously created anxieties, motivated especially in the post-1949 context, when even the internal cultural diversity is challenged. The "new community" lost autonomy after this brutal state intervention[27].

Synagogues, the only places that remained in the community possession, and the only ones in which Jewish people gathered became rooms of anti-emigration discourses dissemination. The effects of these attempts to distort the group identity and feeling of belonging through brutal intrusion of totalitarian power, using Decrees, Laws, Ordinances as punishment mechanisms had destructive consequences, generating anxiety. The totalitarian state constituted an entity that generated anxieties- demolishing through sometimes direct, sometimes more subtle strategies- the identity of the group.

The Jewish communities shared the same fate with many other communities in Romania: with social, educational spaces, confiscated in 1948 and 1949, the religious ones controlled and manipulated, with a private sphere also "confiscated" through different totalitarian strategies (the private properties being exposed to

---

[25] Ashkenazi, Sephardim, *Neolog and orthodox.*
[26] In 1948, law 119/11.06 for nationalizing factories, banks, insurance, mines, transportation companies. All these became state propery. In general terms it is perceived as the law that marked the transition from capitalist economy to a centralized type of economy. Private properties were nationalized if the owner emigrated.
[27] See in this respect Liviu Rotman, *Evreii din Romania in perioada comunistă* [*The Jewish of Romania in Communist Period*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2004.

nationalization). Compared to other ethnic/ cultural communities, the Jewish ones had previous been (between 1940 and 1944) targets of anti-Semitic laws as well. Therefore, in a relative short period of time they had been double victims, of Nazism – in a radical, extreme way – and of totalitarian communism, without at least a period of recovery. In terms of generating fears, post-1989 period is not more comfortable for Jews, the new policies have not served to alleviate anxiety.

The property restitution legislation that was re-articulated more clearly after 1997 favored the current Romanian citizens and did not consider the non-residents; or, emigrating, people lost the Romanian citizenship. There were primarily only two historic minorities that were excluded from compensation and restitution: Jewish and the Saxon (German speaking) communities. Their members, who emigrated in totalitarian times, lost the Romanian citizenship. Theoretically, they could reapply for it but the application deadline for getting properties back was established soon afterwards, therefore, in a subtle way, being discouraged to apply.

Also, non-residents, those who lived in other places than Romania, although they kept the Romanian citizenship, had been disadvantaged, as post-1995 Laws and Ordinances considered the interest of current citizens (Law 112/1995) and residents in Romania. This legislation contributed to and reinforced the national-state ideology[28], excluding minorities from restitution/ recuperation of properties, from reintegration, keeping them apart. The same type of approach dominated property restitution legislation in other Central and East European countries (Lithuania, Czech Republic, Croatia).

The Cluj Jewish community was exposed to these triggers and faced this legislation in particular ways. The interrogations I have formulated tackle the role of the property restitution/recuperation in the process of constituting of an interpretive community. Are the members of the nowadays Jewish group "reading", understanding and analyzing in the same way the elements, the actors, the facts of restitution/ recuperation process? How does the group aggregate itself after such a situation of liminality? Other research questions have followed, derived from the previous ones. Is property restitution an issue that proves, shows, configures certain specificities of the Cluj Jewish community? Is there any specific response to this phenomenon that aggregate other communities as well?

My intention is to relate this issue of properties restitution/ recuperation to the one of identity, considering that the process of Property restitution and recuperation is related to the one of restitution/ recuperation of the Past, a way in which both sides (one involved in Restitution, the other – in Recovery) can prove that memory is, to certain extents, alive (assuming the guilt from one side, simply affirming it, from the other). It relates past to the present, projecting the future. In this case, these two sides are the State (with all its mechanisms, with all its institutions

---

[28] Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations. Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*, New York – London, W.W. Norton and Co., 2000.

involved in restitution) and the Cluj Jewish community (with its institutions designed for properties recuperation and mostly, with its members who have certain attitudes, thoughts and imaginary regarding it).

I. First of all, I have tried to ascertain how these two sides or parts of the process approach one another, which is their dynamic and how this issue is manifested through this dynamic.

II. Secondly, I have tried to focus on the internal dynamic of the community, approaching it and somehow, entering it via this topic, considering as much as we could, the multitude of voices, views, perspectives, meanwhile searching for invariant, recurrent responses, coagulation factors.

III. On the other hand, I have intended to assess the ways in which these groups see the same process of restitution/recuperation as affecting others (other ethnic, religious communities) and, not really systematically, to see how the process of restitution/recuperation for this Jewish community is perceived by the others. I have chosen this path as I want to have a dynamic perspective of the phenomenon, seeing it as a sort of negotiation of voices, responses, triggers etc.

IV. I have conducted and recorded interviews of members who conceptualize several problems associated with these communities (producing a sort of internal reflection on them; see in this respect the statement of a community member, known in group as "our memory"): "Those returned from deportation, very few, were not interested any more in properties and afterwards, communism distorted the sense of property. Everyone preferred not to have anything" (Moritz, 18th of November, 2012, Cluj).

Discussion

I. First of all, there are definitely certain levels of ambiguities, indecisions, contradictions in what concerns the attitude of the State regarding Restitution post-'89; the laws are formulated as such, justice is not to be trusted. The community perceives all these and the response is usually disappointment, renouncement, or incrimination of the State, which is not necessarily public. One can speak about levels of indecisions and, associated with them, about heterogeneous responses with respect to the topic. Clearly, the consequent answer is that the State is perceived as a non- trustful mechanism, with arbitrary actions. At this level, a few interlocutors made references to the process of nationalization[29] (through it, a part of private properties became state properties): "nationalization happened over night and look, after so many years we are still so confused"; "This principle of nationalization should have been abandoned immediately after the Revolution as we intend to change the direction of society. But it is far from being that way" (Salamon, 10th of December, 2012, Cluj).

---

[29] In 1948, Law 119/11.06, see the footnote above.

Another interlocutor, Marcus, lawyer, made reference to the Law 90/18th of March 2003, that privileged post-1989 political parties; in the sense that they could buy buildings from the State at low prices): "As far as I know, in any democratic country, if a party needs a location, it will follow the regular path: it is not the Government responsible for offering it from the property of someone else". Another interlocutor was also extremely disturbed when speaking about the Jews private properties fate: "There are no family members to claim these properties, so, no problem, they remain state property. The state is the beneficiary of our tragedy. There are buildings in this situation, as well. In Cluj, the property on Mâloasă street, nr. 7. belonged to one of our families. Nobody returned. It became state property. The state sold it to the tenants" (Marcus, 13th of December 2012, Cluj).

II. With respect to our second research focus, one can say that, as there is a plurality of attitudes and voices concerning the topic of recuperation properties. I also identified some invariant responses and views, it can be seen as a dynamic one, which to a certain extent revitalizes the community. The whole topic of property restitution–recuperation is deeply linked to one of identity. The dynamics surrounding this process are relevant as part of the identity configuration and representation strategies. The Jews are involved in it as they want, in other words, to recreate their identity though rediscovering the Jewish roots by recreating a narrative besides their traumatic/ liminal experiences. Constantly, the process is accompanied by anxieties. The triggers of them are well represented, as post-1989 Laws are excluding Jews from restitution and other forms of compensation. State is perceived therefore as an enemy entity, one that makes the process of the identity restitution-recuperation sometimes slow, sometimes impossible. One interlocutor, a lawyer, making reference to the Law 112/1995 which has stated the fact that the former owners could get the property back only in case they prove Romanian citizenship asserts: "I have friends in New York and Israel. They had directly contacted Romanian Embassies, trying to regain the Romanian citizenship. But this procedure lasted too much, more than 2 or 3 months. They did not have any chance, as they could not regain the citizenship on time" (11th of May, 2012, Cluj).

III. Related to the third research point, one can say that the members of the Jewish Community that I have interviewed, assert they feel they share the same fate with members of other religious and ethnic communities, mentioning that their case is pretty much similar with that one of Greek-Catholics[30]. "Greek Catholics have so many difficulties, like us. The others [religious communities] have as well, but not so many. Unitarians, Catholics. They have the center of Cluj. It is a real problem, it is a problem for the State, meanwhile. It is necessary to build up places for all state institutions and from where – this amount of money?". Anxieties of a virtual identity loss (another limen) through the abandonment of or lack of interest

---

[30] In 1948, the Greek Catholic churches had been confiscated by the State, Orthodoxy became the only tolerated religion/ cult of Romanians.

in this issue of property restitution/ recuperation are present in certain interlocutors narratives: "My children, one in Israel, one in Canada have their own lives where they are. They have told me they are not very interested in recuperating anything, which is sad" (Ezra, 17th of May, 2012, Cluj). Even if some persons managed to get their properties back, after repetitive trials, state appealed, and "the situation is still ambiguous". Again, behind all these, the State entity causes turbulences and all the related anxieties.

Conclusions

All these unfavorable circumstances – the anxiety triggers, the threat of identity loss, the common enemy – play an important role in the community aggregation/ coagulation, reinforcing it, underlining its meanings. The challenges are, at a symbolic level, thresholds or limens, and the result of surpassing them is a new inner state, community being strengthened through living for a little while in *communitas*[31]. The Cluj Jewish group could be viewed and analyzed as an interpretive community, in the sense that its members construct and share a common interpretation on history, social actors, facts and contexts, also assuming the same meaning of memory.

WORKS CITED

ANTZE, Paul, Michael LAMBEK (eds.), *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, New York – London, Routledge, 1996.
BAL, Mieke, *The Practices of Cultural Analysis: Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation (Cultural Memory in the Present)*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2008.
BARKAN, Elazar, *The Guilt of Nations. Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*, New York – London, W.W. Norton and Co, 2000.
BINES, Carol, *Din istoria emigrărilor în Israel* [*From the History of Emigration to Israel*]*,* Bucureşti, Hasefer, 1998.
BOLOVAN, Ioan, "Evreii din Transilvania între 1870-1930. Contribuţii demografice" ["The Jews from Transylvania. Demographic Contributions"], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie George Bariţ*, XLIV, 2005, pp. 539-550.
BURAWOY, Michael, Katherine VERDERY (eds.), *Uncertain transitions. Ethnographies of Change in the Post-socialist World*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.
CARMILLY-WEINBERGER, Moshe, *The Memorial Volume for the Jews of Cluj-Kolozsvar*, New York, Memorial Foundation of Jewish Culture, 1970.
CARMILLY-WEINBERGER, Moshe, *Istoria evreilor din Transilvania* [*The History of Jews in Transylvania*], Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică, 1994.
COOKE, Paul, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia,* Oxford, Berg, 2009.
COOK, John, *Morality and Cultural Differences*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999.

---

[31] To involve again Victor Turner's terms.

GRUBER, Ruth Ellen, *Virtually Jewish. Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*, Berkeley, Los Angeles – London, University of California Press, 2002.

HANN, Chris, *Postsocialism. Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, New York – London, Routledge, 2001.

LUCK, Steven, Andrew HOLLINGWORTH, *Visual Memory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.

LINKE, Uli, "Anthropology of Collective Memory", in Neil Smelser, Paul Baltes, (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Amsterdam – Paris – New York – Oxford – Shannon – Singapore – Tokyo, Elsevier, 2001.

ROSENAU, Pauline, *Post Modernism and Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads and Intrusions*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009.

RUSSELL, Bernard, H. *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, Lanham, AltaMira Press, 2010.

ROTMAN, Liviu, "Evreii din Romania. Final de istorie" ["The Jews from Romania. End of History"], in Lucian Nastasă, Andreea Andreescu, Andrea Varga, (eds.), *Minorităţi etnoculturale. Mărturii documentare. Evreii din România (1945-1965)* [*Ethno-cultural Minorities. Documentary Testimonies. The Jews from Romania, 1945-1965*], Cluj-Napoca, Ethno-Cultural Diversity Center, 2003.

ROTMAN, Liviu, *Evreii din Romania in perioada comunistă* [*The Jewish of Romania in Communist Period*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2004.

TURNER, Victor, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-structure*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1977.

VERDERY, Katherine, "The Property Regime of Socialism", *Conservation & Society*, II, 2004, 1, pp. 189-198.

ON "DRAMAS, FIELDS AND…" INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITIES
(*Abstract*)

Reconsidering Victor Turner's concept of communitas, my study aims to analyze its history, applicability and limits, focusing on the specific case of the Cluj Jewish group. Based on the interpretation of empirical material, collected through intensive fieldwork, my approach contributes to an anthropological understanding of "interpretive communities". The experiences of anxieties, traumatic memories, nostalgia and the ways they determine specific group coagulation strategies are topics of main interest, permanently analyzed in my study. Viewed both at the individual and communitarian levels, constituted as thresholds or liminal stages, they have an important role in the process of identity construction and representation of the Cluj Jewish group. Empirical data gathered through applying qualitative research methods (mostly life-histories, semi-structured and in-depth interviews), put in a neo-interpretive framework, structure my approach.

Keywords: Jewish community, limen, communitas, interpretive community, memory.

COMUNITĂŢI INTERPRETATIVE. UN STUDIU DE CAZ
(*Rezumat*)

Reconsiderând conceptul de *communitas*, aşa cum este acesta utilizat de Victor Turner, îmi propun să analizez aplicabilitatea şi limitele sale printr-un studiu de caz asupra comunităţii evreieşti din Cluj. Bazându-se pe interpretarea materialului empiric, adunat printr-o cercetare antropologică de teren, abordarea mea doreşte să contribuie la înţelegerea cât mai adecvată a conceptului de comunitate

interpretativă. Experienţele anxietăţii, memoriei traumatizate, nostalgiei şi modalitatea în care acestea determină strategii de coagulare a grupului sunt subiecte permanent analizate în prezentarea mea. Văzute deopotrivă la nivel individual şi comunitar, constituite ca praguri, stadii liminale, ele au un rol important în procesul de construire şi reprezentare a identităţii grupului analizat. Datele empirice au fost adunate în procesul de derulare a terenului, prin aplicarea unor metode calitative – observaţie participativă, inteviuri nonstructurate, semistructurate, interviuri în adâncime, istorii de viaţă – şi prelucrate într-o grilă antropologică neointerpretativistă (cum principalele concepte care m-au ajutat la configurarea grilei teoretice derivă din perspectiva lui Victor Turner – antropolog interpretativist).

Cuvinte-cheie: comunitatea evreiască din Cluj, *limen*, communitas, comunitate interpretativă, memorie.

OLIVIER THOLOZAN

LES COMMUNAUTÉS INTERPRÉTATIVES EN DROIT

Évoquer les Communautés interprétatives de Stanley Fish dans le cadre de la théorie du droit peut paraître curieux. Cet auteur a, en effet, soutenu que le rôle de ces communautés était « moins que normatif et plus que sociologique »[1]. Mais on ne peut ignorer que ce professeur de littérature a aussi exercé les fonctions de professeur de droit et qu'il a voulu faire bénéficier les juristes de sa réflexion générale sur l'Interprétation. Il faut de surcroît préciser ce que Stanley Fish veut dire en affirmant que le rôle des Communautés interprétatives est moins que normatif. Reprenant le conseil pragmatiste de R. Rorty, il considère que tout ce que nous pouvons faire pour accéder à la connaissance, c'est de « travailler avec le vocabulaire dont nous disposons, tout en guettant sans relâche les procédés par lesquels il pourrait être étendu et révisé »[2]. Prônant une démarche antifondationnaliste, Stanley Fish estime que « sans représentations des origines, on peut tout de même produire des assertions, lancer des recherches, déterminer le vrai du faux »[3]. Aussi la Communauté interprétative, à laquelle tout un chacun appartient, n'est plus qu'un « espace à l'intérieur duquel » nous pouvons appréhender le réel. La notion de Communautés interprétatives a donc une portée épistémologique et non pas normative. C'est dire à quel point la critique normative de cette idée par le philosophe du droit américain R. Dworkin manque sa cible[4]. C'est justement cette approche purement épistémologique qui suscite l'intérêt du juriste perplexe face à une globalisation moderne bousculant la vision classique de l'ordonnancement juridique[5]. Une telle démarche souple permet de penser le droit comme une construction dialogique et de dépasser la vieille opposition normative inopérante entre le pluralisme et le monisme juridiques.

---

[1] Stanley Fish, *Quand lire c'est faire. L'autorité des Communautés interprétatives*, Paris, Les Prairies ordinaires, 2007, p. 16.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 137.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 132.

[4] R. Dworkin postule la supériorité d'une Communauté nationale intégrée dont les valeurs sont proclamées par le juge. Il rejette l'idée d'une pluralité des Communautés interprétatives défendue par Stanley Fish. Il écrit en ce sens : « Pourquoi les objectifs et les présupposés d'une communauté ne sont-ils pas meilleurs que ceux d'une autre ? Pourquoi ne sont-ils pas aussi bons qu'ils pourraient l'être ? S'ils sont effectivement les meilleurs, alors ils ne sont pas simplement corrects par rapport à cette communauté. Ils sont simplement corrects ; les objectifs et les présupposés d'autres communautés sont alors erronées » (*Justice pour les hérissons. La vérité des valeurs*, Bruxelles, Labor et Fides, 2015, p. 165).

[5] Cette problématique est largement abordée dans : Jean-Yves Chérot, Benoît Frydman (éds.), *La science du droit dans la globalisation*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 2012.

L'accès du juriste français aux idées de Stanley Fish reste malaisé malgré la traduction française de ses principaux écrits. Il faut y voir une conséquence du caractère polémique de l'œuvre et du personnage[6]. Il y a surtout la fascination pour l'œuvre de Fish qui peut conduire à se l'approprier au risque de la déformer. La simple traduction du titre d'un de ses livres est significative de cette tentation. Ainsi en 1989, Stanley Fish fait paraître un recueil d'articles intitulé *Doing what comes naturally. Change, rhetoric and practise of theory in literary and legal studies*[7], soit *Agir de façon naturelle. Changement, rhétorique et pratique de la théorie en littérature et en droit*. En 1995, l'ouvrage est traduit en français sous le titre « Respecter le sens commun Rhétorique, interprétation et critique en littérature et en droit »[8]. Ce nouvel intitulé a tendance à édulcorer la dimension pragmatiste de la pensée de Stanley Fish et masquer son intérêt prépondérant pour le thème du changement[9].

La réinterprétation proposée ici de la notion de Communauté interprétative dans la perspective de la théorie du droit ne prétend pas éviter ce risque de réappropriation dont Stanley Fish n'a, au demeurant, pas nié le bien fondé[10]. La légitimité de la démarche envisagée nécessite du moins de revenir de façon précise au texte de cet auteur. Cette relecture révèle l'importance de ces communautés au sein du monde du droit (I) et vise à montrer leur importante incidence sur le travail juridique (II).

I. LA PRESENCE DE COMMUNAUTES INTERPRETATIVES DANS LE MONDE DU DROIT

S'inspirant du constructivisme de Th. Kuhn et N. Goodman, Stanley Fish s'est efforcé d'esquisser les contours du concept souple de Communautés interprétatives[11]. L'examen de sa pensée permet de mobiliser les éléments nécessaires à l'identification de Communautés interprétatives juridiques.

---

[6] Y. Citton, « Préface », in Stanley Fish, *Quand lire*, pp. 10-16.

[7] Stanley Fish, *Doing what comes naturally, Change, rhetoric and practise of theory in literary and legal studies*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989.

[8] Stanley Fish, *Respecter le sens commun. Rhétorique, interprétation et critique en littérature et droit*. Traduit par Odile Nerhot, Bruxelles – Paris, Story Scientia – LGDJ, 1995.

[9] Stanley Fish a publié *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge – London, Harvard University Press, 1980. Ce titre a été traduit sous l'intitulé : *Quand lire c'est faire. L'autorité des Communautés interprétatives*. Cet ajout vise à rapprocher Fish de J.-L. Austin qui a écrit *Quand dire, c'est faire*. La réutilisation de la syntagme est moins gênante car Fish reconnaît avoir subi l'influence du philosophe britannique (*Quand lire*, p. 125).

[10] Stanley Fish l'affirme à propos de la reprise de sa pensée par Y. Citton (*Quand lire*, pp. 137-138).

[11] *Ibidem*, pp. 49-50.

Comprendre au sein d'une communauté selon Stanley Fish

Stanley Fish veut dépasser la « dichotomie sujet/ objet » et expliquer « l'accord… (et) le désaccord »[12]. Il souhaite montrer comment « la controverse se résout » grâce aux tentatives de tout un chacun de « persuader l'autre en rassemblant des preuves et en élaborant des arguments »[13]. Ces actions se déroulent au sein de différentes Communautés interprétatives. Ces dernières ne sauraient être réduites à un simple « groupe d'individus partageant un point de vue ». Chacune est plutôt « une idée ou une manière d'organiser l'expérience » permettant à une « entreprise communautaire » d'interprètes d'écrire « avec plus ou moins d'harmonie entre eux, le même texte bien que la ressemblance ne puisse être attribuée à une identité de texte mais à la nature communautaire de l'acte interprétatif »[14]. La Communauté interprétative apparaît donc comme une « dimension d'évaluation… (un) paradigme… (une) textualité… (une) epistème… ou (un) habitus », révélant que « les structures discursives » ne sont pas « purement instrumentales » mais ont le statut de « données constitutives de Tout, fait, vérité, valeur »[15].

Si Stanley Fish évoque la pesanteur des « contraintes intériorisées de la communauté », s'exerçant « tyranniquement »[16], il n'en aborde pas moins le thème important du changement dans la pensée. Selon lui, cette dernière n'est pas une « structure statique… mais un ensemble de croyances apparentées, chacune d'entre-elles pouvant exercer une pression sur l'autre dans un mouvement qui peut conduire à une auto-transformation ». Aussi, la Communauté interprétative, au sein de laquelle s'exerce cette pensée, est « un projet porteur dont les fonctionnements peuvent être contraints et sont en même temps les moyens qui permettent d'altérer ces mêmes contraintes »[17]. Cette communauté est « un moteur de changement » car ses « hypothèses » ne sont pas « un mécanisme servant à étouffer le monde mais à l'organiser pour voir les phénomènes comme s'ils étaient déjà reliés aux intérêts et aux buts qui font la communauté telle qu'elle est ». Le « travail » communautaire est au service de son projet qui est « transformé par son propre projet » lui-même[18]. L' « identité » communautaire s'inscrit donc « au sein d'une continuité de la pratique »[19].

Stanley Fish précise le fonctionnement de cette machinerie communautaire. Lors de l'appréhension de la réalité empirique, toute description se voit opposer

---

[12] *Ibidem*, p. 130.
[13] *Ibidem*, p. 136.
[14] Stanley Fish, *Respecter le sens commun,* p. 93.
[15] Stanley Fish, *Quand lire*, p. 132.
[16] *Ibidem*, p. 129.
[17] Stanley Fish, *Respecter le sens commun,* p. 98.
[18] *Ibidem*, p. 101.
[19] *Ibidem*, p. 104.

une « description concurrente ». Cette compétition se fait « en référence aux normes, aux modèles et aux procédures compris par la communauté comme pouvant être appropriés à la détermination d'un fait empirique »[20]. Ce travail demeure continu car la finalité communautaire est toujours la recherche « du 'mieux'… étant en relation avec les faiblesses reconnues dans les circonstances actuelles »[21]. Stanley Fish en conclut que le changement, comme tout fait, est « irrémédiablement interprétatif »[22]. Il illustre l'idée en évoquant au premier chef « the enterprise of the law ». L'expression est remarquable car elle recèle l'ensemble des virtualités de la notion de Communauté interprétative appliquée au monde du droit. Le terme d'entreprise du droit renvoie à la fois au travail et à une initiative commune dans le domaine juridique. Stanley Fish évoque d'ailleurs les juristes en les qualifiant de « workers in the field of law » et assimile leur activité professionnelle à un travail juridique (« legal enterprise »)[23]. Tous ces termes qui font percevoir le droit comme une activité sont d'autant plus heureux que le travail des juristes est qualifié en français de pratique et en anglais de practise.

Ce qui n'est resté qu'une intuition de Stanley Fish mérite d'être approfondi. Il convient de commencer par se demander si, au sein du phénomène juridique, il est possible de mettre à jour des Communautés interprétatives. Le thème général de l'Un et du multiple est abordé, dans la théorie du droit, en réfléchissant sur les sources du droit. Le courant normativiste a tendance à faire prévaloir la volonté de l'État comme origine du droit, postulant le monisme de l'ordre juridique. Inversement, dans sa version la plus radicale, le courant pluraliste postule la diversité des ordres juridiques, chacun sécrété par un groupe social différent. D'un point de vue logique, la question ainsi posée demeure indécidable car la réponse dépend de conceptions implicites différentes du lien juridique propre à chaque prise de position théorique[24]. Le recours à la notion de Communauté interprétative permet d'éviter la difficulté car il n'implique pas de réflexion sur la nature du Droit. Il permet de basculer du plan normatif au plan épistémologique.

---

[20] *Ibidem*, p. 110.

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 111.

[22] *Ibidem*, p.108. Cette conception interprétativiste est affirmée de façon radicale. Stanley Fish écrit en ce sens : « Le fait que nos objets nous apparaissent dans le contexte de quelque pratique, d'un travail de quelque communauté interprétative […] signifie simplement qu'ils sont des objets interprétés et que, puisque les interprétations peuvent changer, la forme perceptible des objets peut changer aussi » (*Ibidem*, p. 104).

[23] Stanley Fish, *Doing what comes*, p. 157.

[24] Otto Pfersmann, « Monisme revisité contre juriglobalisme incohérent », in Jean-Yves Chérot, Benoît Frydman, *La science du droit*, p. 86.

Communautés interprétatives et cultures juridiques

La présence des Communautés interprétatives est manifeste au sein même de l'Occident qui a forgé l'idée et le vocable modernes du Droit comme modalité de régulation sociale[25]. Malgré son caractère excessivement didactique, la distinction entre le système juridique de Civil Law et de Common Law offre un exemple suffisamment heuristique. Le droit français est une des illustrations les plus radicales du système de Civil Law. La France est un pays qui s'est construit par la centralisation étatique. Ce contexte conditionne éminemment son modèle de pensée juridique formé entre 1804 (adoption de Code civil) et le début du XXᵉ siècle. Ainsi pour les juristes français, la loi, expression de la volonté étatique, a toujours été la source principale du droit. Toutefois, le changement industriel de la fin du XIXᵉ siècle a suscité de nouveaux besoins que le législateur est trop lent à satisfaire. On a commencé à reconnaître l'importance du juge et la nécessité de lui reconnaître, de façon libérale, un pouvoir d'interprétation. Mais l'ancienne méfiance révolutionnaire à son égard fit craindre l'arbitraire judiciaire. La théorie de l'interprétation judiciaire a donc évolué. La déduction à partir des dispositions légales paraît insuffisante. Les juristes doivent recourir à l'induction fondée sur l'observation de la jurisprudence et du droit comparé. Une fois les principes dégagés du réel, les professeurs de droit ou Doctrine sont chargés de les systématiser de façon cohérente dans des manuels articulés par des concepts et des théories générales[26]. L'enseignement juridique est avant tout le fait du savoir savant de l'Université. Les juges demeurent des fonctionnaires encore très largement soumis au législateur. Les avocats, notaires et huissiers sont cantonnés au rôle d'auxiliaires de justice soumis à la loi.

Les Communautés interprétatives formées par les pays de Common Law sont modelées par un tout autre modèle de pensée juridique. On se bornera à l'évoquer à travers l'exemple de l'Angleterre qui en est le berceau et des États-Unis. Ce droit est profondément marqué par l'histoire médiévale et moderne anglaise. Il est le fruit de la lutte de la justice royale contre les tribunaux seigneuriaux. Les Cours royales de justice ont eu besoin d'un consensus social pour s'imposer. La lutte au XVIIᵉ siècle entre la monarchie et le pouvoir parlementaire explique le renforcement du prestige du juge ; d'autant que le système institutionnel britannique s'est largement structuré autour de l'idée de séparation des pouvoirs, également reprise aux États-Unis. La Common Law édictée par les Cours royales

---

[25] Aldo Schiavone, *L'invention du droit en Occident*, Paris, Belin, 2008. La naissance de l'anthropologie juridique apparaît comme un regard occidental sur les modes de régulation sociale d'autres aires culturelles (Norbert Rouland, *Anthropologie juridique*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1988, pp. 47-67).

[26] Christophe Jamin, « Un modèle original : la construction de la pensée juridique française », *Bulletin d'information de la Cour de cassation*, 2004, 596, 15 avril, pp. 3-6.

est donc avant tout un droit judiciaire issu du procès. Aujourd'hui encore, les lois adoptées par le pouvoir législatif (statute Law) restent moins nombreuses qu'en France. Le droit repose sur la décision du juge au sommet de la hiérarchie des tribunaux. Cette décision devient un précédent ayant force obligatoire, qui s'impose dans les affaires similaires futures. Pour autant la procédure n'est pas rigide. La décision judiciaire est ici un « objet destiné à être ajusté et précisé dans des conditions nouvelles ou plus strictes »[27]. Elle est donc toujours « défectible (defeasible) »[28].

De ce fait, le droit de Common Law n'est pas le produit d'une « construction savante », mais de la « pratique elle-même (recevant) tout (son) sens de cette pratique »[29]. Le raisonnement par analogie est central. Il ne consiste pas à induire un principe général de la juxtaposition de cas particuliers pour ensuite en déduire une nouvelle application particulière. Il s'agit plutôt « d'étendre la portée des décisions singulières dans chaque contentieux subséquent ». Le juriste se soucie surtout de « la proximité des faits nouveaux (avec) ceux qui y avaient donné lieu ». Pour le « common lawyer » la comparaison et la distinction des faits est le « moteur du raisonnement »[30]. Les concepts de la pratique sont élaborés à « partir de faits tangibles et concrets […] délimités les uns par rapport aux autres à l'aide d'indices extérieurs et, si besoin, élargis » par des fictions[31]. Ce caractère pratique de la Common Law en imprègne profondément l'enseignement. Aujourd'hui, les juristes anglais reçoivent une formation essentiellement pratique au sein d'écoles ou de centre de formation de leur association professionnelle. L'accès à cette formation n'implique pas nécessairement le suivi préalable d'études universitaires juridiques, moyennant un rattrapage rapide dans ce domaine du savoir[32]. Aux États-Unis, le caractère pratique de l'enseignement transparaît dans l'introduction au sein des cursus universitaires juridiques d'un atelier d'apprentissage du droit (Law clinic). Dirigés par un « clinical professor » et aidés par un cabinet d'avocats, les étudiants peuvent au sein de cette formation faire du conseil juridique gratuit[33].

L'existence de Communautés interprétatives de cultures juridiques différentes n'empêche pas qu'elles puissent communiquer. Au Québec, région canadienne francophone, la tradition de Civil Law inspire encore le droit privé et la tradition

---

[27] Pierre Legrand et Geoffrey Samuel, *Introduction au Common Law*, Paris, La Découverte, p. 73.

[28] *Ibidem*, p. 45.

[29] *Ibidem,* p. 78.

[30] Duncan Fairgrieve et Horatia Muir-Whatt, *Common Law et tradition civiliste*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2006, p. 30.

[31] Max Weber, *Sociologie du droit*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1986, p. 143.

[32] Danièle Frison, *Introduction au droit anglais et aux institutions britanniques*, Paris, Ellipses, 2005, pp. 136-137, 149-151.

[33] Marie Mercat-Bruns, « L'enseignement du droit aux Etats-Unis », *Jurisprudence. Revue critique de droit*, 2010, 1, pp. 118-119.

de Common Law le droit pénal et public. Aussi, les facultés de droit proposent de former en français les juristes à la Common Law. Des organismes de traduction normalisent le vocabulaire français de Common Law en faisant appel, si besoin, au néologisme de forme et de sens (détournement de la signification)[34]. La comparaison des systèmes juridiques offre des exemples de communication entre communautés de culture juridique plus éloignées. Les transplants juridiques (legal transplants)[35] caractérisent des migrations d'institutions juridiques particulièrement visibles lors des colonisations. Ces transferts de droit peuvent aussi être animés par des formants juridiques (legal formants) englobant outre le droit positif, le discours doctrinal sur le droit, la philosophie, la politique, la religion ou l'idéologie[36]. Le voyage du droit repose au premier chef sur le travail nécessaire de traduction. Celui-ci est tout l'enjeu d'entreprises multiculturelles comme la promotion de la Charte européenne des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne. D'autant que ce texte juridique repose sur des notions floues telles celles de droits de l'homme ou d'acquis communautaires[37]. Mais il n'est pas besoin de franchir les frontières pour observer l'importance des Communautés interprétatives dans le fonctionnement du phénomène juridique.

Communautés interprétatives et diversité de la pratique du droit

De façon générale, on relèvera que le point de vue de l'usager du droit est différent de celui du professionnel dans ce domaine. Ce dernier, juge ou auxiliaire de justice, se soucie plus ou moins du respect de la règle officielle. Par contre, plongé dans un problème plus immédiat et concret, l'usager est moins sensible à la nécessité de la qualification juridique[38]. La conscience du droit dépend, au demeurant, de la socialisation et donc de la façon dont la Famille, l'Ecole, un groupe de pairs inculquent à tout un chacun les schèmes culturels relatifs au droit[39]. La situation peut aussi conduire à appréhender diversement les règles juridiques. Un acteur social peut se situer « face au droit » et considérer la légalité comme un univers coupé de la vie sociale ordinaire. Les règles lui semblent transcender les situations particulières et être hors de sa portée. De façon plus dramatique le droit peut être ressenti comme une contrainte écrasante qui assujettit et persécute par ses normes. La légalité est perçue comme un pouvoir arbitraire et

---

[34] Karine McLaren, « Le bilinguisme législatif et judiciaire au Canada », in Isabelle Pingel (éd.), *Le multilinguisme dans l'Union européenne*, Paris, Pedone, 2015, pp. 130-137.
[35] Jean-Louis Halpérin, *Profils de la mondialisation du droit*, Paris, Dalloz, 2009, p. 29.
[36] *Ibidem*, p. 37.
[37] Elser Pic, « La traduction multilingue des droits fondamentaux », in Isabelle Pingel (éd.), *Le multilinguisme*, pp. 34-39.
[38] Jacques Commaille, *A quoi nous sert le Droit ?*, Paris, Gallimard, 2015, pp. 121-122.
[39] Thierry Delpeuch, Laurence Dumoulin, Claire de Galembert, *Sociologie du droit et de la justice*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2014, p. 72.

ses destinataires peuvent se positionner « contre le droit ». Inversement un individu peut estimer être « avec le droit » et le considérer comme un espace de jeu. Il s'efforcera de mobiliser les « ressources » juridiques nécessaires à la réalisation de gains stratégiques[40]. De fait des acteurs profanes du droit peuvent acquérir une certaine familiarité avec le monde juridique et judiciaire et envisager leurs entreprises en ce domaine comme un répertoire d'actions. C'est le cas d'associations qui défendent leur cause par le militantisme judiciaire[41].

De manière plus radicale, la Société civile peut contester au professionnel sa place dans la procédure judiciaire au nom d'une justice plus proche du citoyen. C'est ainsi que le jury populaire paraît l'incarnation d'une justice profane animée par l' « intuition » ou « l'équité » et éloignée du juridisme de la justice professionnelle[42]. Les expériences de médiation vont encore plus loin car elles se présentent comme une alternative à la procédure judiciaire étatique et s'inspirent d'un modèle de régulation des rapports sociaux moins « institutionnel/autoritaire » et moins « contradictoire (adversarial) »[43]. La logique d'affrontement des parties doit faire place à celle d'harmonisation d'une communauté troublée.

La communauté des professionnels du droit est-elle même loin d'être homogène. Aux États-Unis les avocats ne se cantonnent pas à un rôle d'auxiliaires de justice uniquement soucieux du respect de la règle. Le caractère accusatoire – et donc contradictoire – de la procédure judiciaire les incite à être plus actifs. Ils remplissent donc aussi la fonction d'« ingénieur social » en réglant des questions générales de Société à l'occasion du procès[44]. Ils incarnent la défense de grandes causes sociales par le droit (cause lawyering), modèle d'action en vogue dès les années 1960[45]. Les avocats américains peuvent enfin se comporter comme des entrepreneurs (entrepreunarial bar). Intéressés aux dommages et intérêts gagnés par le client grâce à un pacte de *quota litis*, ils peuvent prendre des risques financiers et intenter des procédures collectives économiquement avantageuses grâce aux *class actions* (actions judiciaires de groupe)[46]. De manière plus générale, les pratiques des professionnels du droit dans le monde se transforment. Leur fonction n'est plus « la déclinaison d'une règle figée ». Ils sont soumis à la contrainte croissante de rationalisation, de recherche de l'efficacité économique. La dynamique de l'économie libérale globalisée les conduit à se présenter comme

---

[40] *Ibidem*, pp. 69-70. Devenue classique, cette distinction est celle opérée entre « before the law », « against the law » et « with the law » par P. Ewick et S. Silbey.

[41] *Ibidem,* p. 208.

[42] Jacques Commaille, *A quoi nous sert*, p. 80.

[43] *Ibidem*, p. 122.

[44] Gilles Cuniberti, *Grands systèmes de droit contemporains,* Paris, LGDJ, 2011, pp. 183-184 (§ 303).

[45] Liora Israel, *L'arme du droit*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 2009, pp. 84*sq*.

[46] Gilles Cuniberti, *Grands systèmes de droit*, pp. 182-183 (§ 302).

les « intermédiaires du nouveau management public »[47]. Soumis à l'économie comme valeur prééminente, les juristes se soucient moins de règles que de standards et d'indicateurs économiques s'imposant comme référence de la régulation[48]. Cet ajustement idéologique du droit permet de mettre en exergue une ultime catégorie de Communautés interprétatives.

Communautés interprétatives et idéologies

L'identité d'une Communauté interprétative peut résider dans l'attachement à un modèle idéologique du droit. Le droit pénal en offre un exemple topique. La comparaison des législations ou l'analyse d'une même législation nationale montrent que deux modèles opposés peuvent soit s'imposer l'un face à l'autre, soit essayer difficilement de s'articuler entre eux. Le premier est un modèle « autoritaire » fondé sur la « confiance absolue » dans la répression et le souci de « cohésion » de la communauté et de ses valeurs. Modèle sécuritaire, il privilégie la Société par rapport à l'Individu et peut aller jusqu'à réprimer afin de changer les mentalités. Les techniques de raisonnement juridique privilégiées sont l'analogie, la rédaction vague des textes répressifs (types ouverts), les lois en blanc ne déterminant pas les éléments constitutifs de l'infraction ainsi que l'incrimination de l'intention, des actes préparatoires et des personnes morales. La procédure est diligentée par des magistrats professionnels selon le principe de l'inquisitoire. Le contrevenant peut être frappé par la peine aggravée et les mesures de sûreté à titre préventif[49].

Le modèle pénal libéral ou de confiance relative dans la répression obéit à une tout autre logique. L'équilibre entre répression et protection des droits et libertés du criminel et de la victime est son objectif. On retrouve ici le souci de réinsertion sociale du délinquant. Ce modèle est marqué par le constitutionnalisme pénal. La procédure judiciaire est de tendance accusatoire, laissant aux parties le soin de diligenter l'instance. Enfin les tenants de ce modèle peuvent aller jusqu'à réclamer le repli du système pénal étatique par la déjudiciarisation, la dépénalisation, ou plus simplement la décriminalisation[50].

L'impact de l'idéologie sur la connaissance juridique n'est pas dû à une influence purement externe ; il lui est consubstantiel. Il est l'un des signes de l'impossibilité humaine d'une « distance envers ses propres croyances et présupposés […] (ainsi qu'envers) […] les normes et valeurs qui habilitent sa conscience ». Ainsi tout-un-chacun « agit et débat […] avec la pleine confiance

---

[47] Jacques Commaille, *A quoi nous sert*, pp. 150-151.

[48] Benoît Frydman, Arnaud Van Wayenberge, *Gouverner par les standards et les indicateurs de Hume aux Rankings*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 2014.

[49] Jean Pradel, *Le droit pénal comparé*, Paris, Dalloz, 2008, pp. 717 (§ 670), 719 (§ 671), 728 (§ 678).

[50] *Ibidem,* pp. 746 (§ 693*sq*), 749 (§ 694*sq*), 761 (§ 706*sq*).

qu'assure la croyance »[51]. Cette constatation du poids de la croyance dans l'épistémologie des Communautés interprétatives incite à s'interroger sur la nature de la connaissance qu'elles mettent en œuvre.

II. COMMUNAUTES INTERPRETATIVES ET CONNAISSANCE JURIDIQUE

La présence des Communautés interprétatives dans le monde du droit s'explique très largement par le caractère interprétatif de la connaissance juridique. L'examen du contentieux judiciaire est ici très révélateur.

Connaissance juridique interprétative et opérations du droit

Durant l'Antiquité les premiers jurisconsultes romains se sont efforcés d'établir les moyens de connaissance nécessaires à la technique du droit. Ils se sont appuyés sur la rhétorique grecque[52]. Ils manifestaient une sensibilité particulière à la médiatisation de la connaissance juridique par le langage. Mieux encore, ils furent parmi les premiers à comprendre que sans rompre avec les langues naturelles, le Droit repose sur un langage spécifique assis sur un vocabulaire et un discours propre[53]. Une propriété commune aux langues naturelles et au langage juridique a tout particulièrement attiré l'attention des juristes. Inspirés par le logicien F. Waissman, ils se sont intéressés à la texture ouverte du langage[54]. En vertu de cette propriété, la trame du langage est lâche et les termes utilisés ne peuvent être définitivement définis sans ambiguïté. Le juriste autrichien H. Kelsen considérait la norme juridique comme « un cadre ouvert à plusieurs possibilités »[55] et dénonçait l'idée de « sécurité juridique » comme une « illusion »[56]. Le philosophe du droit britannique H. Hart a développé de façon plus approfondie ce thème de la texture ouverte (open texture) du langage juridique. Selon lui, « quel que soit le procédé choisi pour assurer leur communication […] (les) modèles de comportement (standards of behaviour) s'avèreront indéterminés ». Si pour Hart, cette limite est inhérente à la nature générale du langage, elle est surtout causée par

---

[51] Stanley Fish, « Y a-t-il un texte », pp. 49-50.
[52] Aldo Schiavone, *Ius*, pp. 255-258.
[53] Gérard Cornu, *Linguistique juridique*, Paris, Montchrestien, 2000, pp. 18*sq*.
[54] Neil McCormick, « La texture ouverte des règles juridiques », in Paul Amselek et Christophe Grzegorczyk (éds.), *Controverses autour de l'ontologie du droit*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, p. 110.
[55] Hans Kelsen, *Théorie pure du droit*. Traduit par H. Thevenaz, Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1953, p. 151.
[56] *Ibidem*, p. 155.

la « relative ignorance du fait » et de la « relative indétermination au niveau des fins (aims) propre à la condition humaine »[57].

L'indétermination du langage juridique à des conséquences importantes sur les différentes modalités d'expression du droit. Ainsi la qualité de la loi adoptée par un parlement est une notion « vague et polysémique »[58]. Les simples critères de qualité rédactionnelle du texte législatif sont équivoques. L'idée de cohérence reste sujette à débat. L'idée de simplification de la loi peut facilement être « instrumentalisée ». Quant à la notion élémentaire de clarté, elle peut reposer sur des conceptions contradictoires : soit elle implique une exigence de « compréhensibilité, de simplicité et de concision », soit elle se rattache à la nécessité de disposer d' « un corps de règles précises et détaillées » permettant de « connaître très clairement l'application de la loi dans tous les cas possibles »[59]. L'indétermination du langage juridique impacte bien plus encore le raisonnement judiciaire. En effet, le procès n'est que la tentative de « dégager et de justifier la solution autorisée d'une controverse, dans laquelle des argumentations en sens divers (sont) menées conformément à des procédures imposées »[60]. L'interprétation du langage devient l'instrument de la stratégie de défense des parties.

La connaissance juridique se révèle être une connaissance interprétative[61]. Elle est le fruit d'un complexe épistémologique où la déduction et l'induction sont mises au service de l'argumentation. Le langage du droit, qui en médiatise la connaissance, repose amplement sur la catégorie sémiotique de l'interprétant, cet « outil » employé par l'interprète au cours de son travail[62]. Dans le domaine juridique, cet « outillage » est constitué par des « opérations du droit »[63], pertinentes illustrations des « opérations mentales » des Communautés interprétatives de Stanley Fish[64]. Ces opérations du droit sont le produit des

---

[57] Herbert Hart, *Le concept de droit*, Saint Louis, Publications des Facultés Universitaires de Saint Louis, 2005, p. 147. Cette traduction a été comparée à l'édition originale anglaise (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970, pp. 124-125).

[58] Alexandre Flückiger, « Qu'est-ce que 'mieux légiférer'. Enjeux et instrumentalisation de la notion de qualité législative », in Alexandre Flückiger et Christine Guy-Ecabert (éds.), *Guider les parlements et les gouvernements pour mieux légiférer. Le guide des rôles de légistique*, Zürich, Schulthess, 2008, p. 13.

[59] *Ibidem,* p. 16.

[60] Chaïm Perelman, *Logique juridique. Nouvelle rhétorique*, Paris, Dalloz, 1979, p. 135.

[61] Neil MacCormick et Ota Winberger relèvent que la « connaissance juridique » se fonde sur des faits résultant « de l'interprétation d'actes humains et d'autres évènements physiques et psychologiques à la lumière d'une série de normes et de coutumes efficaces » (*Pour une théorie institutionnelle du droit. Nouvelles approches du positivisme juridique*, Gent, Story Scientia, 1992, p. 105).

[62] Jean Marie Klinkenberg, *Précis de sémiotique générale*, Louvain-la-Neuve, De Boeck et Larcier, 1996, p. 313.

[63] Yan Thomas, *Les opérations du droit*, Paris, Seuil – Gallimard, 2011, p. 7.

[64] Stanley Fish, « Comment reconnaître un poème quand on en voit un », in *Quand lire*, p. 68.

« techniques par lesquelles le droit ne cesse de se construire, à l'aide des mêmes catégories, de nouveaux objets ». Elles reflètent le caractère performatif du droit puisqu'elles prennent leur plein sens au sein des « interactions » entre Droit et relations culturelles, économiques et sociales[65]. Ces opérations constitutives du travail des juristes se nourrissent des techniques classiques de la rhétorique générale[66]. Sans prétende à l'exhaustivité, il est possible d'évoquer les opérations juridiques les plus remarquables.

La plus essentielle est certainement la définition des catégories juridiques. On la retrouve déjà dans l'une des plus anciennes compilations de la pensée juridique, le *Digeste*, réunissant le point de vue des plus grands jurisconsultes de la Rome antique. Parmi les trois titres relatifs au problème de l'interprétation, l'un est consacré à la signification conventionnelle des termes juridiques. Cette activité définitoire élémentaire conduit les rédacteurs du *Digeste* à établir d'autres dispositions réglant les conflits de significations d'une même règle ou plus largement les conflits entre règles contradictoires[67]. L'indétermination du langage limite tout succès en ce domaine. Elle justifie le travail diligenté par l'interprète lorsqu'il doit qualifier juridiquement les faits. La liberté accordée ici reste limitée car elle se heurte à des contraintes culturelles, socio-économiques voire plus simplement juridiques[68]. La même liberté rationalisée est accordée au juriste lorsqu'il met en œuvre un mode de preuve des situations juridiques. L'influence culturelle peut ici jouer. Ainsi la Common Law n'envisage normalement pas la preuve par acte authentique comme d'autres systèmes de droit mais privilégie la preuve testimoniale[69].

Les théoriciens du droit se sont principalement intéressés aux opérations qui permettent de déduire la solution juridique d'une proposition formulée de façon plus ou moins générale. Ils se sont plus particulièrement penchés sur les questions posées par l'interprétation des principes. Même lorsque ces derniers « ressemblent le plus à des règles », ils « ne présentent pas de conséquences juridiques qui en découlent automatiquement quand les conditions sont remplies »[70]. Ainsi les principes d'égalité ou de proportionnalité posent plus de problème d'interprétation qu'un article plus précis du Code civil français déterminant l'âge de la majorité. Les principes n'impliquent pas d'agir « conformément à une hypothèse qu'ils

---

[65] Yan Thomas, *Les opérations*, p. 7. Raymond Michel assimile les Communautés interprétatives de Fish à des communautés d'usage (« Il n'y a jamais que des contextes », *Pratiques*, 2011, 151-152, pp. 49-52).

[66] Chaïm Perelman, *Logique*, pp. 125-133.

[67] Pol Foucher, *Qu'est-ce que l'interprétation juridique*, Paris, Vrin, 2013, pp. 17-19.

[68] Michel Troper, Véronique Champeil-Desplats, Christophe Grzegorczyk (éds.), *Théories des contraintes juridiques*, Bruxelles, Bruylant – Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 2005, pp. 12-24.

[69] Serge Rousselle, *La preuve*, Montréal, Blais Inc., 1997, pp. 8-11.

[70] Ronald Dworkin, *Prendre les droits au sérieux*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1995, p. 83.

fixent comme c'est le cas pour les règles ; ils appellent une « prise de position » conforme à leur propre ethos, face à toutes les circonstances, non précisées et non précisables à l'avance ». La réalité mise au contact des principes n'est plus « une matière inerte, un objet purement passif de l'application des règles, une hypothèse concrète à encadrer de l'hypothèse abstraite prévue par la règle »[71]. Signe de cette indétermination consubstantielle, les principes s'expriment souvent par des notions à contenu variable qui plongent l'interprète dans la perplexité[72]. La situation du juriste est encore plus inconfortable lorsqu'il n'existe pas de proposition normative plus ou moins générale pour régler le litige. Il s'agit des cas difficiles (hard cases) évoqués par les juristes américains.

Depuis l'Antiquité et le Moyen-âge, les juristes ont alors recourt à la casuistique. Cette opération du droit ne se fonde pas vraiment sur « la force du précédent, qui veut que toute règle s'applique aux cas identiques à celui par lequel elle fut la première fois énoncée, conformément au modèle normativiste qui subsume verticalement les cas sous la norme ». La casuistique est plutôt « une pratique allégatoire » servant à « étendre des réseaux d'analogies tissées d'un cas à l'autre [...] pour associer des institutions ou des choses relevant pourtant de règlementations distinctes et situées à des niveaux de réalité disparates ». Ce mode de raisonnement s'appuie sur la mise « en place de configurations à première vue étranges, parfois même aléatoires, d'objets qui ont en commun d'avoir suscité, non pas une même norme mais un type de récit exemplaire, une sorte d'intrigue matricielle »[73]. Il s'agit du cas type autour duquel le casuiste va raisonner par analogie.

Toutefois, les opérations qui caractérisent le mieux le travail juridique sont celles qui lui permettent de s'extraire de la réalité empirique la plus immédiate. Les juristes peuvent recourir à la théorie de l'apparence. Son application paralyse « le jeu normal de la règle juridique » et la « situation apparente devient une source de droits et d'obligations »[74]. L'exemple classique du droit civil français est celui de la paternité légitime présumée du mari de la mère de l'enfant. Avec la théorie de l'apparence, le juriste veut capter « un reflet du monde juridiquement protégé »[75] afin d'assurer « un monde de confiance » et d'aménager « l'accès à la connaissance du monde en organisant la preuve du procès »[76]. C'est cependant en employant des fictions que le juriste révèle le mieux le caractère constructiviste de sa pratique. La fiction est « une interprétation contraire à la vérité [...] mais encore

---

[71] Gustavo Zagrebelsky, *Le droit en douceur*, Paris, Économica, 2000, p. 114.
[72] Chaïm Perleman, Raymond Vander Elst, *Les notions à contenu variable en droit*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 1984.
[73] Yan Thomas, *Les opérations*, pp. 235-236.
[74] Agnès Rabagny, *L'image juridique du monde*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2003, p. 108.
[75] *Ibidem*, p. 251.
[76] *Ibidem*, p. 315.

et surtout faut-il que le faux ne laisse aucun doute, que la dénaturation dont il s'agit soit absolument assurée ». Cette technique d'interprétation se distingue des présomptions qui « ne renoncent pas à tout lien avec le substrat de réalité auquel leur énoncé réfère ». La présomption ne repose pas « sur la certitude du faux mais l'incertitude du vrai »[77].

Il existe enfin des « mécanismes de pensée involontaires », repérées par M-L Mathieu, constitués par des représentations du Droit fondées sur « des images mentales » ayant un « rôle éminent sur la pensée juridique »[78]. M-L. Mathieu met en lumière des figures de style comme la synecdoque, l'analogie, la métaphore mais aussi des représentations géométriques, de nombre ou de dimension en usage dans le discours juridique[79]. Le juriste y recourt pour expliquer le fonctionnement d'institutions juridiques telles que des contrats, des régimes matrimoniaux ou successoraux.

L'ensemble de ces opérations du droit atteste de la nature herméneutique de la connaissance juridique nécessaire à l'élaboration de propositions normatives appliquées. L'analyse du contentieux devant les tribunaux permet de voir comment les Communautés interprétatives mobilisent un tel savoir.

L'action des Communautés interprétatives dans le contentieux devant les tribunaux

C'est sans conteste dans le domaine de l'unification européenne qu'apparaît de la façon la plus éclatante le rôle de Communautés interprétatives dans l'édification des règles juridiques. Le droit établi par la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme peut découler de l'analyse des différents droits nationaux des parties à la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme. Dans un domaine aussi marqué par les traditions nationales que le droit de la famille, la Cour s'efforce de promouvoir dans ses décisions un dénominateur commun des droits des différents États. En droit communautaire (droit de l'actuelle Union européenne), le juge peut également nourrir sa réflexion avec le dialogue des droits nationaux. Face aux lacunes du droit communautaire, le juge européen a pu forger la notion de droits fondamentaux ou esquisser un modèle communautaire de droit administratif en faisant appel au droit comparé des États membres des traités communautaires[80].

Les juridictions de pays différents peuvent constituer des Communautés interprétatives autonomes. C'est le cas de la Cour de cassation française si on la

---

[77] Yan Thomas, *Les opérations*, pp. 133-134.
[78] Marie Laure Mathieu, *Les représentations dans la pensée des juristes*, Paris, IRJS éditions, 2014, p. 12.
[79] *Ibidem*, pp. 14, 19*sq*, 63*sq*.
[80] Olivier Tholozan, « Vers un droit commun ? », in Jean-Yves Chérot, Benoît Frydman (éds.), *La science du droit*, pp. 281-283.

compare avec une autre juridiction de tradition culturelle différente, telle que la Cour suprême du Canada. Ces deux Cours ont eu l'occasion de statuer sur un litige dont les faits sont assez similaires. Des copropriétaires de religion hébraïque voulaient construire sur leur balcon un petit édifice végétal éphémère pour respecter le rite d'une fête religieuse. Ils se sont heurtés à l'interdiction du règlement de copropriété. L'affaire canadienne différait légèrement car, sensible au communautarisme en usage dans le pays, le syndic de copropriété avait autorisé les copropriétaires de religion hébraïque à construire un édifice collectif dans le jardin.

En 2006, la Cour de cassation française a rejeté le pourvoi des coreligionnaires hébraïques fondé sur la violation de la liberté religieuse. Pour saisir le raisonnement des juges, il faut rappeler que, malgré la difficulté d'établir une séparation entre droit et faits, les juges de cassation bornent leur mission à la qualification juridique des faits. La France reste un pays légicentriste et le juge ne fait qu'appliquer la loi. Aussi les arguments des décisions de cassation sont purement juridiques. Dans l'affaire des copropriétaires hébraïques, la Cour a estimé que l'article 9 paragr. 2 de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme n'avait pas été violé par le règlement de copropriété. Ils ont interprété de façon abstraite ce texte. Au terme d'une argumentation laconique classique, ils ont décidé que la liberté de religion ne peut rendre licite les violations d'un règlement de copropriété. A leurs yeux, du moment que les juges d'appel ont constaté que les constructions portent atteinte à l'harmonie générale de l'immeuble, ils n'ont pas à diligenter d'autres recherches et peuvent faire prévaloir le règlement. Les juges de cassation n'ont pas exercé de véritable contrôle de proportionnalité entre l'atteinte à la liberté religieuse et les exigences de l'organisation sociale, pourtant utilisé par la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme.

Dès 2004, la Cour suprême de Canada avait adopté la solution contraire pour faire respecter la liberté religieuse protégée par la Charte québécoise. Les juges ont considéré que même l'alternative d'une construction collective dans le jardin proposée par le syndic de copropriété était insuffisante pour permettre l'exercice de la liberté en cause. Sans aborder les différences de fonctionnement entre les Cours française et canadienne, il faut insister sur les divergences de raisonnement. La Cour canadienne est une vraie Cour suprême qui ne se borne pas à la qualification juridique des faits. Elle rend une décision fondée sur un raisonnement soucieux d'emporter la conviction. La Cour s'appuie donc aussi sur des arguments extra-juridiques tirés de la morale, la philosophie, les sciences. La longueur de ses décisions dépasse largement celles des tribunaux français. En l'espèce, les juges canadiens ont exercé un véritable contrôle de proportionnalité entre la liberté religieuse et ses atteintes. Ce contrôle plus concret s'attache à la réalité des faits et à la relativité des différentes situations auxquelles les juges sont confrontées. La

Cour a ainsi limité les effets du droit de propriété dès lors que ce dernier est confronté à la liberté religieuse[81].

Le jeu des Communautés interprétatives dans le déroulement du procès peut s'avérer beaucoup plus complexe. Au cours du procès, les professionnels du droit que sont les juges peuvent être confrontés aux revendications d'une Communauté interprétative profane. En 1998 en France, le Tribunal de grande instance de Tarascon a accepté d'évaluer les conséquences juridiques des agissements des créateurs en Art contemporain. Il était question d'Art de comportement. Selon la logique des tenants de cette forme d'art, la qualité d'œuvre ne réside plus dans la matérialité de l'objet fabriqué mais dans l'immatérialité du geste, bien souvent éphémère, de l'artiste qui met en perspective et médiatise l'objet d'art. C'est justement une manifestation de cette forme d'art conceptuel qui a servi de cadre à l'affaire jugée. Au Carré d'Art de Nîmes, les musées de l'État français ont exposé les œuvres de Marcel Duchamp, dont ses « ready made ». Ces derniers sont des objets de série que l'artiste a transformés en œuvre non par un acte matériel mais par sa volonté de déclarer objets d'art des objets de la vie courante. Un artiste de comportement, P. Pinoncely, est entré dans l'exposition nîmoise et a endommagé par un coup de marteau un « ready made » appelé « Fontaine » dont le support matériel était un simple urinoir. Par ce geste P. Pinoncely a considéré, conformément à la logique de l'Art de comportement, avoir débaptisé l'œuvre de Duchamp, l'avoir retransformé en objet banal et lui avoir rendu sa fonction d'origine. Puis l'artiste a uriné sur l'ancien « ready made » de Duchamp afin de le transmuter en produit de son propre travail artistique. L'Etat français a attaqué cet artiste provocateur pour être indemnisé du dommage causé. L'avocat de P. Pinoncely a soutenu que conformément à la méthode de Duchamp, son client avait créé une œuvre d'art et rien détruit[82].

Le Tribunal de grande instance de Tarascon a bien senti l'ironie de l'affaire et le contexte de provocation qui l'entourait. Les juges ont accepté d'examiner les prétentions de « l'Etat, malheureux propriétaire d'œuvres d'art provocatrices et génératrices d'actions artistiques spontanées de la part d'artiste de 'comportement' ». En même temps, ils ont tenu compte des prétentions de l'Art de comportement dans leur raisonnement, refusant tout « simplisme », toute « imperméabilité supposée de l'institution judiciaire à toute démarche « artistique d'avant-garde ». Ils se sont efforcés de concilier deux logiques incommensurables en les pondérant. Sensibles aux conséquences financières de l'acte de l'artiste de comportement sur le patrimoine de l'Etat, ils ont condamné P. Pinoncely à

---

[81] Christophe Jamin, « Juger et motiver. Introduction comparative à la question du contrôle de proportionnalité en matière de droits fondamentaux », *Revue trimestrielle de droit civil*, 2015, avril-juin, pp. 263-281.
[82] Bernard Edelman, Nathalie Heinich, *L'Art en conflit. L'œuvre de l'esprit entre droit et sociologie*, Paris, La Découverte – Syros, 2002, pp. 73-101.

indemniser les musées de l'Etat français. Les juges ont d'abord estimé qu'en absence « d'autre unité disponible » leur évaluation devait reposer sur celle « communément admise, l'argent ». Ils ont ensuite considéré que les actes de Pinoncely avaient pris tout leur sens parce qu'ils avaient été exécutés sur des œuvres de Duchamp, artiste reconnu et de réputation mondiale. D'ailleurs la publicité de ces actes par les médias ne se justifiait que par la célébrité de Duchamp. Ainsi P. Pinoncely ne pouvait « créer » sa propre œuvre d'art qu'en captant à son profit cette célébrité qu'il utilisait comme son « faire valoir ». Donc cet artiste avait dû reconnaître à titre préalable l'urinoir de Duchamp comme une œuvre d'art et ne pouvait soutenir que cet objet cassé n'avait aucune valeur par lui-même[83].

Conclusion

Dans un souci de réalisme le juriste sicilien Santi Romano a repensé le concept classique d'ordre juridique en développant une conception institutionnaliste originale. L'ordre juridique est, à ses yeux, un rapport d'autorité et de force créant, modifiant, appliquant et faisant respecter les normes juridiques sans s'identifier à elles[84]. Il en déduisait une vision pluraliste des ordres juridiques sans remettre en cause la prévalence de l'ordre étatique sur tout autre. Aujourd'hui le règne sans partage de l'ordre juridique étatique est contesté. La figure classique de la hiérarchie pyramidale est écartée au profit de celle du réseau formé par des connections entre les diverses sources du droit[85]. La notion de Communautés interprétatives de Stanley Fish permet au juriste de déplacer le questionnement du plan normatif vers le plan épistémologique. L'importance des conditions d'élaboration de la connaissance juridique sur la résolution de la controverse et du débat purement normatif apparaît. La notion de Communautés interprétatives juridiques montre à quel point la rationalisation du droit repose sur une démarche dialogique.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

CHÉROT, Jean-Yves, Benoît FRYDMAN (éds.), *La science du droit dans la globalisation*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 2012.
COMMAILLE, Jacques, *A quoi nous sert le Droit ?*, Paris, Gallimard, 2015.
CORNU, Gérard, *Linguistique juridique*, Paris, Montchrestien, 2000.

---

[83] Tribunal de Grande Instance de Tarascon (État français/ Pinoncely), 20 novembre 1998, *Recueil Dalloz*, CLXXVI, 2000, pp. 128-129.
[84] Santi Romano, *L'Ordre juridique*, Paris, Dalloz, 1975, p. 10 (§ 5).
[85] François Ost, Michel Van de Kerchove, *De la pyramide au réseau ? Pour une théorie dialectique du droit*, Saint Louis, Publications des Facultés Universitaires de Saint Louis, 2002.

CUNIBERTI, Gilles, *Grands systèmes de droit contemporains*, Paris, Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 2011.

DELPEUCH, Thierry, Laurence DUMOULIN, Claire DE GALEMBERT, *Sociologie du droit et de la justice*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2014.

DUNCAN, Fairgrieve, Horatia MUIR-WHATT, *Common Law et tradition civiliste*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2006.

DWORKIN, R., *Justice pour les hérissons. La vérité des valeurs*, Bruxelles, Labor et Fides, 2015.

DWORKIN, Ronald, *Prendre les droits au sérieux*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1995.

EDELMAN, Bernard Edelman, Nathalie HEINICH, *L'Art en conflit. L'œuvre de l'esprit entre droit et sociologie*, Paris, La Découverte – Syros, 2002.

FISH, Stanley, *Quand lire c'est faire. L'autorité des Communautés interprétatives*, Paris, Les Prairies ordinaires, 2007.

FISH, Stanley, *Doing what Comes Naturally. Change, Rhetoric and Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989.

FISH, Stanley, *Respecter le sens commun. Rhétorique, interprétation et critique en littérature et droit*. Traduit par Odile Nerhot, Bruxelles – Paris, Story Scientia – LGDJ, 1995.

FLÜCKIGER, Alexandre, « Qu'est-ce que 'mieux légiférer'. Enjeux et instrumentalisation de la notion de qualité législative », in Alexandre Flückiger et Christine Guy-Ecabert (éds.), *Guider les parlements et les gouvernements pour mieux légiférer. Le guide des rôles de légistique*, Zürich, Schulthess, 2008.

FOUCHER, Pol, *Qu'est-ce que l'interprétation juridique*, Paris, Vrin, 2013.

FRISON, Danièle, *Introduction au droit anglais et aux institutions britanniques*, Paris, Ellipses, 2005.

FRYDMAN, Benoît, Arnaud VAN WAYENBERGE, *Gouverner par les standards et les indicateurs de Hume aux Rankings*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 2014.

HALPÉRIN, Jean-Louis, *Profils de la mondialisation du droit*, Paris, Dalloz, 2009.

HART, Herbert, *Le concept de droit*, Saint Louis, Publications des Facultés Universitaires de Saint Louis, 2005.

ISRAEL, Liora, *L'arme du droit*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 2009.

JAMIN, Christophe, « Juger et motiver. Introduction comparative à la question du contrôle de proportionnalité en matière de droits fondamentaux », *Revue trimestrielle de droit civil*, 2015, avril-juin, pp. 263-281.

LEGRAND, Pierre, Geoffrey SAMUEL, *Introduction au Common Law*, Paris, La Découverte, 2008.

MacCORMICK, Neil, Ota WINBERGER, *Pour une théorie institutionnelle du droit. Nouvelles approches du positivisme juridique*, Bruxelles, Story Scientia, 1992.

MATHIEU, Marie Laure, *Les représentations dans la pensée des juristes*, Paris, IRJS éditions, 2014.

McLAREN, Karine, « Le bilinguisme législatif et judiciaire au Canada », in Isabelle Pingel (éd.), *Le multilinguisme dans l'Union européenne*, Paris, Pedone, 2015, pp. 130-137.

McCORMICK, Neil, « La texture ouverte des règles juridiques », in Paul Amselek, Christophe Grzegorczyk (éds.), *Controverses autour de l'ontologie du droit*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1989.

MERCAT-BRUNS, Marie, « L'enseignement du droit aux Etats-Unis », *Jurisprudence. Revue critique de droit*, 2010, 1, pp. 113-123.

OST, François, Michel VAN DE KERCHOVE, *De la pyramide au réseau ? Pour une théorie dialectique du droit*, Saint Louis, Publications des Facultés Universitaires de Saint Louis, 2002.

PERELMAN, Chaïm, *Logique juridique. Nouvelle rhétorique*, Paris, Dalloz, 1979.

PERELMAN, Chaïm, Elst VANDER, *Les notions à contenu variable en droit*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 1984.

PRADEL, Jean, *Le droit pénal comparé*, Paris, Dalloz, 2008.

RABAGNY, Agnès, *L'image juridique du monde*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2003.

RAYMOND, Michel, « "Il n'y a jamais que des contextes". Les communautés interprétatives de Stanley Fish », *Pratiques*, 2011, 151-152, pp. 49-72.

ROMANO, Santi, *L'Ordre juridique*, Paris, Dalloz, 1975.

ROULAND, Norbert, *Anthropologie juridique*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1988.

ROUSSELLE, Serge, *La preuve*, Montréal, Blais Inc., 1997.

KELSEN, Hans, *Théorie pure du droit*. Traduit par H. Thevenaz, Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1953.

KLINKENBERG, Jean Marie, *Précis de sémiotique générale*, Louvain-la-Neuve, De Boeck et Larcier, 1996.

SCHIAVONE, Aldo, *L'invention du droit en Occident*, Paris, Belin, 2008.

THOMAS, Yan, *Les opérations du droit*, Paris, Seuil – Gallimard, 2011.

Tribunal de Grande Instance de Tarascon, (État français/ Pinoncely), 20 novembre 1998, *Recueil Dalloz*, CLXXVI, 2000, pp. 128-129.

TROPER, Michel, Véronique CHAMPEIL-DESPLATS, Christophe GRZEGORCZYK, (éds.), *Théories des contraintes juridiques*, Bruxelles, Bruylant – Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 2005.

ZAGREBELSKY, Gustavo, *Le droit en douceur*, Paris, Économica, 2000.

WEBER, Max, *Sociologie du droit*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1986.

LEGAL INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITIES
(*Abstract*)

The Fish's notion of interpretive Communities aims to demonstrate hermeneutic nature of knowledge. This concept is useful to explain the legal phenomenon. In legal field, there are different interpretive Communities in accordance with cultural traditions, with professional lawyers or lay(wo)men. Inside the interpretive Communities, the social players perform legal operations to establish legal answers. Judicial cases show the influence of interpretive Communities's performance.

Keywords: Stanley Fish, legal Interpretive communities, legal performances, legal reasoning, legal epistemology.

COMUNITĂŢI INTERPRETATIVE ÎN DREPT
(*Rezumat*)

Noţiunea de „comunitate interpretativă" pe care o gândeşte Stanley Fish mizează pe natura hermeneutică a cunoaşterii. Conceptul e de aceea cât se poate de util juristului. În sfera dreptului, există diferite comunităţi interpretative, aparţinând unor profesii juridice diferite, ataşate unor tradiţii culturale diferite. Juriştii îşi efectuează operaţiile juridice în cadrele comunităţii lor de apartenenţă. Analiza câtorva decizii judiciare e relevantă pentru a demonstra această influenţă a comunităţii.

Cuvinte-cheie: Stanley Fish, comunitate interpretativă în drept, performanţe legale, raţionare legală, epistemologie legală.

DORIS MIRONESCU

BONDING THROUGH IRONY:
TEXTUAL COMMUNITIES IN I.L. CARAGIALE AND
RADU COSAŞU

Reading Romanian 19th century literature may help us understand communities in literature in a threefold way. Firstly, the 1848 generation of writers manifests itself as a fairly solidary group of young men participating to a relatively homogeneous textual practice, with a common pool of themes and images and a stable rhetorical repertoire circulating among them; it is therefore a writerly community[1]. Secondly, their main literary theme is also one of the main concerns of the early modern Romanian society, namely "national character"; their nationalist drive, which they shared with most European young intellectuals at the time, is an expression of their interest in the aggregation of a coherent social community. Thirdly, as these writers address "the nation" in their writing, they are clearly identifying the national community to a reading community[2].

In the following literary generation, with writers active in the last quarter of the 19th century, there no longer exists a perfect superposition of social and reading communities, as in the previous generation, and the solidity of the writerly community also becomes highly questionable. Although Eminescu, Creangă or Caragiale contribute massively to the constitution of a spiritual solidarity with themes like national history, peasant life or *joie de vivre* in their generation, they also engage in a shrewd deconstruction of the old symbols of nationalist communities. Even when they address a wide readership, they rarely claim to speak to the nation, and instead tend to seek their readership in smaller circles of elite initiates. Even if they are friends with each other, the writer's loneliness is their master trope. But this divorce between national and reading communities calls for techniques that engage the reader on other levels than the social one. In the following pages, I concentrate on this search for a way to compensate the lost social bond by identifying a readership which might feel as a surrogate

---

[1] For the sociability of the 1848 generation, see Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends. Romanian Revolutionaries and Political Exile (1848-1859)*, Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2011. For the rhetorical patterns and the common poetics of this remarkably unified generation, see Mihai Zamfir, *Din secolul romantic* [*From the Romantic Century*], Bucureşti, Eminescu, 1989.

[2] I am referring here, of course, to the reading community as a metaphor, a construct of the nationalist writer's imagination, and not an actual presence. It would be hard to do otherwise. Alex Drace-Francis talks about the phantasmatic character of the nationalist reading community at the beginning of the 19th century, as writers were addressing a society with a majority of illiterates (*The Making of Modern Romanian Culture*, London – New York, I.B. Tauris, 2012, p. 3).

community. But it is not just 19ᵗʰ century literature that has this dual vocation. Writers at the end of the 20ᵗʰ century continue the tradition of social dissidence and innovative textual bonding, even if their struggle is with entirely different types of communities, and their literary endeavor is more postmodern than modern in nature.

To verify literature's resistance to community myths and its ingeniousness in finding alternate textual connections, I will analyze works by two Romanian authors from different epochs who write about different types of community. Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912) wrote his short prose mainly in the last decade of the 19ᵗʰ century, often satirizing the Romanian nationalist mythology that had constituted itself in the Romantic decades starting with the 1830s. Radu Cosaşu (b. 1930), a writer specializing in novellas written during the second half of the 20th century, discussed at length in his work the failure of the communist utopia, which he had enthusiastically embraced in his youth, only to become its disillusioned chronicler later in life. Both denounced a community, either nationalist or communist, with strikingly similar means, proposing instead a strictly literary alliance with their reader, an alliance that can be studied as a new form of community. And they both used irony to build this particular reading alliance, an alliance that may be discussed using Jean-Luc Nancy's vision of the deconstructive mission of literature and Kuisma Korhonen's concept of "textual community".

Textual Community

In *The Inoperative Community*, Jean-Luc Nancy argues that communities spring from a drive toward communion, a form of being in common which seeks further reasons and alibis to rally multitudes. The French philosopher proposes a definition of community that puts at its core the trust in its own organicity and considers secondary the mobiles of this organicity: "community is not only intimate communication between its members, but also its organic communion with its own essence"[3]. By this reversion, the idea of the community's organicity becomes its own motor, it produces itself, it turns itself into work, and this allows the French philosopher to talk about community's innate essentialism or immanentism. It is this immanence that "transforms community into communion, communion into essence and essence into work"[4].

In light of this definition of community as immanent-driven, Nancy attributes great importance to literary texts. They have the dual function to both forge

---

[3] Jean Luc-Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 9.

[4] Btihaj Ajana, "Rethinking Community through Literature", *Journal for Cultural Research*, XI, 2007, 2, p. 102.

immanentist communities by elaborating their myths, and also to enact their dissolving, to ruin essentialist mythologies. If any kind of story-telling may amount to a creation of myth, the situation of literature as something that is written, constituted by *écriture*, permanently differs meaning-making and thus interrupts the community that aspires to be summoned through narration. For Nancy, "myth is simply the invention of literature"[5], and there are numerous cases and instances when literary works seek to edify an emblem of the community. But literature also performs "the interruption of myth"[6], and through its mode of existence, the writing (*écriture*), it denies transcendence, and can therefore be defined as "the inscription of a meaning whose transcendence or presence is indefinitely or constitutively deferred"[7]. It is in the nature of literature to postpone indefinitely the constitution of the immanent sense of what it transmits, and this makes it an excellent deconstructive mechanism for our illusions of immanence.

Starting from Nancy's analysis of the deconstructive vocation of literature, and also using Maurice Blanchot's insights on the "unavowable community" and Jacques Derrida's idea of self-deconstructing notions, Kuisma Korhonen theorized "textual community", an alternative[8], virtual society of readers, each isolated in front of the printed page (or the digital screen) and summoned by the author and by the world in the text to an awareness of their being together through reading. As Korhonen warns us, this community does not turn into an organization, does not achieve its institutionalization, as it is interrupted by "our awareness of a larger textual community"[9]. The very fact that the reading community is open prohibits it from ever being firmly established, claims the Finnish scholar. There are several ways in which textual communities can be described as permanently or indefinitely open. They are virtual, heterogeneous, asymmetrical, and temporary: virtual, because they are not established contractually in a given space; heterogeneous, because they include readers of all calibers and producers of texts and commentaries of all qualities; asymmetrical, because their two main poles, author and reader, participate unequally to it; and temporary, because they only last as long as reading lasts or, more pragmatically, as long as the text still finds its readers. Their fragility is a guarantee that this community is not on the verge of growing into a full-fledged, essentialist community, that it remains "unavowed".

Korhonen prefers the concept of "textual community" to the "interpretive community" defended by Stanley Fish, which he considers too restrictively

---

[5] Jean Luc-Nancy, *The Inoperative*, p. 72.

[6] *Ibidem*.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 80.

[8] "A textual counter-community", Korhonen once calls it.

[9] Kuisma Korhonen, "Textual Communities: Nancy, Blanchot, Derrida", *Cultural Machine*, VIII, 2006, unpaginated, http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/rt/printerFriendly/35/43, accessed on May 3rd, 2016.

centered on reception at the expanse of textuality, and at the same time utopian in its ideal of unity ("is any interpretive community really *one*?"[10]). He chooses to see literature as something other than an institution, and in this he is more close to the theories of reading inspired by phenomenology, such as Wolfgang Iser's. He is fascinated by the idea of floating communities that are spontaneously aggregated and successively dissolved by readers opening or closing their books. But he seems to neglect the possible agency of the literary text that purposefully opens a dialogue with the reader. I am not referring to didactic and/or ideological texts that seek to influence their reader's opinions, but to works that play on a shrewd complicity, based on an appreciation of wit and irony. In them, the rallying call can only come at the expense of a fraudulent, abusive or illegitimate community that the author seeks to deconstruct. By directing their irony at communitary myths, these texts maintain their lucidity and their openness, inviting others to the fragile communication one can establish through reading.

I.L. Caragiale and Radu Cosaşu are both combative writers, active in periods that were suffocated by propaganda. Caragiale addressed the gregarious nationalism of his time, in which he saw demagogy, semantic vacuity, and utter stupidity. Cosaşu, on the other hand, confronted the specter of the communist togetherness that he initially embraced, but soon discovered the falsity of its attraction. For each of them, the separation from the dreamed-of community comes after an unsuccessful interpellation, when contact with the other fails to be established. For each, the need to appeal to the other is a starting point, as the need for being in common does not elude critical spirit. Their texts verify the "principle of incompleteness" that, after Maurice Blanchot, drives each being to "put itself into question" with the help of the other[11]. The communitary instinct starts from the individual's desire to put him – or herself in the game, to be validated by the other's participation to his or her way of being. But, in Caragiale's and Cosaşu's texts, this desire is frustrated, the other refuses the interpellation, and the dream of community fails to materialize. This prompts the author to transfer his appeal to another, at a distance, and this other is the reader of the text. The failed dialogue with the other in proximity is converted into a new dialogical relationship that intersects perpendicularly the plane of the printed page (or of the digital screen). The text orients itself toward the reader, to which it addresses allegorically and metatextually, i.e. using the language of literature. Having failed to congregate a community of feeling and moral solidarity, the text seeks for an intellectual complicity with the reader, based on irony. Markers of irony may be phrases with defective grammar or an intertextual signal, but they function as established bonds

---

[10] Kuisma Korhonen, "Textual".
[11] Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, New York, Station Hill Press, 1988, p. 5.

between the author and the reader. It is through textual techniques that this new community, textual community, comes into being.

Caragiale, Nationalism, and Anacoluthon

Caragiale's short prose paints an image of turn-of-the-20th-century Bucharest as a city pampered by history, but morally corrupt, filled with ordinary people, merrily spending their uneventful lives at cafés and beerhouses. Since his characters often seem devoid of individual features and because their lives seem unimportant, lacking any major commotion that might ever make them suffer the kind of moral breakdown typical for the grand psychological realism of the 19th century, they gave some critics the impression that Caragiale's prose is "minor" and its sole purpose is entertainment. Only later, in the 1970s and 1980s, did investigations of modernist poetics show that there was a correlation between the author's option for short prose and his decision to describe the universe of minor sins, of venial offences, and of likeable corruption. They justified this correlation as a subversive operation to sabotage the prestigious, canonical genres, such as the novel or the national drama, and at the same time to subvert the all-too-flattering and used-up image of national community, which had transformed, after decades of rhetorical abuse, into a parody of itself. The writer sets out to consistently, almost systematically, debunk nationalist myths on several levels. Caragiale decides, for instance, to write about the city, thus shunning the idyllic peasant scenery of most 1848-generation literature. He mercilessly, cruelly mocks at the "sublime" rhetoric of liberal populism through his representation of revolutions as carnivals. He addresses the intellectual imposture of Romanian nationalism in parodies addressed at the so-called "green (diehard) Rrromanians". And he censors the excesses of Latinomania through brilliant caricatures, while promoting, especially in some of his later prose, the non-Latin, Balkanic and Oriental heritage of Romanian post-medieval history in a cultural mix that angered purists.

At a textual level, Caragiale is very innovative: he writes theatrical, dialogic sketches, small anecdotes, mosaic compositions mirroring a Babylonic polyphony of perspectives, and also short experimental pieces, which innovate by using administrative or epistolary style, street talk, as well as several types of journalistic jargon[12]. For the present discussion, I will refer to a particular type of short prose, made of texts where the narrator is also a character, the famous "uncle Iancu", an author figure, given that "Iancu" was a hypocorism for "Ion", Caragiale's given name. These texts have often been singled out by critics, but the relevance of the

---

[12] For a discussion of these short prose experiments, see Al. Călinescu, *Caragiale sau vârsta modernă a literaturii* [*Caragiale, or The Modern Age of Literature*], Bucureşti, Albatros, 1976.

author's submersion in his own literary universe seems to me still noteworthy. "Uncle Iancu" not only "connects the episodes of this comedy, gives theatrical directions, converses with other characters, [...] leading almost the same life as them"[13], but he is the essential character of these texts where he holds the most prominent part. He illustrates the typology of the well-meaning naïve, forced to learn the hard way how uncertain social interaction can be, a quixotic figure that, in many of his appearances, becomes an exemplary victim of others. It is true that he also participates to memorable drinking parties (*Repaosul dominical* [*Sunday Rest*]) and initiates exasperated feats of revenge (*Bùbico*), but more often than that he suffers because of his excessive trust in the benevolence and openness of others. He is peaceful, amicable, and skeptical toward political commitment, but even moderation seems to be a dangerous attitude for this unadjusted, inadequate spectator of 1900 Bucharest's turbulent political scene. For instance, in *Atmosferă încărcată* [*Highly Charged Atmosphere*], "uncle Iancu" strives to avoid a clear political stance in a hot electoral moment, hoping that he will be able to communicate with the others indifferently from their allegiance. He professes no opinion in front of his inflammable friends and reads simultaneously both the government's and the opposition's gazettes to make a clear-headed estimate of the factual truth that both publications are obviously stretching in their favor. Still, he is repeatedly accused by the others and scorned for the abuses that either "your bandit government", or "your scoundrels" of the opposition are making, and has to pay the bill of his aggressive interlocutors. His only compensation is the last laugh, a victim's laugh in fact, which moves the debate, wrongly placed by his interlocutors in the field of politics, in another field, that of intelligence, civility, politeness. Of course, it is the victim who morally wins this dispute, if we follow it not in the flow of the anecdote, where "uncle Iancu" has to pay several rounds of beer and support the violent interpellations of no matter whom, but beyond the page, in the text's interaction with its reader. And while the narrator's desire to fulfill his social aspirations leads him to failure to establish a human understanding with the other, a new form of understanding with a sympathetic reader comes to vindicate his moral martyrdom.

Perhaps the best example of how aspiration for community turns into failure is Caragiale's *Situaţiunea* [*The Situation*]. The texts begins with a declaration of the

---

[13] Florin Manolescu, *Caragiale şi Caragiale. Jocuri cu mai multe strategii* [*Caragiale and Caragiale. Games with a Plurality of Strategies*], Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2002, p. 154. Unlike Manolescu, I do not think that "uncle Iancu" gives theatrical directions in Caragiale's texts. The "director" in his dialogue short proses (for instance, *C.F.R.*), need not be equivalated to the narrator-character in the texts I refer to shortly. In the case of the "director", there is no tension between the fictional status of the character and the civil identity of the author, which I think is the defining trait of the "uncle Iancu" texts.

need for community, expressing the desire to meet a random friend and live the banal experience of "breathing together" in the cool night after a hot day. The friend, Nae, indeed appears, and talking with him reveals a man extremely convinced of the truth of all his assertions. The much desired community of friends is shattered after the first words. Nae is an aggressive speaker, who attributes to his interlocutor a pro-government attitude that he resents, so that he can more vividly direct his polemical accusations toward him. Instead of a peaceful dialogue that might build trust and friendship, the narrator is bitterly scolded. Nae is a hardened patriot who expresses his love of country by diminishing its achievements and exaggerating its poverty and pleads for an authoritarian government. He is obviously politically confused and his nationalist stance is incoherent, mistaking independence for tyranny and claiming his patriotism on everyone else's lack thereof. His ungrammatical jargon, shared by many of Caragiale's characters, is crucial to his political position. It connotes superficial vitality and jovial aggressiveness, but mostly intellectual incoherence and lack of introspection. Nae makes great use of anacoluthon, and displays many parasitic syntactical structures that probably help him project an aggrandizing image of himself as rhetorician: "It's a crisis, if you follow me, that you just as well could say no way could it ever be more horrible"[14]. At some point, Nae seems almost excusable for his nervousness, as it is revealed that he roams the streets at night afraid for the outcome of his wife giving birth at home to his child. But soon after, finding out that the birth went on normally, he sets out for a new alcohol-serving place and reprises his speech even more violently: "Do you know what we need? […] A tyranny like they have in Russia"[15]. It is now that the narrator feels able to leave Nae, but only after he signals to him that any real or possible resistance to his words is gone. He demonstrates his giving in by borrowing Nae's verbal mannerisms, syntactic errors and pompous rhetoric:

-Sorry, Nae: it's so late, I really could not just as well go with you anymore...
-Come on...
-I'm so sleepy, I must just as well go to bed. Good bye...
I took a hackney and I left the happy father go just as well by himself to the pretzel place[16].

---

[14] "E o criză, mă-nțelegi, care poți pentru ca să zici că nu se poate mai oribilă" (Ion Luca Caragiale, *Momente* [*Moments*], București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1969, p. 137). When not specified otherwise, the English translations from Romanian are mine.

[15] "Știi ce-ar trebui la noi? [...] O tiranie ca-n Rusia" (*Ibidem*, p. 141).

[16] "-Nae, scuză-mă: e așa de târziu, că nu pot pentru ca să mai merg...
-Îmi pare rău...
-Mi-e așa de somn, care trebuie negreșit pentru ca să mă culc. La revedere...
M-am suit într-o birjă și l-am lăsat pe fericitul tată pentru ca să meargă singur la simigerie" (*Ibidem*, p. 141).

The Situation relates a failed attempt to construct or confirm a community that was initially supposed to be based on simple things: breathing together, enjoying the coolness of a summer night, drinking beer and leisurely talking about random things. But for Nae, community actually means a relation of power in which the other is a victim forced to endure incriminations and verbal abuse. Pushed into a submissive position, dominated through brutality, the narrator gives in not to Nae's violent political ideas, but to the sheer force of their flow. This is why his capitulation is signaled metalinguistically, by borrowing his verbal mannerisms and displaying them openly, as he would a white flag.

Still, the narrator continues to use the same jargon even after leaving Nae. I don't think this is the result of some irreversible mental colonization, but rather an ironic gesture of independence, similar to the "last laugh" in the previously mentioned prose, *Highly Charged Atmosphere*, which marked the narrator taking his distance from the situation. This newfound distance is not displayed for the benefit of Nae, who no longer participates to the scene in the last sentence, but for the reader, a silent witness to the events so far. It is for him that irony is displayed; in fact, the reader is invited to oppose, along with the narrator, the "Russia-like tyranny" that Nae anticipates. Apparently immersed in the world he talks about, the author evades from it and transforms the text into an allegory of his own dissidence, which the reader is free to verify and adopt for him- or herself. Caragiale, the author, is the first reader of the text narrating the conversation between "uncle Iancu" and his friend Nae. The second reader is anyone of us, who opens the book and goes through the text from beginning to end, borrowing the narrator's changing perspective and his "situation", alternately, inside and outside the textual world. Finally, the "interrupted community" in the text foreshadows a possible foundation of an alternative community through the collaborative act of reading.

Cosaşu, Communism, and Intertext

Caragiale's text opens directly toward the reader, as if starting a dialogue with him or her. In his texts, the use of intertext is not very obvious, probably because at the time there wasn't too much autochthonous literary tradition for Caragiale to intertextualize. But in Radu Cosaşu's literature, intertextuality is an essential feature, an integral part of his personal poetics. Cosaşu published initially, in the 1950s, reportages that served the newly installed communist regime, but during the next decades he acquired a remarkable artistic prominence, especially in his cycle *Supravieţuiri* [*Survivals*] (1973-1989). An early adherent to communism, Cosaşu soon became a victim of party narrowness and inflexibility, and later he came to formulate his artistic identity by analyzing, in retrospect, his moral choices. In his books, Cosaşu appeals to anecdote and to literary quotation, to trivia and high-

brow cultural references, to biography and fiction, alternatively. A special mention deserves the fact that Cosaşu's texts may be read as autobiographical fictions[17.] The author is, to some extent, present within his text and therefore his interpellation of the reader acquires a personal significance. The text is not an abstract anecdote, the pure fruit of the author's mind, but a shifting, unstable construct, opening the author's work to the text of his life. Written as an address to an unknown other, the text presents itself from the starting point as open, unfixed, mobile, and immaterial. His use of autobiographical fiction is an important part of his larger poetics. Cosaşu is a writer preoccupied with "structuring diversity", as Nicolae Manolescu called it, often employing a technique of juxtaposing fragments, mosaic-like: "[E]ach sentence proceeds by putting together extremely remote things, not only at the story level, and structures the diversity. This is also a way of seeing reality not as chains of events, but concomitantly, like images on a screen"[18]. Indeed, Cosaşu's fascination with trivial life events, newspapers, affairs and football is matched in his writing by grave ethical concerns, with topics like betrayal, cowardice, compromise, dignity and authenticity.

Cosaşu wrote the novella *Arie şi recitativ la Pasternak* [*Aria and Recitative for Pasternak*] in 1987, but it was rejected by censors and published only later, in 1990. In it, a critical moment in 1958 is revisited, when the young writer was going through a moral crisis. Cosaşu was "unemployed for ideological reasons" and had to live with his aunt, which he called, with a Stendhalian name, Sanseverina. He tried to restructure his personal life and his career as a writer, as he was disillusioned with the "conquests of socialism" that he had praised uncritically until then. At this point, he aspired to a communion of any kind, for instance at a football match, as a refuge from loneliness and isolation. But on October 23, 1958, Boris Pasternak, the Soviet writer, is nominated to the Nobel Prize for literature, and the literary pundits in all the socialist countries start an international campaign to discredit him. In this campaign, an article by the reputed Romanian writer Zaharia Stancu[19] is published in Bucharest, with the title *Pasternak? I've Never Heard of Pasternak!* Cosaşu easily detects in it a moral compromise, a useful lie

---

[17] Citing a distinction made by Philippe Gasparini and Arnaud Schmitt, Florina Pârjol pleads for Radu Cosaşu's genre to be classified as "auto-narrative" rather that autofictional: "If one follows Doubrovski's definition of the species, it is obvious that Radu Cosaşu does not write autofictions, but rather a species of autobiographical fiction, in the already long French tradition: his texts do not sport the narcissistic, self-descriptive, non-narrative discourse that is typical of the "violent" autofictions, neither do they have the semi-automatic, «spontaneous» flow of a psychoanalytical exposee" (Florina Pârjol, *Carte de identităţi. Mutaţii ale autobiograficului în proza românească de după 1989* [*Book of Identities. Mutations of the Autobiography in Romanian Post-1989 Prose*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2014, pp. 94-95).
[18] Nicolae Manolescu, *Istoria critică a literaturii române* [*The Critical History of Romanian Literature*], Piteşti, Paralela 45, 2008, pp. 1117-1118.
[19] I will henceforth refer to Cosaşu's semi-fictional character "Zaharia Stancu" plainly as Stancu.

written by Stancu to gain favors from the communist regime, and feels personally affected, because his fall from grace into unemployment had come from his decision to write only "the integral truth". Cosaşu's novella explores the world of the stadium and the literary café to debate moral isolation and false communities.

At the stadium, Cosaşu's autobiographical hero assists at a football game, alongside a throng of loud and likeable common folk who love the game as much as he does. Aspiring, in his own words, to "merge" with the crowds, he obviously practices a self-prescribed therapy for depression. But politics breaks violently into this peaceful gathering as the whole stadium protests the annulment of a goal by the home team. The protest turns political and spills on the streets of Bucharest, with football fans marching together, chanting and chatting. The march thrills the young writer, as he relives the heroic times when the revolution had not yet succeeded. But it also reminds him of his childhood attachment to football, as he recalls, alongside the other fans, the teams and the players before the war, while meandering together on old streets, remembering flamboyant names of old cinemas, defying the recently-installed austerity of communist toponimy ("from Vitan to Călăraşi, beyond «Milano», beyond «Tomis», up to former «Gioconda»"[20]). It is a rejuvenating trip that strengthens his trust in community and in a dense, solid moral universe, where he can feel at home together with numerous comrades. The troubled young communist regains his feeling of being in common in the presence of simple and honest strangers, but this community is politically subversive, because it shares familiar, bourgeois, intimate values, different from those of class struggle and internationalism that his ideology courses taught him.

Feeling encouraged, the hero decides to confront the author of the pamphlet on Pasternak and goes to Capşa café, where Stancu spent his evenings, to question him[21]. The older writer defends himself by claiming that Pasternak himself is not a great and tragic writer, like his friends Marina Tsvetaeva and Osip Mandelstam, but an adaptable character, and therefore similar to Stancu, who was a leftist journalist converted to postwar communism. Secondly, Stancu presents his moral compliance as a sacrifice. His compromise, he says, is actually a method to safeguard literature and help young writers publish their "intimist" and "analytical" literature. Thirdly, there is a veiled accusation that the young Cosaşu is himself an accomplice to Stancu's compromise, since instead of documenting tragic cases of his time, he writes "all-too-luminous proses" that serve the regime.

---

[20] Radu Cosaşu, *Cinci ani cu Belfegor. Mătuşile din Tel Aviv* [*Five Years with Belfegor. The Aunts in Tel Aviv*], Iasi, Polirom, 2009, p. 345.

[21] There is some fiction here, but not in the essential parts. The football match did take place in Bucharest, on October 26th, 1958, with the outcome that Cosaşu remembered, but Stancu's article was published in "The Literary Gazette" only a week later, on October 30th. The writer reversed the succcession in order to construct his thesis more eloquently.

The hero backs out of this trap when he sees the mystification, which he describes with a shrewd metaphor. The young man offers Stancu half of the sandwich his aunt made for him before the game; half of it had been offered and accepted by a fellow football fan, earlier, in a gesture that symbolically sealed Cosaşu's "merger" with the stadium crowd. But Stancu does not simply take his half of sandwich: he basks in the aura of glorious humility projected by the meagre meal. Stancu uses the sandwich not to establish a personal, human connection, as he had been invited, but to showcase his grandiose self, his studied elegance:

> He took the napkin from the sandwich and wiped, old man-like, his cheek, spilling bread crumbs on the white shirt, the black vest, the cuffs of his suit, he didn't try to shake them off, they looked good on him, as if somebody had thrown at him, for luck, charmed beads of corn[22].

It is obvious that, for Stancu, there can be no community with the young reporter. Like Caragiale's Nae from *The Situation*, Stancu sees community as an unequal power relationship, which he uses to gain prestige. He is too immersed in himself to be truly empathic to a young writer's moral plight, and he turns the discussion on its head to talk about himself, about his "heroic" sacrifices. This egoistic posture does not leave room for any sharing of values and compromises community, for it actually proposes complicity, rather than participation. The young reporter backs out, shyly, "like a good child", he says, from the symbolic embrace of the older writer. His instincts nurtured by family values help him go past Stancu's verbal subtlety that cleverly disguises and moral compromise as a moral choice.

In Caragiale's *The Situation*, the text opened to the reader by alluding to the similarity between hardened nationalism and bad grammar. In Cosaşu's *Aria and Recitative for Pasternak*, the reader is constantly being interpellated, notably by means of intertextual references he is called to recognize and interpret. The necessity of an aesthetic reading is signaled at first by the title and composition, which suggests the arrangement of the parts of an opera spectacle, where the "recitative" sets the tone of the text and the "aria" voices the moral debate, in the final pages[23]. There are numerous quotations, mentions of writers and works of art, bookish references, seemingly random at first; very soon, they become markers of a very coherent interior debate, echoing fragments of the hero's biography or his

---

[22] "Luă şerveţelul sendvişului şi se şterse bătrâneşte pe obraz, risipind firimiturile de pâine pe cămaşa albă, pe vesta neagră, pe manşetele hainei, nu încercă să le scuture, îi veneau bine, ca şi cum cineva l-ar fi «bătut» de noroc, cu boabe de grâu feeric" (Radu Cosaşu, *Five*, p. 349).

[23] The borrowing of musical terms in Cosaşu's prose may be read as another hidden homage to his master, Caragiale. For instance, the pairing of "aria and recitative" as pseudonyms for narrative styles echoes Caragiale's choice of musical terms such as "theme and variations" for one famous short prose that relates the outlandish interpretations ("variations") political journals come to give to a banal incident (the "theme").

moral choices, his nostalgia and regrets, his aspirations and models: Stendhal, Gogol, Eminescu, Isaac Babel, Alexandre Dumas-père, Marina Ţvetaeva, Camil Petrescu, Anatole France, and Mihail Sebastian. Each of them symbolizes either the writer's complicated attachment to the family that he reluctantly abandoned, or his troubled loyalty to the communist cause, that seems to him more and more compromised. Writers are symbols of the hero's attachments and abandonments: he wishes he were balanced like Gogol, warm like Dumas-père, sensitive like Sebastian and morally compelling like Isaac Babel. The massive presence of the intertext signals the need for a competent reader to follow on all of these references and allusions.

In this sketch of European literature, there is one name missing which is central to Cosaşu's text: Caragiale. The author of *The Situation* is not mentioned, but only alluded to in small quotations that go unattributed, almost unremarked. During the "aria" part, in the course of a long reply by the Stancu character, a single word recalls Caragiale:

> Don't you need a magazine for your all-too-luminous proses? Who do you give them to? Me or Pasternak? Who prints them for you? Me or Pasternak? I've never heard of Pasternak, so that others can hear of you, of Camil, of Sebastian, of all ironists... of all intimists... of all those crane operators of *yours*... [emphasis added][24].

"Dumitale" (a more familiar, down-to-earth version of "yours") is a very typical word for Caragiale. "Dumitale" is used to accuse somebody of guiltily associating himself with dubious people and upholding their ill-famed moral values. "Macaragiii dumitale" ("Your crane operators") alludes to the young Cosaşu's "luminous" reportages about the working class, while at the same time echoing a famous interpellation in Caragiale's *A Letter Lost*, "moftangiii dumitale" ("your scoundrels"[25]). Before the Stancu character, aunt Sanseverina had also accused the young writer of sharing the views of the top ideologues of the communist party that resented Pasternak: "I understand *you people* do not like they gave him [Pasternak] the Nobel Prize [emphasis added]". Cosaşu's hero is accused both from left and right, like the narrator in *Highly Charged Atmosphere*, of siding with the enemy when all he wants to do is to preserve his independence, his lack of political partisanship, and his incertitude. By quoting Caragiale, Cosaşu adheres to the classic writer's dilemmatic manifesto of improbable independence before the political passions of everybody. This is why the signification of Cosaşu "silently"

---

[24] "N-ai nevoie de o revistă pentru schiţele acelea prea luminoase? Cui le duci? Mie sau lui Pasternak? Cine ţi le publică? Eu sau Pasternak? N-am auzit de Pasternak, ca să se audă de dumneata, de Camil, de Sebastian, de toţi ironiştii... de toţi analiştii... de toţi macaragiii *dumitale*..." (Radu Cosaşu, *Five*, p. 349, s.n.).

[25] Also, in *Highly-Charged Atmosphere*, the narrator was repeatedly accused of endorsing either "your bandit government", or "your scoundrels of the opposition".

quoting Caragiale is central to this text. It suggests a deeper solidarity with the author of *The Situation* than with Pasternak and Gogol. This solidarity may be observed in the stylistic features of Cosaşu's text, in his preference for irony and word play, in flaunting his lack of seriousness and assuming a "minor" status, for instance by talking about stadiums like Caragiale talked about beerhouses. But solidarity is even clearer in keeping this quotation "hidden", and it is also where the text turns decisively towards the reader. Caragiale's name is intentionally avoided, probably to stimulate the reader to recognize the unmarked snippet. By recognizing the quote, the reader enters a secret pact with the text, proving that his "encyclopedia"[26] is open at the same page as the writer's.

Conclusion. Bonding through Irony

From Korhonen's point of view, textual communities are a feature of all world literature and are established by the simple act of reading. But for a big part of modern literature, establishing textual communities is the task of the writer, who seeks a literary alliance with readers, and especially with readers who do not share the same "time, space or identity"[27] as the author. Modern literature refrains from being too culturally specific, too narrowly pinpointed to a particular time and space. To achieve an alliance with the reader, writers must refer to some place in time, without becoming the "voice" of that place. This is why, for a large part of modern literature, Caragiale and Cosaşu included, their discussion of community issues is made in a universal horizon, and sometimes rests on the recognizable deconstruction of communities. And this is why irony functions as a privileged form of bonding between text and reader: not because modern life is inconsistent and lacks *gravitas*, but because it offers "disenchanted" ways of being together, social aggregations that defy essentialism, communities that refuse to "avow" themselves as communities.

Textual communities are configured in Caragiale and Cosaşu by means of textual techniques like anacoluthon and intertext, which are meant to stimulate solidarity between reader and writer. Seeing the importance of irony for the construction of the modern textual community, it is understandable why both are employed in an ironic manner[28]. Caragiale starts from the recognizable rhetoric of his age, that of demagogic and violent nationalism; he underlines not only its abuses, but most of all its ridiculousness, made obvious by incoherence and bad

---

[26] "The encyclopedia competence" of the model reader, Umberto Eco says, is also an intertextual competence (Umberto Eco, *Lector in fabula*, Bucureşti, Univers, 1991, pp. 112-120).
[27] Kuisma Korhonen, "Textual".
[28] Creangă's famous use of anacoluthon as an expression of affectivity in *Memories of My Boyhood* and Gabriela Adameşteanu's Homeric intertext in *The Encounter* are examples when these techniques are used without an ironic intent.

grammar. Later, Cosaşu describes his escape from the lure of communism and the struggle for moral integrity using bookish passwords and oblique allusions that address the reader. Both are using irony as the overarching technique that unites the reader with the text. It is irony's transgressive nature allows it to practice a "transideological politics"[29] and to be variously employed to counter both the nationalist narrations of the 19th century and the communist narrations of the 20th. And it is, ultimately, irony that projects a specific and very efficient form of being in common that not only deconstructs essentialist communities, but succeeds to deconstruct itself, in order to maintain its paradoxical openness.

WORKS CITED

AJANA, Btihaj, "Rethinking Community through Literature", *Journal for Cultural Research*, 2007, 11, p. 2.

BLANCHOT, Maurice, *The Unavowable Community*. Translated by Pierre Joris, New York, Station Hill Press, 1988.

CARAGIALE, Ion Luca, *Momente* [*Moments*], Bucureşti, Editura pentru Literatură, 1969.

CĂLINESCU, Al., *Caragiale sau vârsta modernă a literaturii* [*Caragiale, or The Modern Age of Literature*], Bucureşti, Albatros, 1976.

COSAŞU, Radu, *Cinci ani cu Belfegor. Mătuşile din Tel Aviv* [*Five Years with Belfegor. The Aunts in Tel Aviv*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2009.

ECO, Umberto, *Lector in fabula*. Translated by Mariana Spalas, Bucureşti, Univers, 1991.

HUTCHEON, Linda, *Irony's Edge. The Theory and Politics of Irony*, London – New York, Routledge, 1995.

KORHONEN, Kuisma, "Textual Communities: Nancy, Blanchot, Derrida", *Cultural Machine*, (2006), 8, http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/rt/printerFriendly/35/43, accessed on May 3rd, 2016.

JIANU, Angela, *A Circle of Friends. Romanian Revolutionaries and Political Exile (1848-1859)*, Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2011.

MANOLESCU, Florin, *Caragiale şi Caragiale. Jocuri cu mai multe strategii* [*Caragiale and Caragiale. Games with A Plurality of Strategies*], Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2002.

MANOLESCU, Nicolae, *Istoria critică a literaturii române* [*The Critical History of Romanian Literature*], Piteşti, Paralela 45, 2008.

NANCY, Jean-Luc, *The Inoperative Community*. Translated by Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland and Simona Sawhney, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

PÂRJOL, Florina, *Carte de identităţi. Mutaţii ale autobiograficului în proza românească de după 1989* [*Book of Identities. Mutations of the Autobiography in Romanian Post-1989 Prose*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2014.

ZAMFIR, Mihai, *Din secolul romantic* [*From the Romantic Century*], Bucureşti, Eminescu, 1989.

---

[29] Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge. The Theory and Politics of Irony*, London – New York, Routledge, 1995, p. 9.

BONDING THROUGH IRONY: TEXTUAL COMMUNITIES
IN I.L. CARAGIALE AND RADU COSAŞU
(*Abstract*)

Starting from Jean-Luc Nancy's explanation of literature as both community-making and interrupter of community myths, this paper discusses Kuisma Korhonen's notion of "textual community". Textual community refers to the interaction between reader and text as a form of open, virtual cooperation that avoids the essentialism of political or religious communities. Trying to locate historically and culturally the propositions of the two scholars, this paper reads two distant, yet connected authors in Romanian literature, the 19th century classic Ion Luca Caragiale and the contemporary author Radu Cosaşu in their dealings with communities and their unmaking in their respective texts. Caragiale presents how nationalist rhetoric can be divisive rather than unifying when paired with personal pride and stupidity. Cosaşu analyses the moral failure of writers' solidarity in the face of communist totalitarianism. Both are using irony as the overarching technique to dissolve fraudulent communities and forge on their ruins a new, textual community.

Keywords: textual community, irony, deconstruction, modern Romanian literature, Ion Luca Caragiale, Radu Cosaşu.
.

IRONIA CARE CONECTEAZĂ: COMUNITĂŢI TEXTUALE
LA I.L. CARAGIALE ŞI RADU COSAŞU
(*Rezumat*)

Pornind de la explicarea literaturii ca instrument de construcţie şi de dizolvare a miturilor comunităţii realizată de către Jean Luc Nancy, lucrarea de faţă discută noţiunea de „comunitate textuală" propusă de către cercetătorul finlandez Kuisma Korhonen. Comunitatea textuală desemnează interacţiunea dintre cititor şi text ca o formă de cooperare deschisă şi virtuală, lipsită de esenţialismul comunităţilor politice şi religioase. Pentru a situa istoric şi cultural propunerile celor doi teoreticieni, lucrarea propune lecturi a doi autori români, clasicul Ion Luca Caragiale şi contemporanul Radu Cosaşu. La Caragiale, retorica naţionalistă mai mult separă decât uneşte, atunci când e intersectată de orgoliu şi stupiditate. Cosaşu analizează eşecul moral al solidarităţii scriitoriceşti în timpul comunismului totalitar. Ambii se folosesc de ironie ca tehnică crucială pentru a dizolva comunităţile frauduloase şi pentru a ridica pe ruinele lor noua comunitate textuală.

Cuvinte-cheie: comunitate textuală, ironie, deconstrucţie, literatura română modernă, Ion Luca Caragiale, Radu Cosaşu.

ANDREEA MIRONESCU

THE INTERRUPTED COMMUNITY:
NEW IMAGES OF THE NATION IN POSTCOMMUNIST
ROMANIAN LITERATURE

What Can One See through a Hole in a Flag

The 1989 Romanian Revolution brought to the forefront one of the most powerful and suggestive images of the interrupted community: the hole in the flag. Cutting out the national emblem of the former Socialist Republic of Romania could have been a purely contextual and defiant action during the insurrection against Ceausescu's oppressive regime, but it had immediate and large echoes. Andrei Codrescu, a reputed Romanian-American writer who travelled back to Romania in December 1989 to relate the revolution as a radio commentator for ABC's Nightline, was one of the first to speculate upon this image in his homonymous book published in 1991: "suddenly there, under the cold moon, there it was, the Romanian flag with the socialist emblem cut right out of the middle. […] It's through that hole, I thought, that I am returning to my birthplace"[1]. Codrescu connects the hole in the flag not only with a maternal tunnel through which he returns in his homeland, but also to the motif of the empty space which featured recurrently in Romanian theories of national culture ever since the interwar period, as Bogdan Ştefănescu suggests[2]. However, a more transparent connection to the interrupted community, as Jean-Luc Nancy defines it in his celebrated book *The Inoperative Community*, is to be found in Slavoj Žižek's interpretation of the hole in the flag. For the Slovenian philosopher, the Romanian hollowed flag is a "sublime image" of a suspended and open historical situation: "the rebels waving the national flag with the red star, the Communist symbol, cut out, so that instead of the symbol standing for the organizing principle of the national life, there was nothing but a hole in its centre"[3]. Žižek confuses the emblem on the Romanian flag, a cliché image of socialist prosperity based on natural resources such as grain, petroleum and green forests, with the communist red star, but his observation remains a valuable one. The emblem on the flag is a metonymy of the nation, and its removal is equivalent to the interruption or to the

---

[1] Andrei Codrescu, *The Hole in the Flag – A Romanian Exile's Story of Return and Revolution*, New York, W. Morrow & Co. Inc., 1991, p. 67.
[2] Bogdan Ştefănescu, "Voices of the Void: Andrei Codrescu's Tropical Rediscovery of Romanian Culture in *The Hole in the Flag*", *University of Bucharest Review*, X, 2008, 2, p. 12.
[3] Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative. Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 4.

suspension – using Jean-Luc Nancy's terms – of a particular national and politically organised group.

Let us return for a moment to Codrescu's book. The hole in the flag through which the author metaphorically returns to Romania frames an image and predetermines the point of view. What does the exile actually see when he looks at his own people through a hole in the national flag? Codrescu's semi-fictional reportage describes a nation in the process of creating a new collective oral mythology, centred on two figures: the December Revolution and Ceauşescu. In fact, these two figures lie at the centre of a conspiracy imaginary which will blossom during the 1990s and will be kept into public attention by the mass-media and vocal nationalist groups. This new type of (national) communion, based on the death of the young men and women murdered during the insurrection and on phantasmagorical stories about the Ceauşescu couple, stays at the core of Codrescu's story of return and revolution. Not only sacrificial death, but also unbelievable rumours, jokes and secret information which everybody knows keep the people together and, at the same time, make them extremely suspicious towards each other. This confused image of the community will be a constant feature of the "transition novels" of the following decades.

So how can one think of community after 1989? The fall of the totalitarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in the same tumultuous year led not only to the interruption of the myth of communism *stricto sensu*, but also to a systematic analysis of the public representations of the communist era[4]. But, in philosophy and political science, the critique of community myths was articulated even earlier. As Pieter Vermeulen shows, since the 1980s, the traditional concept of community undergoes a radical rethinking, thanks to the seminal works of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Maurice Blanchot's *The Unavowable Community*, both published in 1983, Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Inoperative Community* (1986), or Giorgio Agamben's *The Coming Community* (1990). Despite the inherent differences, these authors denounce the community understood as *Gemeinschaft,* a key concept in German Romanticism that fostered the rise of nationalism in nineteenth century Europe, snowballed into the National Socialist doctrine and survived even in Ceauşescu's National Communism of the 1970s and 1980s. As an alternative, the philosophers mentioned above theorize other different, democratic and ethical forms of togetherness[5]. But where are these

---

[4] In the last decade, Maria Todorova co-edited several collective volumes which aim to recuperate the everyday memory of communism and to forge a postcommunist community founded on nostalgia. See, for instance, Maria Todorova, Augusta Dimou and Stefan Troebst (eds.), *Remembering Communism. Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experience in Southeast Europe*, Budapest – New York, CEU Press, 2014.

[5] Pieter Vermeulen, "Community and Literary Experience in (Between) Benedict Anderson and Jean-Luc Nancy", *Mosaic*, XLII, 2009, 4, December, p. 96.

alternative spaces of communion to be found? Benedict Anderson, as well as Maurice Blanchot and Jean-Luc Nancy claim that literature allows the possibility of imagining and experiencing other ways of being-in-common, either essentialist and immanent, or non-essentialist and non-immanent.

Starting from these premises, this article aims to question the role that literature plays in the construction of a certain image of community in postcommunist Romanian culture. My approach benefits from Benedict Anderson's and Jean-Luc Nancy's statements on the function of literature in the many-sided process of rethinking both the nation and the ideal forms of community. The similarity between Anderson's *imagined community* and Nancy's *inoperative community* was more recently elaborated by Pieter Vermeulen[6], while previous suggestions in this direction are made by Jonathan Culler[7]. Of course, literature and the novel in particular do not envision an imaginary, i.e. fictionalized, version of a particular national community. Instead, literary works project, through various narrative strategies, a textual space which can be conceived as an *analogon* of the nation (but not of a *particular* nation), and at the same time construct an implied reader which becomes himself/ herself a part of the fictional community[8].

In what follows I will analyse the textual construction of various literary images of community in several Romanian novels published at the beginning of the 2000s by authors of the so-called young prose wave. I will focus especially on three novels which deal with smaller or larger communities from the postcommunist transition period: Dan Lungu's *Raiul găinilor* [*Chicken Paradise*] (2004), Bogdan Suceavă's *Venea din timpul diez* [*Coming from an Off-Key Time*] (2004), and Florina Ilis's *Cruciada copiilor* [*The Children's Crusade*] (2005)[9]. My thesis is that the above mentioned writings can be seen as nation-imagining novels[10], because they frame a fictional space which is explicitly presented as postcommunist "Romania". As the author of *Imagined Communities* implies in his

---

[6] *Ibidem*, pp. 95-111.

[7] Jonathan Culler, "Anderson and the Novel", in Jonathan Culler and Pheng Cheah (eds.), *Grounds for Comparison: Around the Work of Benedict Anderson*, New York – London, Routledge, 2003, pp. 29-52.

[8] This observation was made by Culler in Jonathan Culler, "Anderson", p. 44.

[9] Titles and excerpts are given in my translation. Foreign translations in English and French are also available for some of these authors: Bogdan Suceavă, *Coming from an Off-Key Time*. Translated by Alistair Ian Blith, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2011; and Dan Lungu, *Le paradis des poules*. Traduit par Laure Hinckel, Paris, Editions Jaqueline Chambon, 2005.

[10] Culler uses this paraphrase of Benedict Anderson's thesis in Jonathan Culler, "Anderson", p. 38. The Romanian scholar Sanda Cordoş proposes, in her 2012 book, the term *identitary novel* to describe the novels published in the 1990s and the 2000s, which present community images of postcommunist Romania. See Sanda Cordoş, *Lumi din cuvinte. Reprezentări şi identităţi în literatura română postbelică* [*Worlds Made of Words. Representations and Identities in Romanian Postwar Literature*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2012, pp. 133-134.

later book *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, not only "old-fashion novels" have a powerful national content, but also postmodern fictions, notably Salman Rushdie's or Mario Vargas Llosa's works. However, unlike nineteenth-century realist fictions, postmodern nation-imagining novels lack the capacity and desire to legitimate the nation: what they are proposing, claims Jonathan Culler, is a community without unity[11]. To put it in Jean-Luc Nancy's words, these novels "do not complete a figure or a figuration"[12] that could be attributed to the nation(al) myth. Instead, they create a textual space in which authors and readers re-imagine nation and community after the interruption of their own myths.

The Community Under Scrutiny

Collectivity and community were two core notions in the communist regime, and both presupposed an intimate connection between politics and literature. The "socialist democracy", as one of the numerous books published under the signature of Nicolae Ceauşescu is entitled, imposed a particular relation between individual and collectivity, essentially based on forced collaboration, reciprocal surveillance and even voluntary denunciations. At the same time, the socialist communion was celebrated in public holidays such as The Workers' Day on May 1st or at national artistic festivals such as *Cântarea României* (literally *Song [of praise] to Romania*), where both professional and amateur artists were competing[13]. Literature itself plays an ambiguous role in the communist regime, while film and fiction become media of political propaganda[14]. Romanian literature at the time was far from being unitary and homogenous, but, undoubtedly, literature in general and the novel in particular proposed figures of collectivity and communion which the readers related to. During the 1950s and even afterwards, socialist realism promoted a class-conscious literature, especially through novels written by well-known and even respected authors such as Eugen Barbu or Petru Dumitriu. They explored the life of the emerging proletarian communities (Barbu's short stories),

---

[11] See Jonathan Culler, "Anderson", p. 44.

[12] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, Minneapolis – Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 79.

[13] For further details on the making of the socialist community see Dragoş Petrescu, "Communist legacies in the New Europe: History, Ethnicity and the Creation of a 'Socialist' Nation in Romania, 1945-1989", in Konrad H. Jarausch, Thomas Lindenberger (eds.), *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, Oxford – New York, Berghahn Books, 2011, pp. 37-54.

[14] Insightful details regarding the relation between literature and political propaganda are to be found in Eugen Negrici, *Literatura română sub comunism*: *1948-1964* [*Romanian Literature under Communism: 1948-1964*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2010. A short version of the book is available also in English: Eugen Negrici, *Literature and Propaganda in Communist Romania*, Bucureşti, Editura Institutului Cultural Român, 1999.

but also the irreversible disintegration of the great Romanian aristocratic families (Dumitriu's *Cronică de familie* [*Family Chronicle*]). At the same time, Marin Preda's acclaimed *Moromeţii* [*The Moromete Family*] (1955) gained a wide recognition for its far from idealistic presentation of the rural community before World War II. However, despite its violent inner conflicts, the world depicted in *Moromeţii I* still resisted as a representative community image.

It is also important to note that, during the communist period, literature catalysed a specific type of *interpretive community* (Stanley Fish)[15]. At the universities of Bucharest, Iaşi and Cluj student literary groups functioned, which largely became open spaces for the circulation of ideas. At the same time, the emerging neomodernists of the 1960s undermined the clichés that stood for class struggle and class solidarity by activating a secret author-reader complicity, based on "double language" and shrewd dissident allusions. *Animale bolnave* [*Sickly Animals*] and *Bunavestire* [*The Annunciation*] by Nicolae Breban, *Vânătoarea regală* [*The Royal Hunt*] by D.R. Popescu, *Racul* [*The Crab*] by Alexandru Ivasiuc, *Delirul* [*The Delirium*] and *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* [*The Most Beloved Man on Earth*] by Marin Preda were not just complex novels of the time, but also very popular works. This type of literary solidarity relied on a subversive political message encapsulated in these novels, a message that was supposedly embraced by a wide readership. However, Monica Lovinescu repeatedly argued that aesthetic dissidence, manifested through ambiguity and double-entendres, eventually led to the failure of the civil society both in communist and postcommunist Romania[16]. For Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca, who introduced the concept of *East-ethics* in Romanian literary studies, the political complicity between the writer and his readers constructed in fact a false solidarity, since it annihilated the possibility of a real revolt against totalitarianism.

Consequently, after the fall of communism in East-Central Europe, both the concept of community and the structure of interpretive communities faced radical changes[17]. During the 1990s, the large amount of trauma literature which came out into the public space encouraged new, ethical forms of national solidarity, based

---

[15] Stanley Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge – London, Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 171-172. For Fish, readings are governed by particular interpretive strategies and expectations that one learns in his/ her community, as the text itself is "produced" by the common interpretive strategy.

[16] See Magda Cârneci, „Scriitorul trebuie să vegheze la mersul lucrurilor în cetate. Un interviu cu Monica Lovinescu şi Virgil Ierunca" [The Writer Must Watch over the Course of Things in Society. An Interview with Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca], apud. E. Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieţii literare româneşti. Perioada postbelică* [*Chronology of Romanian Literary Life. The Postcommunist Period*], III, Bucureşti, Muzeul Naţional al Literaturii Române, 2014, p. 388.

[17] See Marcel Cornish Pope, John Neubauer (eds.), *Literary Cultures in East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. IV. *Types and Stereotypes*, Amsterdam – Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004, pp. 561-562.

on empathy with the repressed memory of the others. But the 1990s were a time of disunion and of radical national(ist) debates[18]. The resurrection of interwar nationalist ideologies, such as orthodoxism and "Romanianness", revealed an active process of re-defining a collective "Romanian" identity. In his satirical-intellectualist novel *Coming from an Off-Key Time*, Bogdan Suceavă reveals the falsity of all these doctrines, be they nationalist, mystical or rationalist, reality-based or fictional. In doing so, Suceavă also questions the possibility of existence for non-ideological communities after the failure of the communist mythology of national and human solidarity. Alongside the concurrent media discourses, literature deals in its own particular, radical way with several much debated issues, for instance national identity, the communist past or Romania's historical rebirth. Is there a particular stylistics at work in the post-1990 Romanian novels dealing with community representations? If so, does it have an intrinsically political or ethical dimension? Finally, can literature be considered not only a space for imagi-*nation*, but also a medium of circulation for collective representations and, consequently, the space for establishing a new community connection?

In the late 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s a new generation of writers comes into the public arena. Authors such as Petre Barbu, Bogdan Suceavă, Dan Lungu, Florin Lăzărescu, Filip Florian and Florina Ilis, to name but a few, focus on the postcommunist transition period and to the ways in which people fit into this brave new world. For instance, Barbu's *Blazare* [*Tedium Vitae*] describes the extraordinary quotidian life of a family in a proletarian quarter of a Romanian city where everyone is obsessed with bringing back to life the *Alimentara,* an abandoned local commercial complex, and also an emblem of their community. Lungu's *Chicken Paradise* narrows in on a colourful zone, the Acacia Street, at the edge of an anonymous town where, just like in Barbu's novel, curious things are happening. Florian's *Degete mici* [*Little Fingers*] elaborates on the mystery of a common grave discovered by chance in a small mountain town. The discovery will set in motion various social actors, such as the police, archaeologists, reporters, former political prisoners, and Orthodox monks, while the local community seems to majestically ignore the event. Finally, in Florina Ilis's *Children's Crusade*, a train is hijacked by children going on holiday, while the people on it come spontaneously together, fervently debating Romania and romanianness. Eventually, because of the crusade, Romania becomes for a brief moment the centre of the world media buzz. Despite inherent differences, what all these novels have in common is their intention to create satirical or realist narratives about the collective feeling of instability shared by people in a transition period, when old community symbols are lost or exposed as deceitful. These authors' preference for

---

[18] An overview of the debates around national identity in the cultural press of the 1990s can be found in E. Simion (coord.), *Cronologia*, I-VII.

satire and other "minor" narrative formulae, such as slang (Barbu, Lungu, and to some extent Ilis), journalistic clichés (Suceavă, Ilis) or parodic aulic speech (Suceavă, Florian), suggests that people are no longer finding a common language, or a shared sentiment of communion.

The three novels I have chosen for closer reading – Lungu's *Chicken Paradise*, Suceavă's *Coming from an Off-Key Time* and Ilis's *Children's Crusade* – tell the story of the making and unmaking of postcommunist communities. The community in the first novel is made of the neighbours living on a peripheral street in a symptomatically provincial town. The second novel circles several groups (religious sects, political parties, countercultural movements) in Bucharest, coming together in the end at a spontaneous street celebration. Finally, Ilis's novel presents a polyphony of dissonant voices: obedient pupils and tough street kids, pedagogues, politicians, representatives of state authority, journalists, popstars, men and women participate, some of them without knowing it, to the making of history. Probably no social group of postcommunist Romania is absent from Ilis's narrative fresco. Actually, all three novels are imagining, on various scales, the same national community, using the *pars pro toto* mechanism of metonymy. Lungu depicts a local, fixed community, which ultimately dissolves under the pressure of social and economic changes. Suceavă imagines a fluid and carnivalesque community, while Ilis scrutinizes a community without unity. Ultimately, all of them bring the concept of postcommunist national community under literary scrutiny.

Textual Strategies for Imagining Communities

For a better understanding of the connection between literature and the process of imagining communities, we must return to Benedict Anderson's seminal book published in 1983. All communities, as Anderson points out right from the beginning, are in some sense imagined, "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion"[19]. This is a statement that points in two directions: the nation is a sovereign and limited (both numerically and spatially) community, but it is also an imagined community. Further on, Anderson argues that nationality, nation-ness, as well as nationalism are "cultural artefacts of a particular kind", which develop within the modern paradigm of space and time, based on the concept of simultaneity. The imagined community of a nation presumes the existence of a large number of individuals who are simultaneously involved in similar actions, such as the daily reading of the

---

[19] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition, London – New York, Verso, 1991, p. 6.

newspaper, each of them being aware that "the ceremony he performs is being replicated […] by thousands (or millions) of others, of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion"[20]. Consequently, the particular form of political imagination which is the nation relies on a temporal horizon "measured by clock and by [daily] calendar". It is a perception of time radically different from the mythical temporality which Jan Assmann, a philosopher whose influential theories on cultural memory have benefited to some extent from Anderson's ideas, associates with the sacred or ritualised forms through which a group "imagines" and performs its collective identity[21]. However, one must note that the *imagined nation* is proper to the (European) modernity of the 19th century, whereas the *imagined community* designates much older forms of representing collectivity. In his pioneering book *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*[22], Assmann draws attention to the very different ways in which the great ancient cultures "remember" their past. Each type of remembering engenders a particular mode of projecting the community and its future survival. The cultural identity of a group, as well as the idea of community, is articulated through various media, such as monuments, texts, images and even places, which vary across different times, spaces or cultures. Returning to Anderson, his nation-imagining cultural model also relies on the media and their expansion in the 19th century: the heroes' monuments (in particular the cenotaph), the press, and, last but not least, the arts and literature.

Needless to say, Anderson's approach puts great emphasis on the crucial role that literature, and particularly the novel, plays in the emergence of a new thinking about the nation. Still, as Jonathan Culler observed in 1999, "there has been surprisingly little discussion of Anderson's claims about the novel and of the possible ramifications of its characteristic structure of narration"[23]. Culler's intervention on the subject summarizes three elements of the novel in its relation to nations as imagined communities: 1) the formal structure of the narrative point of view; 2) the national content of the novel; and 3) the construction of the reader. I will discuss these aspects in the novels of Lungu, Suceavă, and Ilis, but first let us have a closer look at Anderson's ideas. In the *Cultural Roots* chapter of his book*, Anderson claims that the novel and the newspaper "provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation"[24]. What do the novel and the newspaper have in common? Firstly, they are both modern media

---

[20] *Ibidem*, p. 35.

[21] Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", in Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin – New York, De Gruyter, 2008, pp. 109-110.

[22] Assmann's book was originally published in 1992 and translated in English in 2011.

[23] Jonathan Culler, "Anderson", p. 32. The situation has not changed very much since then, either.

[24] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined,* p. 25.

of circulation for collective representations within a particular (national) community or regarding a particular national community. It is the case of Balzac's *La Comédie humaine,* which Culler shrewdly characterizes as *La Comédie française.* Secondly, both the newspaper and the novel use a model of spatial representation of the "world", by presenting side by side events which seem to happen simultaneously. Simultaneity is then a key-concept for the narrative structure of 19th century great fictions. These novels' particular narrative perspective – the so called omniscient narration – calls for an "omniscient reader" who, „like God, watches A telephoning C, B shopping and D playing pool all *at once*. That all these acts are performed at the same clocked, calendrical time, but by actors who may be largely un-aware of one another, shows the novelty of this imagined world conjured up by the author in his reader's mind"[25]. The narrative structure of the novel, more than its national content, is thus the focus of Anderson's thesis. Anderson's linking of novel and nation allows two readings. In one reading, it radically asserts that "the novel would always be capable of representing, at different levels, the reality and truth of the nation"[26]. In the other, it suggests that the novel, and especially a particular type of novel, can function as an *analogon* of the nation. Both readings are discussed by Culler, who concludes that "the novel offers a particular formal structure, involving what can be called 'the space of a community'"[27]. Such an observation opens the way to a more relativist definition of nation-imagining fictions, and also to a re-examination of the role literature plays in imagining various forms of social and cultural interaction.

Three Community Spaces: a Neighbourhood, a Capital, a Country

What kind of communities, then, implied in the novels which are the subject of my discussion? One must observe that many of these fictions fit very well with Anderson's observations regarding the narrative form, the content and the implied reader specific to nation-imagining novels. Firstly, what Lungu's *Chicken Paradise*, Suceavă's *Coming from an Off-Key Time* and Ilis's *Children's Crusade* have in common is a similar narrative structure, which connects the events through the rhetoric pattern of *meanwhile*. By presenting simultaneously the characters' actions, be they interconnected or just coincidental, the novels delineate a community precisely bounded in time and space. In Lungu's *Chicken Paradise*, the narrator's overview of the first chapter present a string of simultaneous, non-related actions: "misses Milica enters the Colonel's house, miss Veronica

---

[25] *Ibidem*, p. 26.
[26] Jonathan Culler, "Anderson", p. 47.
[27] *Ibidem*, p. 34.

Geambaşu comes into possession of an illegitimate embryo and in the garden of mister Relu Covalciuc strange things happen"[28]. However, if in the small community on Acacia Street there is a sense of intimate togetherness, in Ilis's novel, the narrative structure of simultaneity expands on more than 600 pages, connecting very many characters that never come into direct contact. Secondly, the "national content" of the three novels reveals itself through direct allusions to the extra-textual reality. The time and space are precisely fixed: it's Romania at the middle of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, which is also the period when these novels are written and published. Thirdly, the novels under discussion often seem to be aimed at an audience with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Romanian realities of the time. Consequently, the reader projected by such texts is an involved reader, which is invited to become an empathetic member of the fictional community.

A brief analysis of the texts will provide concrete examples of how narrative strategies summon the idea of community in their very first paragraph. This is how Lungu's novel begins:

> All along Acacia Street, in only half a day the story went around all the house yards, with only two exceptions: the Colonel's yard (as people called it), protected by a wall of river rock with bright black wrought iron spears, where only the postman, of all the strangers, entered confidently, and the Socoliucs' yard, where people treaded lightly and spoke softly because of the sick woman who was lying in the good room for a long time, that all things in it seemed frozen[29].

The first paragraph of the novel, with its swift panorama of people discussing the news simultaneously evokes the idea of a small, gossipy community, where everyone knows one another. The chronicle continues with the story of Milica, which seems to be the first person on the street who ever entered the Colonel's house, and her description of the domestic interior grows hyperbolically with every new listener. In fact, what Lungu imagines is an oral community held together through story-telling, nea Mitu's unbelievable personal recollections of the communist times, local jokes, rumors and inventions. With the picturesque street and its inhabitants Lungu resuscitates the topos of the *mahala*, a unique mix of rurality and urbanism traditional for classical Romanian literature, and also a

---

[28] „doamna Milica pătrunde în casa Colonelului, dra Veronica Geambaşu devine posesoarea unui embrion nelegitim, iar în grădina domnului Relu Covalciuc se întâmplă lucruri ciudate" (Dan Lungu, *Raiul găinilor* [*Chicken Paradise*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2010, p. 211).

[29] „Cât de lungă era strada Salcâmilor, într-o jumătate de zi întâmplarea făcu ocolul tuturor curţilor, cu două excepţii: cea a Colonelului, cum îi spune lumea, străjuită de un gard de piatră de râu şi suliţe de fier forjat vopsite într-un negru strălucitor, unde – dintre cei străini casei – doar poştaşul intra fără sfială, şi cea a familiei Socoliuc, unde se păşea pe vârfuri şi se vorbea în şoaptă din pricina femeii ce zăcea bolnavă de mai multă vreme în camera cea bună, astfel încât toate lucrurile păreau încremenite" (Dan Lungu, *Chicken*, p. 9).

sociological reality which definitively disappeared with Ceauşescu's systematization projects and later because of the postcommunist middle-class migration to the suburbs[30]. Of course, Acacia Street is Romania itself, on its way to capitalism and pluralist politics.

In the beginning of his novel, Bogdan Suceavă choses a more metatextual approach, that produces a different perspective on the national community:

> The narrator is me. Even then, you knew the end of this story, like a bird watches from above the anthill and sees the torrent coming towards it, while the ants still enjoy the beautiful sun, you knew everything that was about to happen, from the minute he entered Bucharest to his last prophetic breath. [...] We were all expecting for a miracle. Do you remember the nineties, with all their secrets and their untold history? Here is the time for their real chronicle to be written[31].

The choice of a narrator who comes to the fore in the very beginning to proclaim his identity and also to directly address the reader as "you", is strikingly original. Suceavă plays on the dialectical relationship between the *I*, the *you* and the implicit *us*, each having a different perspective on the events. In an interview, Suceavă explains his narrative option as a deliberate one, since it is meant to be the voice of an uncoagulated community: "My narrator says 'I' and 'We' in an interchangeable manner because that was the state of mind after the 1989 revolution"[32]. Calling to mind the conflicting ideologies that surfaced in the public space in the 1990s, Suceavă employs a particular poetics which mixes literary satire and the intertextual memory of Romanian nationalism. The communities in Suceavă's novel spontaneously configure around a prophet or another, such as Vespasian Moisa, the man with the map of Bucharest imprinted on his chest since birth. Ultimately, Suceavă's brilliant satire hints to the salvationist narratives, which proliferate in times of political and social change. *Coming from an Off-Key Time* conjures up a joyful anarchy, which suggests the impossibility of an operative community who can affirm itself by saying "us", because, as Suceavă claims, this "us" is in fact an "ideologically generated illusion"[33].

---

[30] Acacia Street incidentally appears in Lungu's later novel *Sînt o babă comunistă!* [*I'm an Old Communist Biddy!*], as a changed place, well advanced on the road to urbanization.

[31] „Povestitorul sunt eu. Tu ştiai încă de pe atunci sfârşitul istoriei, aşa cum o pasăre priveşte din văzduh furnicarul şi zăreşte torentul venind către muşuroi, pe când furnicile se bucură de soare, tot ceea ce avea să urmeze, din prima clipă a intrării sale în Bucureşti şi până la cea din urmă suflare a profeţiilor sale. […] Cu toţii aşteptam o minune. Mai ţii minte anii nouăzeci, cu toate tainele lor şi cu toată istoria lor nespusă? Iată că a venit acum vremea să li se scrie adevărata cronică" (Bogdan Suceavă, *Venea din timpul diez* [*Coming from an Off-Key Time*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2014, p. 7).

[32] Andrei Simuţ, *Despre romanul "Venea din Timpul diez". Un interviu cu Bogdan Suceavă* [*About the Novel 'Coming from an Off-Key Time'. An Interview with Bogdan Suceavă*], http://atelier.liternet.ro/articol/9010/Andrei-Simut-Bogdan-Suceava/Despre-romanul-Venea-din-timpul-diez.html, accessed June, 1st 2016.

[33] *Ibidem*.

Finally, Ilis's novel begins *ex abrupto*, with the impersonal, ethereal voice of the station loud-speaker announcing the trains:

> Watch out for lane three! Please keep off lane three! [...] In the hot summer air, the Bucharest express, that the station radio had announced a couple of minutes before the special interregional train, was slowly starting to form on lane two, Pavel gazed at it intently, To an immobile observer the Brownian movement of the travellers would seem chaotic and apparently meaningless, just as meaningless as the madness in the first minutes of the universe [...] but as that gaze, uninterested in distances unfit for the human visual scale, manages to adapt to examining isolated states of the big cosmos, cutting out portions from reality whose perception may be adjusted, like a camera, to the perceptive horizon of the human senses, the picture of reality gains [...] meaning and consistency, offering itself with elementary simplicity to the senses and to conscience[34].

In the fragment above, the moving camera-eye progressively expands its spatial horizon to a planetary scale and even further, as the Brownian movement of the travellers calls to mind the Big Bang. Back on earth, the coincidental intersection of two trains – the Bucharest express and the interregional train with pupils and teachers going to the seaside – is the *primum movens* of the action. Changing plans at the last minute, Calman, a homeless child, climbs in the holiday train and triggers a spontaneous, postmodern Children's Crusade against grown-ups and the way they rule the world. As in the other novels discussed so far, the events narrated are happening simultaneously, a fact which gives Ilis the occasion to switch between characters, points of view and individual stories, all connected in a puzzle-like structure. This way, postcommunist Romania is reflected through a multitude of antagonistic perspectives and conflicting narrative voices: school pupils, street children, teachers and parents, businessmen, politicians, and journalists. Consequently, the national community no longer appears as a monad, like in Lungu's and even in Suceavă's novels, but as a Rubik cube. It is an image mirrored by the articulation of the novel, where episodes are part of a moving structure which shifts and realigns in ever-changing series. With *The Children's Crusade*, one of the last fictions on Romanian transition published before the 2007

---

[34] "Atenţie la linia trei! Vă rugăm feriţi linia trei! […] În aerul fierbinte de vară, rapidul de Bucureşti, anunţat la megafon cu câteva minute înaintea acceleratului special, se forma cu încetineală pe linia doi, Pavel urmărindu-l lung cu privirea, Unui observator imobil mişcarea browniană a călătorilor i-ar părea haotică şi, aparent, lipsită de sens, aşa cum, fără rost, aceluiaşi ochi exterior, i s-ar părea până şi nebunia din primele minute ale universului […] dar pe măsură ce privirea, dezinteresându-se de distanţele neprevăzute de etalonul vizual uman, reuşeşte să se adapteze examinării unor stări izolate din marele tot, decupând din realitate porţiuni a căror percepţie poate fi reglată, asemenea unui aparat de filmat, în funcţie de orizontul de cunoaştere al simţurilor umane, tabloul realităţii dobândeşte […] sens şi consistenţă, oferindu-se cu simplitate elementară simţurilor şi conştiinţei" (Florina Ilis, *Cruciada copiilor* [*The Children's Crusade*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2005, p. 7).

accession to the European Union, the nation-imagining novel reaches both its apogee and its closure.

Voices of the Interruption: Eminem, Ceauşeşcu and the TV Camera

By coincidence or not, each of the three novels under discussion ends with a funerary scene. In Florina Ilis's *Children's Crusade*, we are witnessing the death of Remus, a schoolboy accidentally murdered by another child during the internal fights between the "crusaders" who had taken over a holiday train. The novel's closing scene presents Remus's funeral ceremony in the central square of Cluj-Napoca. The final chapter of Dan Lungu's *Chicken Paradise* recounts mister Milu's imaginary projection of his own death and the probable impact the event would have on the Acacia Street community. Finally, in Bogdan Suceavă's *Coming from an Off-Key Time*, the murder of the self-proclaimed prophet Vespasian Moisa is immediately followed (apparently with no direct connection) by an unusual mass ceremony, something between a carnival and an Orthodox funeral procession.

Reading closely, the novels reveal the intent behind these funereal tropes. Needless to say, death is a key concept both in Anderson, and also in Blanchot and Nancy's works. The idea of community reveals itself through the death of the other(s), as it allows a particular experience of the impossible communion. In *The Children's Crusade*, the final scene brings together, as participants to the funeral ceremony, the main characters of the story and the anonymous inhabitants of Cluj-Napoca. The narrative perspective „from above", which is also the readers' perspective, is the same as that in the beginning of the novel, only now it mirrors a community forged through somebody's death, and not just a group of strangers intersecting on the railway station's platform. However, this community reinforced by death is unexpectedly interrupted,

> ...because the air had filled suddenly with black clouds which darkened the sky at an amazing speed, the first rain shots falling randomly on the giant horse of Matei Corvin, on the king's rocky face, on the rocky shoulders of his brave soldiers, on the red petals of the carnations in the wreaths, on the roofs of the buildings, on the white silk fringes of the funeral adornment [...] a summer rain attacking with liquid bullets the square, the city, setting the whole mass of people in an undisciplined movement, to search for the protective walls of the buildings that surrounded the square, the bank, the arches of the Town Hall [...] the threatening rain creating among those present at the ceremony [...] a space that grew wider as the rain drops were falling heavier and heavier...[35].

---

[35] "…văzduhul se umpluse pe neaşteptate de nori negri care întunecară, cu o rapiditate uluitoare, cerul, primele împuşcături de ploaie nimerind la întâmplare uriaşul cal al lui Matei Corvin, chipul împietrit al regelui, umerii de piatră ai bravilor lui oşteni, petalele roşii ale garoafelor din cununi, acoperişurile clădirilor, faldurile de mătase albă ale veşmântului funerar […] o ploaie de vară atacând

Ilis's use of gun metaphors as *the rain shots* or *the liquid bullets* brings into the reader's memory not only the accidental shooting of Remus by a schoolfellow, but also the Romanian Revolution, when hundreds of young people were killed while protesting in the main city squares of Bucharest or Timişoara. In fact, the analogy between the crusade and the 1989 Revolution is present throughout the novel. But the real focus of the fragment is on the widening empty space at the centre of the crowd, as it disperses under the rain. The empty space fills up with a stranger's voice – the rapper Eminem's on a tape – which is neither the voice of the community, nor the one supplanted by the omniscient narrator or by the main *reflecteur* of the events, the journalist Pavel Caloianu.

Mister Milu's funeral daydream in Dan Lungu's novel involves two antithetic visions of his own burial ceremony. Milu pines for a socialist type of funeral ceremony, as he would have had during the Ceauşescu's defunct regime, when there was a strong sense of solidarity and human respect. The other, more probable, image that comes to Milu's mind asserts the irreparable loss of the sense of community:

> Now nothing was like in the old days! [...] Were he to die now, a few neighbours from Acacia Street would have come to the wake, or maybe all of them, scramming afterwards from the ceremony to catch a movie or the news, but no one from the factory where he had worked for thirty years, where form a total of a few thousand only several hundred and the guard had remained, and in no way would the whole town have heard of it, as they should have. Not even the working people came together anymore, as did his chickens when they looked for warmth; they ran in all directions looking to „privatize" themselves. This is why he had once prayed to end up in a chicken paradise. A lukewarm feeling of sadness came upon him, and his eyes welled up[36].

Just like in *The Children's Crusade* ending scene, Lungu brings together the neighbours on Acacia Street as virtual participants to a wake. But what should have been an occasion to reaffirm community and to ensure its survival turns into a tragi-comical picture of people running about like confused hens with very short attention span. Since after 1989 the communist paradise is lost, Milu ends up praying to arrive in a chicken paradise, where he could recuperate a sense of

---

cu gloanţele de apă piaţa, oraşul, punând întreaga masă de oameni într-o mişcare dezordonată, căutând zidurile protectoare ale clădirilor care înconjurau piaţa, sediul băncii, arcadele primăriei […] ameninţarea ploii creând între cei prezenţi la ceremonie […] un spaţiu gol care se lărgea pe măsură ce stropii de ploaie îşi înteţeau vertiginoasa cădere…" (Florina Ilis, *Cruciada copiilor*, p. 484).

[36] „Acum nimic nu mai era ca înainte! […] Acum să fi murit el, s-ar fi strâns câţiva vecini de pe strada Salcâmilor, poate chiar toţi, ştergând-o de la priveghi să prindă filmul sau ştirile, dar nici gând să se audă până la întreprinderea unde muncise treizeci de ani, unde din câteva mii de muncitori mai rămăseseră câteva sute şi portarul, şi cu atât mai puţin să se audă în tot oraşul, cum poate ar fi meritat. Acum nici ei, oamenii muncii, nu se mai strângeau unii în alţii, cu căldură, ca puicuţele lui, ci fugeau care încotro să se privatizeze, de aceea poate se rugase cândva să ajungă în raiul găinilor. O tristeţe călduţă îl copleşi, înlăcrimându-l" (Dan Lungu, *Raiul găinilor*, p. 195).

warmth and intimacy. His mock-metamorphosis into a chicken after death is indicative of his longing for community at least among animals, if human togetherness fails.

Ultimately, Suceavă's *Coming from an Off-Key Time* ends with a carnivalesque celebration in the centre of Bucharest, occasioned by the investiture of a new "national prophet". In describing the procession, which is broadcast on television, the unnamed narrator invokes several funerary decorations which recall to the reader's mind an Orthodox burial ceremony, complete with hearse, funerary wreaths and vexilla:

> …everything looked, when attentively filmed from a helicopter, very similar to the Carnival in Rio, with the obvious difference that on the Dâmbovita Quai there was no parade of samba scholls, but of philosophical schools, each with its own dances and vexilla, with its exoticism and metaphors, with it allegorical platform, onto which subtle ikebanas were combined in postmodern fashion with funerary wreaths in honour of our dead in the battles of Tapae, Posada, Podul Înalt, Calugăreni, Mărăşti and so on[37].

At a closer look, the parade turns out to be a sort of philosophy festival, since Suceavă alludes to the various nationalist doctrines of "Romanianess" that circulated in the 1990s. However, the presentation of this postmodern *Symposium* is suddenly interrupted for what seems to be technical reasons. The novel ends with a suggestive figure of distorted communication, as the camera suddenly "fell down and started filming the sky, while on the TV screens a tricolour band in red, yellow and blue incessantly proclaimed: TRANSMITTING LIVE"[38]. By turning to the sky and focusing on something that could mean the absence of God, Suceavă suspends all judgement on the philosophical melee parading through Bucharest. Without an identifiable centre, the image mirrors the interruption of the myth of national community in the early 1990s.

In *The Inoperative Community*, Jean Luc-Nancy understands the interruption of the myth of community as a denunciation of a specific foundational and authoritative narrative, which is actually the essence of the myth, since "the mythic speech is always a communitarian speech"[39]. That is why myth is inherent to community and, at the same time, it enforces the myth of community. However, Nancy makes clear that "the myth of communion, like communism […] is myth,

---

[37] "…totul arătând, la o atentă filmare din elicopter, foarte asemănător carnavalului de la Rio, decât că pe Splaiul Dâmboviţei nu defilau şcolile de samba, ci şcolile de gândire, fiecare cu dansul şi prapurii ei, fiecare cu exotismul şi metaforele ei, fiecare cu carul ei alegoric, pe care subtile ikebane se amestecau postmodern cu coroane mortuare în memoria morţilor noştri din bătăliile de la Tapae, Posada, Podul Înalt, Călugăreni, Mărăşti şi aşa mai departe" (Bogdan Suceavă, *Venea din timpul diez*, p. 237).
[38] *Ibidem*, p. 238.
[39] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative*, p. 50.

absolutely and rigorously…"[40], and it is exactly in the acknowledgement of its "mythical" essence when the interruption of myth takes place. Since the interruption of myth is equivalent to the interruption of the *operative community* which was founded on it, the voice of interruption can no longer be a community voice, nor can it be a new authoritative, foundational voice. In Nancy's exact words, the voice of interruption

> …consists in *allowing to be said* something that no one – no individual, no representative – could ever say: a voice that could never be the voice of any subject, a speech that could never be the conviction of any understanding and that is merely the voice and the thought of community in the interruption of myth. At once *an* interrupted voice, and the voiceless interruption of every general or particular voice [41].

The three novels discussed in this article bring to the fore voices of interruption which signal the failure of the myth of community itself. In Lungu, Ceauşescu's spectral voice, embodied in nea Mitu's anecdotes gathered in separate chapters, operates an insider critique to the myth of communist solidarity, so much longed-for by the characters in the novel. In Suceavă, the camera which points silently to the sky interrupts the voice of the fake prophets, be they mystical, like Vespasian Moisa, or rationalist, like dr. Arghir. Finally, in Ilis, Eminem's rhythms, resounding from a closed coffin where the brother of the dead child had put a walkman, are interrupting all the other voices of this polyphonic novel.

At the end of this article, one final observation should be made in regard to the ethical dimension of the literary reflection on community. One shared opinion on this issue seems to be that literature refuses all common categories and articulates itself on the subversion of the authoritative forms of enunciation, *écriture* or communication. In my view, this is a somewhat presumptuous idea. Literature is not inherently engaged in the deconstruction of myths, since there are many cases when it actually enforced and perpetuated political myths, for instance in totalitarian regimes. Nancy himself suggests that the opposition between *myth* and *literature* is actually inoperative, since literature does not simply invalidate myth by pointing to its foundational and authoritative structure. Ultimately, literature and myth are different ways in which a community conceives of its narratives. The Postcommunist Romanian novels analysed in this article emerge in the breaking point of the community myth, and question its very possibility through the techniques of literature. However, there is nothing intrinsically benign or democratic about literature, and the exigence of an ethical reading always belongs to the individual reader.

---

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 51.
[41] *Ibidem*, p. 80.

WORKS CITED

ANDERSON, Benedict, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London – New York, Verso, 2006.

ANDERSON, Benedict, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalist, Southeast Asia, and the World*, London – New York, Verso, 1998.

ASSMANN, Jan, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", in Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin – New York, De Gruyter, 2008, pp. 109-118.

BARBU, Petre, *Blazare* [*Taedium Vitae*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2005.

CODRESCU, Andrei, *The Hole in the Flag – A Romanian Exile's Story of Return and Revolution*, New York, W. Morrow & Co., Inc., 1991.

CORDOŞ, Sanda, *Lumi din cuvinte. Reprezentări şi identităţi în literatura română postbelică* [*Worlds made of Words. Representations and Identities in Romanian Postwar Literature*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2012.

CORNIS-POP, Marcel, John NEUBAUER (eds.), *Literary Cultures in East-Central Europe*: *Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, IV, *Types and Stereotypes*, Amsterdam – Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004.

CULLER, Jonathan, "Anderson and the Novel", in Jonathan Culler and Pheng Cheah (eds.), *Grounds of Comparison: Around the Work of Benedict Anderson*, New York – London, Routledge, 2003, pp. 29-52.

FISH, Stanley, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge – London, Harvard University Press, 1980.

FLORIAN, Filip, *Degete mici* [*Little Fingers*]*,* Iaşi, Polirom, 2005.

ILIS, Florina, *Cruciada copiilor* [*The Children*'s *Crusade*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2007.

LUNGU, Dan, *Raiul găinilor* [*Chicken Paradise*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2011.

NANCY, Jean-Luc, *The Inoperative Community*. Edited by Peter Connor, translated by Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney, Minneapolis – Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, , 1991.

NEGRICI, Eugen, *Literatura română sub comunism*: *1948-1964* [*Romanian Literature under Communism: 1948-1964*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2010.

NEGRICI, Eugen, *Literature and Propaganda in Communist Romania*, Bucureşti, Editura Institutului Cultural Român, 1999.

SIMION, Eugen (coord.), *Cronologia vieţii literare româneşti. Perioada postcomunistă* [*Chronology of the Romanian Literary Life. The Postcommunist Period*], III, Bucureşti, Muzeul Naţional al Literaturii Române, 2014.

ŞTEFĂNESCU, Bogdan, "Voices of the Void: Andrei Codrescu's Tropical Rediscovery of Romanian Culture in *The Hole in the Flag*", *University of Bucharest Review*, X, 2008, 2, pp. 11-21.

SUCEAVĂ, Bogdan, *Venea din timpul diez* [*Coming from an Off-Key Time*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2004.

TODOROVA, Maria Augusta Dimou, TROEBST, Stefan (eds.), *Remembering Communism. Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experience in Southeast Europe*, Budapest – New York, CEU Press, 2014.

VERMEULEN, Pieter, "Community and Literary Experience in (Between) Benedict Anderson and Jean- Luc Nancy", *Mosaic*, XLII, 2009, 4, December, pp. 95-111.

ŽIŽEK, Slavoj, *Tarrying with the Negative. Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1993.

THE INTERRUPTED COMMUNITY: NEW IMAGES OF THE NATION IN POSTCOMMUNIST ROMANIAN LITERATURE
(*Abstract*)

This article aims to question the role that literature plays in the construction of a new, critical image of the nation after 1989. The communist regime was the catalyst for a particular type of interpretive community and also of particular figures of the collectivity and representations of interactions between individual and community. After 1989, these figures seemed to fade out in the public and literary discourse, and community itself, as a concept, met with crisis. However, even if the failure of communism definitively interrupted the myth of community, the idea of community could not simply disappear, and instead generated new representations of its fractured reality. Is there a particular stylistics at work in the Romanian novels after 2000 dealing with communitarian representations? If so, does it have an intrinsically political or ethical dimension? Finally, can literature be considered not only a space for imagi-*nation*, but also a medium of circulation for collective representations and, consequently, the space for establishing a new community connection?

Keywords: imagined communities, the nation in postcommunism, Romanian literature, Dan Lungu, Bogdan Suceavă, Florina Ilis**.**

COMUNITATEA ÎNTRERUPTĂ: NOI IMAGINI ALE NAŢIUNII ÎN LITERATURA ROMÂNĂ POSTCOMUNISTĂ
(*Rezumat*)

Articolul îşi propune să urmărească rolul literaturii în construirea unei noi imagini critice a naţiunii după 1989. Regimul comunist a fost, în România, un catalizator al unui anumit tip de comunitate interpretativă şi al unor anume figuri ale colectivităţii şi reprezentări ale raportului individ-comunitate. În discursul public şi literar de după 1989, reculul acestor figuri este vizibil, comunitatea fiind ea însăşi un concept în criză. Totuşi, chiar dacă eşecul comunismului întrerupe definitiv mitul comunităţii, aceasta din urmă nu dispare pur şi simplu, ci cunoaşte noi forme de reprezentare scripturală. Există o stilistică a figurilor comunităţii, decelabilă în literatura autorilor care debutează în al doilea deceniu de postcomunism? Dacă da, care este încărcătura estetică, politică, etică a acestora? În cele din urmă, este literatura un spaţiu în care pot fi imaginate noi forme ale comunităţii, un mediu de circulaţie a acestora şi un nou liant comunitar?

Cuvinte-cheie: comunităţi imaginate, naţiunea în postcomunism, literatura română, Dan Lungu, Bogdan Suceavă, Florina Ilis.

CAMELIA GRĂDINARU,
ROXANA PATRAȘ,
SORINA POSTOLEA

MIRRORS OF ANGER: THE "COLECTIV" CASE REFLECTED IN A ROMANIAN VIRTUAL COMMUNITY (*GÂNDUL*)

1. Introduction: Solidarity, Discourse, and Interpretation

Both the national and the international media chronicled the fire that broke at the "Colectiv" Club during a rock concert on 30 October 2015 as the most resounding topic on the last year's map of events. Its impact can be measured not only in terms of immediate victims (65 deaths), but also in terms of collateral effects such as street protests, political changes, and public scandals. In the event's aftermath, thousands of protesters marched through Bucharest several days in a row and adopted, at the discourse level, a position against the state system. Their claims led to a change in the composition of the Romanian Government, who lost their credibility and were forced to move from a political to a technocrat legitimization. The situation also escalated to a national scandal because the Orthodox prelates' official positions did not meet the majority's projections of freedom. Moreover, within the public space, the 65 victims reopened the discussions about the abuses of the ex-minister of Internal Affairs, which had led, days before, to the death of a young police officer. As it was subsequently shown, the latter had been ordered to accompany the minister not on official missions but on private errands. Finally, the public and the Romanian press started a debate over hygiene standards in hospitals. Even now, 7 months later, the "Colectiv" core is still showing its irradiating power, since the new *Hexipharma*[1] case and its dramatic disclosures seem to also stem from it.

We chose this topic because it reflects the dynamic of a virtual community coagulated around a very significant social crisis in Romania. Starting from the assumption that a social catastrophe leads to a rekindling of human solidarity and a strengthening of social bonds, we decided to focus on the effects of this solidarity within digital media. More specifically, we were interested in the way newspaper readers show their social engagement and ties through their online comments to news articles. In our opinion, the online community of *Gândul* commentators may be delineated by taking into consideration three key features: 1. From a technological point of view, this community was formed on the online platform of

---

[1] http://www.gandul.info/stiri/hexi-pharma-a-incetat-productia-pana-la-rezolvarea-situatiei-privind-dezinfectantii-folositi-in-spitale-15276581.

Gândul – a well-known daily newspaper, established in 2005, and ranked on the 9th position in the top of the most accessed news websites in Romania[2]. 2. From the viewpoint of its contextual conditioning, we may talk about a "discourse community" that originated in the "Colectiv" tragedy and its consequences. 3. Beside the core issues relative to the "Colectiv" fire, the specific functioning of this "discourse community" also generated a wide range of other urgent social-political debates. Owing to these thematic ramifications, this specific group of online commenters may also been seen as an "interpretive community" who is able to issue its own beliefs, opinions, and ideas.

Although it does not display all of the classic features mentioned in the literature, we believe that by the strength of its social engagement, involvement and online interactions this community still qualifies as a "virtual" one in the "weak" acceptation of the concept.

2. Virtual Communities. A New Social Contract?

The acceleration of the social evolution brought by New Media led to a development of online communities at a very fast pace. Online communities construct a new kind of "social contract", with flexible rules and at a significant distance from the classic sense of community[3]. The sociological concept of community (in Durkheim's tradition[4]) was organized around features such as family ties, work, economic relations, geographical proximity, face-to-face relationships, moral engagement, durability, but all these traits are modified or simply overridden in the digital environment. The community is a protean concept that does not have a unique or a fixed definition; George Hillery's efforts to inventory the meanings of this term in various domains constitute a key reference[5]. Thus, the term community "means many things to many people, and it would be hard to find a definition of community that would be widely accepted"[6]. In the same vein, this term carries a huge emotional weight, so the researchers of communities are dealing, in fact, with the "defining of undefinable"[7]. The concept of "community" suffers from four diseases: polysemy, ideologization,

---

[2] According to the ranking provided by www.trafic.ro.

[3] Camelia Grădinaru, "The Potential Role of New Media in the Creation of Communities", *Argumentum*, IX, 2011, 1, pp. 137-161.

[4] Emile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1893.

[5] George Hillery, "Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement", *Rural Sociology*, 1955, 20, pp. 111-123.

[6] L. Komito, "The Net as a Foraging Society: Flexible Communities", *The Information Society*, 1998, 14, pp. 97-106.

[7] Lori Kendall, "Community and the Internet", in Robert Burnett, Mia Consalvo, Charles Ess (eds.), *The Handbook of Internet Studies*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 309-325.

naturalisation and obsolescence, so that it has to be used as a weak and vague concept, but still as "one of the greatest leading principles of sociology"[8].

By combining the terms "community" and "virtual"[9], geographical requirements were suspended and social interactions were realizable through computer-mediated communication. Thus, there happened a shift from traditional bonds to common interest ties[10]. Of course, the virtual community defines its location through technology tools, which leads to the idea of a "common location", a virtual "place" where members communicate[11]. *Usenet* is seen as the first form of virtual community, while *The Well* is viewed as an example of community, widely described by Rheingold, a pioneer researcher in this field. For him, virtual communities are "social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace"[12]. Some reasons for which online communities are the "next step in the transformations of community" would be the following: de-traditionalization, dis-embedding, globalization, reflexivity, and the human need to find communion with other people through media and symbolic means[13]. Anonymity[14] is also a central factor that contributes to the extension of virtual communities and a source of paradoxes (freedom of speech versus online defamation and the easiness of leaving the group).

The myriad of online communities challenged the synthetic abilities of researchers who had to organize them into coherent typologies. There are virtual aggregations for nearly every interest that we can think of, from *communities of practice* to *brand communities*. Armstrong and Hegel[15] condensed those options to four types: *communities of transactions*, *communities of interest*, *communities of fantasy*, and *communities of relationship*. To the affiliation criteria and technologic criteria (Internet message boards, online chat rooms, virtual worlds etc.), we can

---

[8] Monique Hirschhorn, "La communauté: du concept à l'idée directrice", in Ivan Sainsaulieu, Monika Salzbrunn, Laurent Amiotte-Suchet (eds.), *Faire communauté en société. Dynamique des appartenances collectives*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010, pp. 9-13.

[9] R. Shields, *The Virtual*, London, Routledge, 2003.

[10] B. Wellman, M. Gulia, "Virtual Communities as Communities", in M.A. Smith, P. Kollock (eds.), *Communities in Cyberspace*, New York, Routledge, 1999, pp. 167-194.

[11] Catherine M. Ridings, "Defining 'Virtual Community'", in S. Dasgupta (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Virtual Communities and Technologies*, Hershey – London – Melbourne – Singapore, Idea Group Reference, 2006, pp. 116-120.

[12] Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, Boston, Addison-Wesley, 1993.

[13] Vincent Miller, *Understanding Digital Culture*, Los Angeles – London – New Delhi – Singapore Washington, Sage, 2011, pp. 189-190.

[14] Kevin Featherly, "Anonymity", in Steve Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of New Media*, London - Thousand Oaks – New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2003, pp. 9-11.

[15] A. Armstrong and J. Hegel, "The Real Value of Online Communities", in E. Lesser, M. Fontaine, J. Slusher (eds.), *Knowledge and Communities*, Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000, pp. 85-97.

also add the structural criteria that define *centralized communities*, *decentralized communities* and *distributed communities*[16].

Constance Elise Porter[17] tried to develop a typology system from a multidisciplinary perspective, using establishment type and relationship orientation as the key categorization variables. As a result, five essential attributes of virtual communities were highlighted: *purpose* (content of interaction), *place* (extent of technology mediation of interaction), *platform* (design of interaction), *population* (pattern of interaction), and *profit model* (return of interaction). Moreover, researchers have also developed criteria in order to exclude virtual forms of sociability from the category of virtual communities[18]. Consequently, Nancy Baym developed an "emergent model of online community"[19], that emphasizes the importance of five external factors in shaping an online community: *temporal structure*, *context*, *system infrastructure*, *group purposes*, and *the traits of the members*.

The translation of the concept of community into the cyberspace brought with it other problems, so that the theoretical approaches are completely polarized. The utopians consider that the Internet provides new ways of communicating and new means for people to get together and form communities without limits, whilst the dystopians emphasize the negative effects of the new technologies (alienation, deviation from traditional communities). In this vein, the effects of the Internet on social capital turned into an important subject of debate[20]. The authenticity of this new form of sociability was also deeply questioned[21], organic communities remaining the gold standard of the analysis[22]. The online community commitment

---

[16] Phillip H. Gochenour, "Distributed Communities and Nodal Subjects", *New Media and Society*, VIII, 2006, 1, pp. 33-51.

[17] Catherine Elise Porter, "A Typology of Virtual Communities: A Multi-disciplinary Foundation for Future Research", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, X, 2004, 1, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2004.tb00228.x/full.

[18] Catherine M. Ridings, "Defining 'Virtual Community'", p. 119.

[19] Nancy Baym, "The Emergence of On-line Community", in S. Jones (ed.), *Cybersociety 2.0: Revisiting Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*, Thousand Oaks, Sage, p. 38.

[20] Barry Wellman, Anabel Quan Haase, James Witte, Keith Hampton, "Does the Internet Increase, Decrease, or Supplement Social Capital?", *American Behavioral Scientist*, XLV, 2001, 3, pp. 436-455; H. Prujit, "Social Capital and the Equalizing Potential of the Internet", *Social Science Computer Review*, XX, 2002, 2, pp. 109-115; J. Lee and H. Lee, "The Computer-mediated Communication Network: Exploring the Linkage Between the Online Community and Social Capital", *New Media & Society*, XII, 2010, 5, pp. 711-727; E.M. Uslaner, "Social Capital and the Net", *Communications of the ACM*, XLIII, 2000, 12, pp. 60-65.

[21] B. Wellman, M. Gulia, "Virtual Communities as Communities"; Manuel Castells, *L'Ère de l'information. 1. La société en réseaux*, Paris, Fayard, 2001.

[22] Jan Fernback, "Beyond the Diluted Community Concept: a Symbolic Interactionist Perspective on Online Social Relations", *New Media and Society*, IX, 2007, 1, pp. 49-69; Lori Kendall, "Virtual Community", in Steve Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of New Media*, Sage – London – Thousand Oaks –

and participatory capital proved that the Internet had consistent potential for the creation and functionality of virtual communities. The incorporation of new media in everyday practices led to the normalization of these "we-groups". Even if virtual communities are marked by fluidity, flexibility, weak ties, "convenient togetherness without real responsibility"[23], what happens inside them and how they shape the offline life remain core interrogations. Online connectivity is not just a metaphor[24], but it is also an empowered structure providing effective actions in order to solve some specific issues.

In this respect, the main tool used in virtual communities is conversation. Even new media have a discursive nature that attracts people. Wagner and Bolloju[25] actually characterized wikis, discussion forums, and blogs as "conversational technologies". What can we obtain when we "talk" online, using computer-mediated communication? In sum, the types of activities generally done online are knowledge transfer, sharing of information, expertise, advice, affective support, companionship, collaboration, etc. As Lévy pointed out about the "collective intelligence"[26], a concept that was adapted later to virtual spaces by Wasko and Faraj[27] there is a fundamental reservoir of knowledge embedded in communities. Thus, virtual communities are like a "living encyclopedia"[28], forming wide databases.

The discursive and interpretive paradigms fruitfully contributed to the elaboration of meaning in online communities. The discourse-oriented approach claims that participants construct community-identity in a discursive manner[29]. The language is viewed as a social practice, while the communities, as forms of life, depend on these practices. The members negotiate the topics, argue, defend or not a certain idea, and, in this process, they construct their own notion of community. The "interpretive repertoire" concept[30] can be applied successfully to the online

---

New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2002, pp. 467-469; J. Van Dijk, "The Reality of Virtual Communities", *Trend in Communication*, I, 1998, 1, pp. 39-63.

[23] Jan Fernback, "Beyond the Diluted Community Concept", p. 63.

[24] D.G. Kolb, "Exploring the Metaphor of Connectivity: Attributes, Dimensions and Duality", *Organization Studies*, XXIX, 2008, pp. 127-144.

[25] C. Wagner, N. Bolloju, "Supporting Knowledge Management in Organizations with Conversational Technologies: Discussion forums, Weblogs, and Wikis", editorial preface, *Journal of Database Management*, XVI, 2005, 2, pp. i-viii.

[26] Pierre Lévy, *Collective Intelligence. Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*, translated from the French by Robert Bononno, Cambridge – Massachusetts, Perseus Books, 1997.

[27] M.M. Wasko, S. Faraj, "Why should I share? Examining Social Capital and Knowledge contribution in electronic networks of practice", *MIS quarterly*, XXIX, 2005, 1, pp. 35-57.

[28] Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community*, p. 46.

[29] M. Colombo, A. Senatore, "The Discursive Construction of Community Identity", *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, XV, 2005, 1, pp. 48-62.

[30] J. Potter, M. Wetherell, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitude and Behaviour*, London, Sage, 1987.

realm, because every virtual community has a database of conversations. This body of discourses can say relevant things about the nature and the dynamic of an online group. Moreover, the virtual community seen as a discursive community has the advantage of comprising difference, heterogeneity, and debate as natural characteristics of its existence[31]. The unrestricted discussion about a theme is increasingly expanding what has been called the "participatory culture"[32] and the possibilities to provoke changes offline. "Discourse community" is preoccupied with the "use of discourse for purposeful social action in a public arena"[33], reinforcing Habermas's ideas about the public sphere[34].

As an "interpretive community"[35], a virtual community shares meanings, experiences and ideas through ongoing social interaction. The members of an online group are usually involved in common activities, they have common interests and accordingly they construct and reconstruct a shared frame of reference. Thus, an interpretive group is "characterized not just by the economic background of their members, but by the common modes of interpretation of their social world"[36]. The majority of virtual communities meet these conditions as they have their own specific rules, ways of joking, jargons, etc.

Jankowski remarked that "although the distinction between these terms is not always clear, they collectively suggest new avenues for understanding community from a perspective where use of language is central. The linguistics perspective seems particularly appropriate for computer-mediated communication because of its focus on forms of language and discourse"[37]. In line with Jankowski's remarks, we approach the community of *Gândul* commentators from a corpus-based, lexical perspective. The methodology used, as well as some of the results of our research are discussed in what follows.

---

[31] T. Meppem, "The Discursive Community: Evolving Institutional Structures for Planning Sustainability", *Ecological Economics*, XXXIV, 2000, 1, pp. 47-61.

[32] Harry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where New Media and Old Media Collide*, New York – London, New York University Press, 2006.

[33] L. Gurak qtd. in N.W. Jankowski, "Creating Community with Media: History, Theories and Scientific Investigations", in A. Lievrouw, Sonia Livingstone (eds.), *Handboook of New Media Leah*, London – Thousand Oaks – New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2002., p. 40.

[34] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989.

[35] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1980; T.R. Lindlof, "Media audiences as Interpretive Communities", *Communication Yearbook*, XI, 1988, pp. 81-107.

[36] Dan Berkowitz, James V. TerKeurst, "Community as Interpretive Community: Rethinking the Journalist-source Relationship", *Journal of Communication*, XLIX, 1999, 3, p. 127.

[37] N.W. Jankowski, "Creating Community with Media", p. 41.

3. Methodological Considerations

Labeled as a huge "accident", then as a "tragedy", and eventually as a "scandal", the "Colectiv" case and its factual unfolding could have been analyzed only through a detailed investigation of the Romanian media that have an online component, which allows for recent information to be updated. However, since the event was reported by all Romanian publications and by television stations, a generic discrimination was necessary from the very beginning.

3.1. Categories of Online Sources

Thus, we focused on written media and discerned four categories of publications that could have fostered communities of online commentators: 1. Cultural/ Literary publications such as "Observatorul Cultural", "Dilema", "Cultura", etc.; 2. Online platforms such as "Contributors", "Vice", "LaPunkt", etc.; 3. Blogs; 4. Daily newspapers such as *Adevărul*, *Gândul*, *Jurnalul Național*, etc. We decided to conduct our research on a community of online commenters formed around a daily newspaper because we are of the opinion that the frequency of publication has direct effects on the community's *size*, *variety of members* and *life span*. Starting from Porter's and Baym's views on the characteristics of virtual communities, our choice to focus on the community of *Gândul* commentators also took into account the site's architecture and the editors' own structuring of information and comments.

At the time when we started our research, the site www.gandul.info (which has been just recently restructured[38]) conveniently gathered all the articles related to "Colectiv" under the label "Tragedia de la Colectiv" [The Tragedy at the Colectiv Club]. Moreover, the topics approached in each news report could be checked through a browser window that listed all the articles uploaded during a particular day. Another important aspect of the site's configuration was represented by the separation between Facebook comments and *on-site* comments, which helped us detect spam messages and invalidate them in the process of corpus modeling. Therefore, the given architecture of the site definitely influenced us in choosing the platform that best fitted our research goals. The newspaper's ideological orientation was out of the scope of our interest.

3.2. Archiving Comments. Time and Length Limits

The fire at the "Colectiv" Club burst on the night of 30 October 2015 around 22h during a concert performed by the metal band *Goodbye to Gravity*. The place was extremely crowded (over 400 people, according to official sources), and had

---

[38] http://www.gandul.info.

only one exit, which made it difficult for so many people to get out when the fire broke. Some of them were severely burnt and others asphyxiated. No less than 65 people died and 147 were injured. Given the fact that the fire's consequences were visible right away, our investigation focused on the comments generated by "Colectiv" articles published between 30 October and 30 November 2015.

The editors' grouping of the articles under the label "The Tragedy at the Colectiv Club" served our general sense of orientation even through this structuring contained only news and updates related to the accident, excluding materials about its consequences. In order to rebuild the complex articulations of the public debate, we had to discern what other themes stemmed from this case. Overall, the articles uploaded on the *Gândul* platform contain a mixture of factual and political information. Therefore, the news directly linked with the "Colectiv" case could only be spotted by using manual browsing because 15 days after the accident, all political messages referred back to the "Colectiv" case. Such being the case, we preferred to build the corpus using the site's search engine, which allowed for a day-by-day check of news and updates. For instance, on 30 October, out of an average news-flow of 60 items per day there are only 2 articles announcing the accident, while on the following 10 days, between 30 and 58 news items about the case were posted each day. One month later, on 30 November, there were only 4 reports mentioning the accident.

3.3. Text Processing and Analysis Tools

After having selected the news reports of interest for our research, we proceeded to the inventory and processing of the messages posted in the *Comments* section of each piece of news. For each article we created two separate files, one encompassing all *on-site* comments and one for Facebook comments, i.e. messages left by people using their own Facebook accounts (whether real or not). The files thus created were named using codes – specifying the news article to which they referred, their type (*Facebook* or *on-site*) and day of publication – and were further grouped by day of publication. All the documents were then converted into *.txt* files and subjected to a process of light editing and markup. Irrelevant and redundant text chunks were automatically removed. They included the names of pre-set buttons and commands present in the *Comments* sections, e.g. *Like*, *Reply*, *Edited*, *Răspunde* [Reply], etc., which might have skewed overall corpus composition. As for markup[39], the commenters' names/nicknames and supplemental coordinates were automatically marked as metadata with XML "< … />" tags so as to exclude them from text analysis *per se* or, if the case, subject them to a separate investigation.

---

[39] T. McEnery, A. Hardie, *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

The corpus thus created was analyzed using AntConc[40], a freeware analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis[41]. Since currently there are no available automatic part-of-speech taggers for Romanian whose tagging system and output be compatible with AntConc or other international corpus-analysis tools, the comments in the corpus have not been POS tagged. However, all of our analyses use a custom-made lemma list that enabled us to take into account not only the tokens (absolute number of words) but also the word-types (unique words)[42] in the corpus.

The lemma list was adapted from the one provided by Michal Boleslav Měchura[43], which, originally, contained a number of approximately 35000 word-types and their forms. In addition to removing some forms which were outside the scope of our research (abbreviations of chemical elements, for instance), since some of the comments in the corpus did not use diacritical marks for Romanian, the original list was enriched with alternative no-diacritic forms for each lemma, i.e. the lemma *bolşevic* includes both forms with diacritical marks and without (*bolsevic*, *bolsevicul*, etc.). Moreover, after a preliminary analysis of the corpus, a number of 152 new lemmas and their forms were subsequently added to the original list. They mostly include relatively new Romanian words, proper names (mainly politicians) and informal terms or forms that are highly frequent in everyday speech and in the corpus at hand: e.g. *manelist* (someone who likes to listen to *manele*, a music style of Oriental origins perceived as vulgar and uneducated in Romania), *securist* (a member of the former Communist *Securitatea*), *Băsescu* (the name of the former president of Romania), *PSD* (the acronym for Romanian Social Democratic Party), *pesedist* (a member of the PSD), *popime* (pejorative term for the clergy), *rocker*, *satanist*, etc. Thus constituted, the lemma list used for this study includes a total number of 35,242 lemmas and no less than 6,829,922 word-forms.

3.4. Corpus Structure and Size

After the initial text selection and comment compiling process, the corpus comprised 2,057 Facebook comments and 14,433 on-site comments. They represented reactions, messages, and replies to a total number of 566 news reports about the "Colectiv" case published on the *Gândul* website. However, upon closer

---

[40] L. Anthony, AntConc (3.4.4x) [Computer Software], Tokyo, Waseda University, 2014. Available from http://www.laurenceanthony.net/.

[41] M. Stubbs, *Words and Phrases. Corpus Studies of Lexical Semantics*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2002; M. McCarthy, A. O'Keeffe (eds.), "Historical Perspective. What are Corpora and how have They Evolved?", in Anne O'Keeffe and Michael McCarthy, *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2010; T. McEnery, A. Hardie, *Corpus Linguistics*.

[42] Sorina Postolea, "State-of-the-Art Text Linguistics: Corpus-Analysis Tools", *Philologica Jassyensia*, Supplement, XIX, 2014, 1, pp. 51-59.

[43] www.lexiconista.com.

inspection, some of the comments in the original set were actually spam messages advertising various websites or companies. Subsequently, the texts were further processed so as to remove these spam comments that could have skewed our final results. The final composition of the corpus by number and type of comments is shown in *Table 1* below:

	Facebook comments	On-site comments
Initial	2057	14433
Spam messages	-214	-23
Final	**1843**	**14410**
Total no of comments:	**16253**	

Table 1: Corpus composition by number and type of comments

As shown by the table above, the preferred type of expression and interaction within the *Gândul* Virtual Community was on-site commenting under the protection of anonymity. A far less consistent number of users posted messages from Facebook accounts, assuming a clear (even if possibly fake) identity when posting. Since we assumed that this distinction may have also led to different lexical choices, we built two different subcorpora for each comment type: a Facebook subcorpus (henceforth FSCorp) encompassing all Facebook comments and an on-site subcorpus (OSCorp) encompassing all on-site comments. The two subcorpora make up our overall comment corpus (henceforth CCorp).

In terms of lexical content, the 16,253 comments posted as reactions to the articles referring to the "Colectiv" case on the *Gândul* website encompass 1,138,892 tokens. As Stubbs put it, "each word-form which occurs in a text is a word-token"[44], so this figure represents the total number of words (repeated or not) present in the texts. However, using the lemma list described above we were also able to count the approximate number of lemmas, or unique words, i.e. word-types used in the CCorp and its two subcorpora. The table below presents the corpus structure and size by type of comment, word-types and word-tokens.

	Word-types	Word-tokens	Type/Token ratio (%)
FSCorp	14,297	140,021	10.21 %
OSCorp	46,301	1,115,431	4.15 %
Ccorp	**43,578**	**1,138,892**	**3.82 %**

Table 2: Corpus structure and size by subcorpora, types, tokens and type/ token ratio

It should be mentioned that the type/ token ratio shown in the table above includes both *grammatical words*, whose role is to "glue texts together by

---

[44] M. Stubbs, *Words and Phrases*, p. 133.

supplying grammatical information"[45] and *content words*, which "carry most of the lexical content, in the sense of being able to make reference outside language"[46]. Even if it is the smallest subcorpus, FSCorp is the most varied in terms of lexical content. On the other hand, the type/ token ratio for the CCorp shows that, overall, mainly due to the composition of the OSCorp, there is little lexical diversity in the comments at hand. In turn, this may suggest that most of the commentators approached and discussed a relatively small number of recurrent themes, using similar vocabulary and expressions in their messages.

4. Discourse Diffusion of Anger:
Topics of Debate within the Gândul *Virtual Community*

Various social actors (public figures, celebrities, politicians, authorities, opinion leaders, journalists, and ordinary people) processed the "Colectiv" tragedy in different ways. For instance, politicians dealt with the information provided by the mass media according to their electoral or ideological interests. The expedient appointment of technocrat instead of political ministers had a boomerang effect that forced political leaders to express either personal or party positions, and ultimately embrace the theory of a fresh start, styled as "the restart" of Romanian politics. Paralleling the political leaders' insistence on the *tabula rasa* image (breaking with the old way of doing politics), the society started to speak about "the moral reformation" of the entire Romanian nation.

In fact, we started from the assumption that the public debate developed a tendency towards diffusion, while the original trigger (the fire) had sometimes only a feeble connection with the comments or their ensuing claims. Online conversations (not all of them developed into real themes) spread according to a "reticular" pattern of dispersal. The lexical analysis of the corpus helped us identify and group several thematic cores present in the messages posted by *Gândul* commenters during a span of a month. In chronological order, they are the following:

4.1. Human Solidarity and Compassion
One of the understated themes in the comments refers to human solidarity and compassion. It emerged in the first messages posted to the news announcing the fire, as people started right away to express their condolences and empathy for the victims and their families. This topic may be seen as the referential frame that

---

[45] M. Scott and C. Tribble, *Textual Patterns: Key Words and Corpus Analysis in Language Education*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2006, p. 23.
[46] M. Stubbs, *Words and Phrases*, p. 40.

provided the background against which all the other debates developed. Due to its nature, it is rather diffuse in comparison with the other subjects approached, materializing in generic and rather sparse references that do not coagulate into full-blown topics. In fact, human solidarity and compassion are some of the main social emotions leading to a sense of community.

The analysis of the most frequent lemmas in the corpus makes the importance of this theme quite obvious. The word-type *om* [man] has the greatest number of occurrences in the CCorp. It emerges no less than 3,978 times, its most used form being the plural *oameni* [people], with 1,871 instances. It is not by chance that the words and expressions epitomizing the human being are the most frequent in our database. To this we could also add at least a part of the occurrences of the word *Dumnezeu* [God], that has 2.022 tokens in the CCorp and was often used in such expressions as: *Dumnezeu să-i odihnească* [May God rest their souls] or *Dumnezeu să-i ierte* [God bless their souls]. These set phrases, which are pervasive in the corpus and accompany a large part of the comments, are also an expression of compassion and solidarity.

4.2. The Orthodox Church and Its Position in Society

A day after the accident, the Patriarchy released an official message of compassion, calling for donations (of both "blood" and "money") to the benefit of the victims of the fire at the "Colectiv" Club[47]. In spite of the message's smooth tone, the commenters punched back with over 100 posts. Among them, there are some of the original versions of phrases that would soon turn into slogans. For instance, someone who called himself *Tribunul* [The Tribune] posted the following: "Inceteaza cu constructia de biserici ca nu folosesc nimanui. Constrieste spitale, bani ai destui, ca murim pe capete in caz de dezastru"[48] [Stop building churches cause they serve no one. Build hospitals instead, you have enough money, don't you see we're dying in mass in case of disaster?]. Due to the position that the Orthodox prelates were now expressing, the role of the national church was seriously shaken. Both the protesters and the commenters launched a comparison between the number of churches and the number of hospitals in the country, together with the catchphrase *Vrem spitale, nu catedrale* [We Want Hospitals, Not Cathedrals], which, in the CCorp is present 39 times in the comments generated by 14 news reports. This shows that the Orthodox Church already had a precarious status in the perception of Romanians, in spite of its ranking in the top position among the most trusted institutions in the country[49]. The theme of the Orthodox Church's role in the Romanian society soon became a

---

[47] http://www.gandul.info/stiri/apelul-patriarhului-daniel-dupa-tragedia-din-clubul-colectiv-14868919.

[48] Here and henceforth, quotes from the CCorp given as such, grammatical and spelling errors included.

[49] http://www.inscop.ro/aprilie-2016-increderea-in-institutii/.

leitmotif of the subsequent comments. This is also apparent in the composition of CCorp, where the lemma *biserică* [church] and its forms are mentioned 3,186 times, being the second most frequent word-type in our database.

Being one of the favorite topics of this interpretative community, the need to reassess the social role of the Orthodox Church turned, in the days following the fire, into a conflict between the Orthodox establishment and the so-called "hooligans", i.e. the people who challenged its role, who, in turn, were labeled as *atei* [atheists], *rockeri* [rockers], *satanişti* [Satanists], and *drogaţi* [junkies]. These words and their derivatives count over 2,200 mentions in the comments. The lexical family of the common noun "Satan" (*satanist*, *satanic*, *satanism*) is quite productive, counting on its own over 1200 occurrences.

4.3. The "Restart" of Romanian Politics

As this virtual community grew and gained in discursive consistency, the mere expression of one's anger progressively turned into radical stances about the ethic of public behavior. At the same time, the dissatisfaction with the current state of public affairs visible in the online comments converged with the series of street protests happening in the aftermath of the fire, most of which were also mustered by online sources. Soon, a demand to "restart" the Romanian political class and the Romanian nation's mores took hold in the public sphere. Commenters (e.g. oPUSDEY, on 4.11.2015) also undertook the neologism "restart", and used it in relationship with terms such as politics, institutions (the Parliament), nation: "Intregul lant de infractori in frunte Daniel continuat cu guvernul corupt si incompetent in frunte cu infractorul Ponta si de ce nu adunatura de ticalosi din Parlament ar trebui RESTARTAT. Este timpul de schimbare dupa 25 ani de jaf nemasurat la adresa poporului" [The whole chain of criminals headed by Daniel, continuing with our corrupt and incompetent government headed by the criminal Ponta and why not the bunch of rascals from Parliament should be RESTARTED. It's time for a change after 25 years of boundless theft against the people].

The fact that state affairs and politics were a consistent topic of reflection is illustrated by other frequent word-types in the CCorp: *stat* [state] (1,691 occurences), *Ponta* [Romani'as prime-minister at the time] (1,235 occurences), *guvern* [government] (1,151 occurences), *PSD* (914 occurences), *Iohannis* [Romania's current president] (873 occurences), *politică* [politics] (866 occurences), *Băsescu* (693 occurences), *politician* (684 occurences).

In the public statements that he made during the crisis, President Iohannis launched the slogan *Nu putem lăsa corupţia să se întindă până ucide!* [We cannot let corruption spread until it kills!], abbreviated as *Corupţia ucide!* [Corruption

kills!][50], which was taken over by commenters and counts 32 ocurrences in our database. This is indicative of a new way of perceiving corruption, which is now envisaged not only in an abstract, moral framework, but also in relation to its ultimate, concrete and possibly fatal consequences. Therefore, it is not by chance that the verb *a ucide* [to kill] and its derivatives appears 529 times in the corpus. However, the debate over "corruption" was anticipated by the wide use of the word-type *ban* [money], with 1, 952 tokens. Additionally, the lemma "corruption" and its derivatives are used 1,213 times, while its lexical sphere (Romanian words for "bribe") unfolds through the use of such words as *șpagă* (581) or *mită* (80). In this context, the Government changed, and several top figures of Romanian politics were pressed to withdraw.

A broader admission of other political paradigms as virtually feasible for Romania, chiefly monarchy, also started to emerge. King Mihai I also voiced the powerful slogan "Timpul României voastre a început" [The time of your Romania has started][51]. The public statements released by Romania's Royal House revived the memory of the events leading to the '89 Revolution, which, in turn, generated a phenomenon of "memory resonance"[52]. The martyrdom of the Colectiv "hooligans" and the new protesters' claims recalled the general demand for freedom expressed by the former hooligans of the '89 Revolution. In the media, the street turmoil following the fire was packed as a new Revolution initiated by the children of the former anti-Communists. This was also fashioned as the "crusade of the children left behind" by parents constrained to immigrate in mass after the Revolution in order to provide basic subsistence means for their families. In fact, the word-type *copil* [child] in its plural form, either articulated or not *copii/ copiii/ copiilor* [children/ the children/ children's], is present in our corpus 927 times, while its singular forms are present only 193 times. In addition, word-types such as *familie* [family] and *tânăr* [young], whose meanings are also related to community, may be found 565 times and 1115 times, respectively. Just like in the case of the word-type *child*, there is a predominance of plural over singular forms (1010 vs. 105 tokens).

4.4. Nationalism, Xenophobia, and the People's Heroes

The talk about Romania's political situation and government got intertwined with other, peripheral topics, as the general anger caused by the fire and its victims brought to the surface not only overt dissatisfaction with the "system" but also

---

[50]   http://www.gandul.info/tragedia-din-clubul-colectiv/iohannis-mesaj-la-doua-zile-dupa-incendiul-din-club-colectiv-nu-putem-lasa-coruptia-sa-se-intinda-pana-ucide-14870177.
[51]   http://www.gandul.info/stiri/mesajul-regelui-mihai-i-catre-tinerii-protestatari-timpul-romaniei-voastre-a-inceput-14878029.
[52] Aleida Assmann, *Impact and Resonance: Towards a Theory of Emotions in Cultural Memory*, Plenary lecture at Södertörn University May 18, 2011, Huddinge, Södertörn University, 2011.

hidden demons. Nationalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism surfaced in the most inappropriate contexts, such as, for instance, the comments to the news announcing the offer of help coming from Israeli hospitals or to the reports that analyzed Raed Arafat's handling of the crisis. In the corpus, the offensive appellation *jidan/ jidov* [jew] emerges more than 30 times, whereas *evreu* [Hebrew] and its derivatives are mentioned 80 times. Similarly, the commenters directed their xenophobic anger towards Raed Arafat[53] as well, who was called several injurious names such as *palestinianul* [the Palestianian], *teroristul* [the terrorist], *cioara* [the crow/negro].

On the other hand, continuing the series of deeply polarized viewpoints expressed so far, special stress was laid on "national heroes", i.e. the victims of the accident, the martyr saviors or the doctors who treated them. For instance, the fourth, the sixth and the seventh most frequent lemmas in the CCorp are *România* [Romania] (2,819 occurrences), *țară* [country] (2,280 occurrences), *român* [Romanian] (2,243 occurrences). Additionally, the type *popor* [people] is also quite frequent (1141 occurrences). More specifically, the collocation *in România* [in Romania] may be found 647 times in the comments to 196 news reports; this construction signals the virtual community's tendency to re-spatialize online interactions. Thus, within the collective mindset, the process whereby a given territory is assigned to a specific community spreads from the particular (the club and Bucharest) to the general (the entire country). This is also apparent in the numerous collocations formed by the word-type *țară* [country]: *în țară* [in the country] (389), *țara asta* [this country] (310), *din țară* [from the country] (276).

4.5. Public Policies: Smoking in Closed Areas, Emergencies, and Natural Disasters

In close relationship with the third theme (i.e. the "restart" of Romanian politics), a debate over the precariousness of the national policies regulating national healthcare, the emergency response system, the people's protection against fire and in case of disaster, and even smoking in public areas involved a large number of commentators. Some of the points raised by the messages posted on the *Gândul* platform were addressed and more or less dealt with during the weeks that followed the fire (the issue of emergency situations as well as the law regulating smoking in public areas), whereas others gained critical mass only several months later (the hygiene in Romanian hospitals and the professionalism of medical staff). Consequently, references to *spital* [hospital] (1790), and *medic/ doctor* [physician] (678/ 290) are rather bivalent. The noun *urgență* [emergency]

---

[53] Raed Arafat is a Syrian-born physician of Palestine origin, well-known and very active in the Romanian public sphere as the founder of Romania's first responders' system (SMURD). He was awarded Romanian citizenship and was appointed deputy-minister in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

(214) as well as collocations such as *de urgenţă* [urgently/ emergency] (160), *medicină de urgenţă* [emergency medical care] (16), *situaţii de urgenţă* [emergency situations] (16), which are pervasive in the corpus, are other proofs in this respect.

Along with the discussion about new health policies, the community of commenters insisted on the idea that Romanians need even more regulation in all public matters. Thus, the frequency of the type *lege* [law] (1051) is enhanced by the following collocations encompassing modals such as *trebuie să* [must] (1380), *nu trebuie să* [must not] (136), *ar trebui să* [should] (375), *nevoie să/ de* [need to/ of] (61/ 526). Here are some verbs associated with the modal *trebuie să* [must], forming 3-word clusters: *trebuie să plece* [must leave] (33), *trebuie să plătească* [must pay] (29), *trebuie să moară* [must die] (24), *trebuie să răspundă* [must be made responsible] (18), *trebuie să dispară* [must disappear] (16), *trebuie să desfiinţeze* [must abolish] (10). In the same manner, the conditional *ar trebui* [should] forms 4-word clusters such as: *ar trebui să existe* [there should be] (10), *ar trebui să facă* [should do/ make] (9), *ar trebui să aibă/ ar trebui să avem* [should have/ we should have] (7/ 5), *ar trebui să dea* [should give] (7), *trebuie să înceapă* [should begin] (4). Additionally, the noun "law" forms several collocations that show the wide range of policy-related issues discussed by the commenters, as in the following examples: *legea electorală* [electoral law] (13), *legi strâmbe* [ambiguously-formulated laws] (7), *legea partidelor* [law of political parties] (7), *legea strămoşească* [law of the land] (6), *legea bugetului* [budget law] (5), *legi clare* [clearly-formulated laws] (5), *legi speciale* [special laws] (4), *legea salarizării* [payroll law] (4), *legea lustraţiei* [lustration law] (4), *legea pensiilor* [pension law] (2).

Along with a tendency to impose the reign of law/ justice over other state institutions, the fire enhanced a state of affairs that was perceived as urgent by the entire virtual community. Thus, the word-type *urgent* [urgent/ urgently] (296) defines all sorts of situations, from "urgent prosecution", "urgently send to prison", "urgently resign from public office" and… "urgent need for exorcism".

Just like in the case of the talks about corruption and the current state of affairs in the country, the discussions about state policies and laws soon turned to marginal topics, and one of them was smoking in closed areas. Some commenters established a link between the fire and the lack of regulation that allowed the people in the club to smoke indoor. Even if the tragedy was not caused by smoking, people saw this as yet another issue to be included in the list of things that had to be urgently solved. The word-type *fumat* [smoking] and its derivatives – *fumător* [smoker], *a fuma* [to smoke], *anti-fumat* [anti-smoking], etc. – counts 120 occurrences in the CCorp.

5. Conclusions

The present paper investigated the rise of an interpretive community formed around a social crisis as well as its characteristics in terms of *purpose* (content, theme), *place* (platform, technology), and *discourse* (linguistic articulation of ideas and interactions stemming from them). We had a look at the group of commenters active on *Gândul* website and at the way they reacted to the news reports about the "Colectiv" case. Although it does not display all of the classic features of a virtual community, we believe that by the great amount of posts and interactions, this community is representative of the way in which the great themes of the Romanian society are digested and verbalized by Romanians through computer-mediated communication. We were able to see that this particular online grouping of people did not generate brand new topics and that it was contaminated by themes born out of offline protests. We could also observe that, even though transferred to virtual space (which made it virtually open to all non-Romanian visitors), this community kept its national homogeneity, and reinforced it through discursive means. Hence, this virtual community extended former debates on social issues, as well as the mentality traits of the Romanian people, being an amplifier of street voices. Due to its new online profile, this form of community based on posting and sharing of comments was looked at as a "deviation" from the traditional understanding of community. This was an important argument for its linguistic, corpus-based analysis, which helped us identify common conversation *loci* using word and collocation frequencies.

Both the monitoring of the news reports themes (through archive browsing) and corpus analysis (with AntConc) revealed a reticular diffusion of core debate topics. The virtual community active on *Gândul* platform discoursed about a variety of interconnected subjects, from the strict facts concerning the "Colectiv" tragedy to its possible political, social, legal, and ethical effects. Hence, we identified 5 prevailing topics of debate, which expressed, even if in a diffuse manner, the feeling of anger and frustration decanting in Romanians after the '89 Revolution: 1. *human solidarity and compassion;* 2. *the Orthodox Church and its position in society;* 3. *the "restart" of Romanian politics;* 4. *nationalism, xenophobia, and the people's heroes*; 5. *public policies: smoking in closed areas, emergencies, and natural disasters*.

Focusing on a tragedy that acted as a trigger for all the hidden monsters of the Romanian collective psyche, we believe that our study may be subsumed to the metaphor of the "mirror". This mirror of anger reflects not only the common people's discontent with the actual state of affairs in Romania, but also with a wide range of issues traditionally perceived or communicated in a particular, tendentious manner or even swept under the carpet.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANTHONY, L., AntConc (3.4.4x) [Computer Software], Tokyo, Waseda University, 2014. Available from http://www.laurenceanthony.net/.

ASSMANN, A., *Impact and Resonance: Towards a Theory of Emotions in Cultural Memory*, Plenary lecture at Södertörn University May 18, 2011, Huddinge, Södertörn University, 2011.

ARMSTRONG, A., J. HEGEL, "The real value of online communities", in E. Lesser, M. Fontaine, J. Slusher (eds.), *Knowledge and Communities*, Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000.

BAYM, N., "The Emergence of On-line Community", in Steve Jones (ed.), *Cybersociety 2.0: Revisiting Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*, Thousand Oaks, Sage, 1998.

BERKOWITZ, D., J.V. TERKEURST, "Community as interpretive community: rethinking the journalist-source relationship", *Journal of Communication*, XLIX, 1999, 3, pp. 125-136.

CASTELLS, M., *L'Ère de l'information*. 1. *La société en réseaux*, Paris, Fayard, 2001.

COLOMBO, M., A. SENATORE, "The Discursive Construction of Community Identity", *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, XV, 2005, 1, pp. 48-62.

DURKHEIM, E., *De la division du travail social*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1893.

FEATHERLY, K., "Anonymity", in S. Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of New Media*, Sage – London – Thousand Oaks – New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2003.

FERNBACK, J., "Beyond the Diluted Community Concept: a Symbolic Interactionist Perspective on Online Social Relations", *New Media and Society*, IX, 2007, 1, pp. 49-69.

FISH, S., *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1980.

GOECHENOUR, P.H., "Distributed Communities and Nodal Subjects", *New Media and Society*, VIII, 2006, 1, pp. 33-51.

GRĂDINARU, C., "The Potential Role of New Media in the Creation of Communities", *Argumentum*, IX, 2011, 1, pp. 137-161.

HABERMAS, J., *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989.

HILLERY, G., "Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement", *Rural Sociology*, IX, 1955, 1, pp. 111-123.

HIRSCHHORN, M., "La communauté: du concept à l'idée directrice", in Ivan Sainsaulieu, Monika Salzbrunn, Laurent Amiotte-Suchet (éds.), *Faire communauté en societé. Dynamique des appartenances collectives*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010.

JANKOWSKI, N.W., "Creating Community with Media: History, Theories and Scientific Investigations", in A. Lievrouw, Sonia Livingstone (eds.), *Handboook of New Media Leah*, London – Thousand Oaks – New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2002.

JENKINS, H., *Convergence Culture: Where New Media and Old Media Collide*, New York – London, New York University Press, 2006.

KENDALL, L., "Virtual Community", in Steve Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of New Media*, Sage – London – Thousand Oaks – New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2002.

KENDALL, L., "Community and the Internet", in Robert Burnett, Mia Consalvo, Charles Ess (eds.), *The Handbook of Internet Studies*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

KOLB, D.G., "Exploring the Metaphor of Connectivity: Attributes, Dimensions and Duality", *Organization Studies*, XXIX, 2008, pp. 127-144.

KOMITO, L., "The Net as a Foraging Society: Flexible Communities", *The Information Society*, XIV, 1998, pp. 97-106.

LEE, J., H. LEE, "The Computer-mediated Communication Network: Exploring the Linkage Between the Online Community and Social Capital", *New Media & Society*, XII, 2010, 5, pp. 711-727.

LÉVY, P., *Collective Intelligence. Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace.* Translated from the French by Robert Bononno, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Perseus Books, 1997.

LINDLOF, T.R., "Media Audiences as Interpretive Communities", *Communication Yearbook*, XI, 1988, pp. 81-107.

McCARTHY, M., A. O'KEEFFE, "Historical Perspective. What are Corpora and how have They Evolved?", in Anne O'Keeffe, Michael McCarthy (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2010.

McENERGY, T., A. HARDIE, *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

MEPPEM, T., "The Discursive Community: Evolving Institutional Structures for Planning Sustainability", *Ecological Economics*, XXXIV, 2000, 1, pp. 47-61.

MILLER, V., *Understanding Digital Culture*, Los Angeles, London – New Delhi – Singapore – Washington, Sage, 2011.

PORTER, C.E., "A Typology of Virtual Communities: A Multi-disciplinary Foundation for Future research", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, X, 2004, 1, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2004.tb00228.x/full.

POTTER, J., M. WETHERELL, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitude and Behaviour*, London, Sage, 1987.

POSTOLEA, S., "State-of-the-Art Text Linguistics: Corpus-Analysis Tools", *Philologica Jassyensia*, Supplement, XIX, 2014, 1, pp. 51-59.

PRUJIT, H., "Social Capital and the Equalizing Potential of the Internet", *Social Science Computer Review*, XX, 2002, 2, pp. 109-115.

RIDINGS, C.M., "Defining 'Virtual Community'", in S. Dasgupta (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Virtual Communities and Technologies*, Hershey – London – Melbourne – Singapore, Idea Group Reference, 2006.

SCOTT, M., C. TRIBBLE, *Textual Patterns: Key Words and Corpus Analysis in Language Education*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2006.

SHIELDS, R., *The Virtual*, London, Routledge, 2003.

STUBBS, M., *Words and Phrases. Corpus Studies of Lexical Semantics*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

USLANER, E.M., "Social Capital and the Net", *Communications of the ACM*, XLIII, 2000, 12, pp. 60-65.

VAN DIJK, J., "The reality of virtual communities", *Trend in Communication*, I, 1998, 1, pp. 39-63.

WAGNER, C., N. BOLLOJU, "Supporting Knowledge Management in Organisations with Conversational Technologies: Discussion forums, Weblogs, and Wikis", editorial preface, *Journal of Database Management*, XVI, 2005, 2, pp. i-viii.

WASKO, M.M., S. FARAJ, "Why should I share? Examining Social Capital and Knowledge Contribution in Electronic Networks of Practice", *MIS quarterly*, XXIX, 2005, 1, pp. 35-57.

WELLMAN, B., M. GULIA, "Virtual Communities as Communities", in M. A. Smith, P. Kollock (eds.), *Communities in Cyberspace*, New York, Routledge, 1999.

WELLMAN, B., A. HAASE QUANN, J. WITTE, K. HAMPTON, "Does the Internet Increase, Decrease, or Supplement Social Capital?", *American Behavioral Scientist*, XLV, 2001, 3, pp. 436-455.

ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.gandul.info/tragedia-din-clubul-colectiv/iohannis-mesaj-la-doua-zile-dupa-incendiul-din-club-colectiv-nu-putem-lasa-coruptia-sa-se-intinda-pana-ucide-14870177.

http://www.gandul.info/stiri/mesajul-regelui-mihai-i-catre-tinerii-protestatari-timpul-romaniei-voastre-a-inceput-14878029.
http://www.gandul.info/stiri/apelul-patriarhului-daniel-dupa-tragedia-din-clubul-colectiv-14868919.
http://www.inscop.ro/aprilie-2016-increderea-in-institutii/.
www.lexiconista.com.
http://www.laurenceanthony.net/.
http://www.gandul.info.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2004.tb00228.x/full.
www.trafic.ro.
http://www.gandul.info/stiri/hexi-pharma-a-incetat-productia-pana-la-rezolvarea-situatiei-privind-dezinfectantii-folositi-in-spitale-15276581.

MIRRORS OF ANGER: THE "COLECTIV" CASE REFLECTED IN A ROMANIAN VIRTUAL COMMUNITY (*GÂNDUL*)
(*Abstract*)

The present paper investigates the emergence of an interpretive community brought to the fore by a social crisis as well as this community's characteristics in terms of purpose (content, theme), place (platform, technology), and discourse (linguistic articulation of ideas and interactions stemming from them). We focused on the group of commenters active on *Gândul* website and on the way they reacted to the news reports about the "Colectiv" case between 30 October and 30 November 2015. The 16253 comments inventoried formed a corpus of approximately 1.13 million words. The specificities of our object of research enabled us to apply a methodology based on new media approaches, lexical semantics, and corpus analysis tools. The interpretation of data led to the delineation of five topics of debate within the community's interactions: 1. *human solidarity and compassion;* 2. *the Orthodox Church and its position in society;* 3. *the "restart" of Romanian politics;* 4. *nationalism, xenophobia, and the people's heroes*; 5. *public policies: smoking in closed areas, emergencies, and natural disasters*. We found out that the tragedy acted as a trigger that rekindled the people's interest in some previously untapped or less tackled problems of Romanian society, which are dispersed within the corpus in a reticular form. Therefore, the five mirrors of anger reflect not only the common people's discontent with this precise case, but also with the actual state of affairs in Romania.

Keywords: virtual community, human solidarity, discourse diffusion, online conversation, corpus analysis.

OGLINZI ALE MÂNIEI: CAZUL „COLECTIV" ÎNTR-O COMUNITATE VIRTUALĂ ROMÂNEASCĂ (*GÂNDUL*)
(*Rezumat*)

Studiul de față investighează emergența unei comunități interpretative care se conturează în contextul unei crize sociale și se definește din perspectiva scopurilor comune (reflectate în conținuturi și teme), a locului comun (aceeași platformă, aceeași tehnologie de postare a mesajului) și a discursului comun (mod de articulare lexicală a ideilor, interacțiuni lingvistice asemănătoare). Ne-am focalizat cercetarea asupra grupului de comentatori de pe *Gândul.info*, comentatori care au reacționat la știrile despre cazul „Colectiv" între 30 octombrie și 30 noiembrie 2015. Cele 16253 comentarii au format un corpus de aprox. 1,13 milioane de cuvinte. Particularitățile obiectului cercetării noastre ne-au permis

să combinăm metode din new media, semantică şi analiză de corpus. Interpretarea datelor a dus astfel la definirea a 5 teme care au marcat interacţiunile intra-comunitare: *1. solidaritate umană şi compasiune; 2. Biserica ortodoxă şi rolul său în societate; 3. „restartarea" politicii româneşti; 4. naţionalism, xenofobie şi eroii neamului; 5. politici publice: fumatul în spaţii închise, situaţiile de urgenţă, dezastrele naturale*. Ceea ce am descoperit este faptul că tragedia din clubul Colectiv a funcţionat ca un impuls pentru readucerea în atenţie a tuturor temelor insuficient dezbătute în societatea românească; dispersia şi varietatea temelor abordate de aceste mesaje reprezintă aşadar o simptomatologie a lipsei de transparenţă, a carenţei de dialog la nivelul întregii societăţi. Ca atare, cele 5 „oglinzi ale mâniei" reflectă nu numai nemulţumirea comunităţii în legătură cu modul în care s-a tratat, punctual, cazul Colectiv, ci o nemulţumire generalizată asupra situaţiei României în general.

Cuvinte-cheie: comunitate virtuală, solidaritate umană, propagare de discurs, conversaţie online, analiză de corpus.

THOMAS FRANCK

LA POLÉMIQUE MARXISTE COMME POUVOIR DE *PRAXIS* : LE RÔLE DES REVUES DANS LA RADICALISATION D'UN IMAGINAIRE POLITIQUE

L'hypothèse d'un dialogue : à propos des dialectiques

Dans le cadre d'une approche sociodiscursive des productions intellectuelles de l'immédiat après-guerre, les revues françaises constituent un objet d'un intérêt tout particulier en ce qu'elles représentent des communautés d'auteurs, des « sodalités »[1], participant à la circulation de pensées, de rhétoriques et de stylistiques particulières. L'analyse de ces espaces d'expression collectifs en tant que matérialités formelles et que média singuliers nécessite la prise en compte de pratiques groupales – lectures, réponses et critiques par les pairs – permettant la mise en lumière d'une *histoire des idées collectives* indissociable d'une *analyse du discours*. Les dialogues qui se construisent dans un même interdiscours entre communautés intellectuelles amènent les revues à se définir et à s'affirmer plus ou moins explicitement dans leurs textes de présentation et leurs textes de repositionnement ainsi que dans différents articles d'explicitation idéologique. Un rapport particulier s'établit dès lors entre une forme précise de savoir et une temporalité que la revue met en œuvre au travers de son éclatement et de sa périodicité. En effet, par la transmission d'un état des travaux non abouti et par l'urgence de la situation sociale, elle permet de saisir sur le vif un savoir en cours d'élaboration et en dialogue, constituant ainsi une forme de « mémoire immédiate »[2] faisant état d'une histoire des idées prise dans sa dynamique collective et processuelle.

Il sera question d'analyser conjointement deux revues, *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique*, créées dans l'immédiat après-guerre (respectivement en octobre 1945 et en juin 1946) au sein desquelles se cristallisent des débats émergeant à un moment historique précis, au sein d'une collectivité d'intellectuels, de philosophes, de critiques littéraires, d'historiens mais aussi au cœur d'une vie politique plus générale. La création et le développement de ces deux revues doivent être resitués dans un panorama plus large structurant une pensée collective qui s'exprime au sein des revues intellectuelles des années 1945-1946 afin de comprendre les logiques de position et d'opposition idéologiques : citons, sans prétention à

---

[1] Marc Angenot, *L'Histoire des idées. Problématiques, objets, concepts, méthodes, enjeux, débats*, Liège, Presses Universitaires de Liège, coll. « Situations », 2014, p. 36.
[2] Bruno Curatolo, Jacques Poirier, *Les Revues littéraires au XX*e *siècle*, Dijon, Éditions Universitaires de Dijon, coll. « Le texte et l'édition », 2002, p. 3.

l'exhaustivité, diverses revues majeures telles que *Esprit* (octobre 1932), *La Pensée* (avril-juin 1939), *Les Lettres françaises* (septembre 1942), *L'Arche* (février 1944), *La Table ronde* (janvier 1948) et *Socialisme ou barbarie* (mars-avril 1949). L'intérêt d'une comparaison des premiers articles des *Temps Modernes* et de *Critique* réside dans l'étroite relation entre leurs membres et dans les conflits que ceux-ci peuvent faire naître à l'intérieur et entre les comités de rédaction. De nombreux auteurs passent en effet d'une revue à l'autre, quittant parfois définitivement celles-ci – les plus connus sont Jean Paulhan, Maurice Blanchot, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Albert Camus, Jean Domarchi, Raymond Aron et Albert Ollivier – et illustrant le cas d'une communauté prise dans une dynamique de collaboration et d'opposition propre à la situation socio-politique et culturelle de l'immédiat après-guerre. Tout en prenant en compte ce contexte précis, il sera question de mettre en œuvre une étude des transferts conceptuels et culturels induits par les échanges et oppositions entre *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique* ainsi qu'une analyse de leur traduction dans la rhétorique d'articles significatifs. Il faudra pour ce faire replacer ces productions dans une sociodiscursivité précise, celle de la Libération et de l'immédiat après-guerre, afin de comprendre en quoi elles sont à la fois la traduction d'une influence de ce contexte social et en même temps un vecteur singulier dans son évolution, ce moment historique étant marqué, à l'image des débats intellectuels qui s'y nouent, par une série de dualismes : communistes contre gaullistes, résistants contre collaborateurs, épurateurs contre modérés, pro-Russes contre pro-Américains, etc. Comme le note André Tosel, dans un commentaire à propos de la philosophie gramscienne de la *praxis* et du rapport dialectique entre le sens commun en tant qu'imaginaire constituant et le pouvoir de correction de tout discours à son égard : « la philosophie a une fonction corrective d[u] sens commun qu'elle doit reconnaître d'abord comme imaginaire constituant, comme monde vital, pour mieux le transformer »[3]. Il sera donc intéressant de montrer, à partir de cette réflexion, en quoi les revues participent à une actualisation discursive d'un certain sens commun de l'immédiat après-guerre, d'un discours obsessionnel à propos de la dialectique, d'un *imaginaire institué*, tout en le corrigeant, le transformant selon un projet critique mis en œuvre par un *imaginaire instituant* tel que l'entend Cornelius Castoriadis[4]. La notion de *praxis* nous permettra dès lors, au détour de la perspective critique de Tosel, de comprendre la manière dont la revue interagit avec son environnement sociologique et politique, tel que suggéré par la dialectique castoriadienne.

Les perspectives méthodologiques privilégiées s'inscriront à la croisée de l'analyse rhétorique du discours social et de l'étude critique des transferts

---

[3] André Tosel, *Le Marxisme du XXe siècle*, Paris, Syllepse, coll. « Mille marxismes », 2009, p. 133.
[4] À propos de la dialectique entre imaginaire institué et imaginaire instituant, voir Cornelius Castoriadis, *L'Institution imaginaire de la société*, Paris, Seuil, coll. « Essais Points », 1975 et Cornelius Castoriadis, *Les Carrefours du labyrinthe. Le Monde morcelé*. Tome 3, Paris, Seuil, 1990.

idéologiques, philosophiques et culturels participant à l'élaboration d'une histoire des idées collectives. Les articles parus dans les revues analysées ne peuvent en effet être compris que s'ils sont resitués au sein des structures matérielles et idéologiques dans lesquelles ils émergent, à l'intérieur d'une *épistémè* singulière et par rapport à la traduction discursive, rhétorique et esthétique, de celle-ci. S'il existe quelques travaux consacrés aux revues et à leurs auteurs, rares sont ceux investiguant la question de la forme induite par le caractère collectif et communautaire du savoir. À la suite de la sociopoétique de Michel Lacroix, nous privilégierons une analyse socio-rhétorique des revues de l'immédiat après-guerre centrée sur une sélection d'articles bien précise de l'année 1946. Le choix de celle-ci se justifie par une volonté de comprendre les débats émergeant autour d'enjeux politiques et idéologiques de l'après-guerre, structurés autour de l'opposition entre le Parti communiste français (désormais P.C.F.) et le Mouvement républicain populaire (désormais M.R.P.), notamment amenés par des réflexions sur la philosophie politique et économique allemande (principalement héritée de Hegel et de Marx, mais aussi de Heidegger ou de Nietzsche). Il est révélateur d'observer que les questions relatives au marxisme et à l'hégélianisme sont centrales dans les articles publiés d'avril à décembre 1946 dans *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique*, de nombreux intellectuels sentant le besoin de renouer un dialogue avec une tradition intellectuelle allemande mise à mal par douze années d'hitlérisme et permettant une compréhension directe de phénomènes idéologiques et politiques contemporains. De plus, l'année 1946 marque l'apogée du P.C.F. qui progresse constamment jusqu'à atteindre un score de 28,2% aux élections législatives de novembre contre 25,9% pour le M.R.P, renversant la tendance des élections de juin 1946[5] – la Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (S.F.I.O.) préservant un score de plus ou moins 20% –, preuve que l'enjeu idéologique se situe dans un débat entre des gauches radicales, bien que le gaullisme soit encore fort présent.

Seront retenus plusieurs articles traitant directement de la philosophie politique allemande du XIXe siècle afin d'analyser, d'une part, la possible existence d'un débat au sein de la communauté intellectuelle de ces revues et, d'autre part, les stratégies rhétoriques et argumentatives mobilisées par les besoins de positionnements idéologiques plus ou moins explicites. Par souci de concision et en raison de l'apparente récurrence thématique des titres d'article, nous focaliserons notre attention sur les numéros 7 à 15 des *Temps Modernes* et sur les numéros 1 à 7 de *Critique* (voir le tableau en annexe reprenant chronologiquement tous ces articles) couvrant les mois d'avril à décembre 1946 et consacrés aux thématiques marxiennes et hégéliennes. La période choisie correspond également à une vie politique française bien précise (qui nous retiendra plus précisément dans

---

[5] Jean-Jacques Becker, *Histoire politique de la France depuis 1945*, Paris, Armand Colin, coll. « Cursus », 1988.

la quatrième partie), celle du tripartisme à la suite de la démission de De Gaulle en janvier 1946, allant du référendum du 5 mai aux élections du 10 novembre 1946, celles-ci marquant les débuts de la Quatrième République (avec l'élection de Vincent Auriol et l'investiture de Paul Ramadier en janvier 1947).

En prenant en compte ce contexte politico-idéologique et l'ancrage des productions dans un interdiscours[6] particulier, nous nous concentrerons sur la performativité de ces deux revues en questionnant l'hypothèse suivante, structurant notre démarche analytique et complétant d'une certaine manière la dialectique castoriadienne entre imaginaire instituant et imaginaire institué. Par la mise en débat du marxisme et du concept même de *dialectique*, *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique* influeraient sur la vie politique selon une *praxis* double, tantôt en tant qu'action et qu'influence directe sur les évolutions politiques, tantôt en tant que mise en réflexion théorique et critique de cette réalité, ces deux composantes praxiques participant de ce que Castoriadis nomme *imaginaire radical* :

> L'autodéploiement de l'imaginaire radical comme société et comme histoire – comme le social-historique – se fait et ne peut se faire que dans et par les deux dimensions de l'*instituant* et de l'*institué*. L'*institution*, au sens fondateur, est création originaire du champ social-historique – du collectif anonyme – qui dépasse, comme *eidos*, toute « production » possible des individus ou de la subjectivité[7].

Cette double dimension, ce dépassement de la dialectique entre instituant et institué, également présente dans la conception gramscienne de la philosophie de la *praxis* telle que la théorise André Tosel, se singulariserait dans le projet à la fois critique et engagé des revues étudiées. Ce rapport entre le pouvoir critique et réflexif des discours et leur visée pragmatique se trouve questionné par Gramsci dans la complexe interrelation qu'il pose entre philosophie de la *praxis* et philosophie de l'immanence :

> [Gramsci] précise en effet la liaison entre immanence et philosophie de la praxis. « *La philosophie de la praxis continue la philosophie de l'immanence en la purifiant de tout son appareil métaphysique et la conduit sur le terrain concret de l'histoire* » […]. Bien entendu, par philosophie de l'immanence il faut entendre l'idéalisme objectif de Hegel et l'historicisme de Croce pour lequel n'existe aucun autre monde que le monde terrestre intrinsèquement historique[8].

---

[6] Nous utilisons cette notion telle que la définit Pêcheux dans son ouvrages *Les Vérités de la Palice* (et non telle que l'entend un certain sens commun), c'est-à-dire en tant que matérialité discursive inconsciente et pré-construite, « ce tout complexe à dominante des formations discursives, en précisant qu'il est lui aussi soumis à la loi d'inégalité-contradiction-subordination dont nous avons dit qu'elle caractérisait le complexe des formations idéologiques » (voir Michel Pêcheux, *Les Vérités de la Palice*, Paris, Maspero, coll. « Théorie », 1975, pp. 146-166).

[7] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Le Monde morcelé*, p. 113.

[8] André Tosel, *Le Marxisme du XXe siècle*, p. 118.

Il faudra montrer en quoi le discours comme action, comme performativité d'une part et le discours comme réflexion critique à propos du réel d'autre part correspondent à la volonté de Gramsci et de Castoriadis de dépasser l'opposition duale entre action et théorie, entre idéalisme et matérialisme, entre hégélianisme et marxisme, dépassement que les revues illustreraient particulièrement dans leur matérialité discursive[9].

MARXISMES HÉTÉRODOXES
CONTRE MARXISME ORTHODOXE

Questions rhétoriques, allo-attributions et attaques ironiques

Il est intéressant de relever, dans un premier temps, les remarques de Ferdinand Alquié à propos de la dimension polémique propre à son époque, dans son article pour *Les Temps Modernes* de mai 1946 « Marxisme ou cartésianisme ? » : « […] notre temps est moins celui des discussions que celui des querelles »[10]. Cette assertion explicite un sentiment récurrent chez les intellectuels d'après-guerre, celui d'être situés dans un interdiscours davantage belliqueux et dual que dialogué. De même, dans « À propos du matérialisme dialectique » publié en juin dans *Critique*, Eric Weil observe qu'il évolue dans une « époque où il est difficile de s'entendre […]. Rien de plus naturel dans un tel moment que de prendre position, ouvertement, avec violence même. Cependant, il y a une condition : il ne faut pas fausser les issues »[11]. Ce constat situe les productions des revues dans une discursivité relevant de ce que Ruth Amossy nomme le registre polémique[12], structuré dans le cas de l'immédiat après-guerre autour de la question du marxisme et de ses variantes. Il est ici question de comprendre en quoi l'ancrage socio-rhétorique de ces productions participe à l'ambivalence praxique des revues évoquées en introduction, en tant que celles-ci s'inscrivent, tout en le déplaçant, dans un discours commun orientant la vie politique et sociale par la reproduction d'une polémique. Alquié, en mettant en scène la position adverse des marxistes orthodoxes – celle qu'expriment Cécile Angrand dans la revue *La Pensée* et Roger Garaudy dans *Les Lettres françaises*[13] – au travers de questions

---

[9] Voir, à propos du « *caractère matériel du sens* des mots et des énoncés », Michel Pêcheux, *Les Vérités de la Palice*, p. 144.

[10] Ferdinand Alquié, « Marxisme ou cartésianisme ? », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°8, mai, p. 1378.

[11] Eric Weil, « À propos du matérialisme dialectique », *Critique*, 1946, n°1, juin, p. 83.

[12] Ruth Amossy, « Modalités argumentatives et registres discursifs : le cas du polémique », in Lucile Gaudin-Bordes, Geneviève Salvan (dir.), *Les Registres. Enjeux stylistiques et visées pragmatiques*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Bruylant Academia, coll. « Au cœur des textes », 2008.

[13] Ce sont les mêmes auteurs et les mêmes revues qui sont visés par la critique de Sartre dans « Matérialisme et Révolution ».

rhétoriques et de propos allo-attribués tels que « Selon M. Garaudy », « Que l'on parcoure le premier du fascicule "Cours de Philosophie" de Mme Angrand », « Quant à nos matérialistes scientistes », explicite ses propres positions en fonctionnant par questions-réponses : « À cette question nous voudrions répondre » ou « Pour notre part, nous jugeons possible et souhaitable la discussion entre existentialistes et marxistes ». Cette structure d'apparence dialoguée induit la volonté de mettre en débat des positions bien distinctes contre les intentions polémiques des marxistes orthodoxes, qui coupent court à l'échange par une argumentation par opposition, par une réfutation dogmatique de l'idéalisme et de la philosophie métaphysique ainsi que par des attaques *ad hominem* des philosophes qu'ils qualifient de bourgeois. Dans « Matérialisme et Révolution » – texte paru en deux parties dans les numéros de juin et juillet 1946 des *Temps Modernes* –, Jean-Paul Sartre développe une rhétorique similaire à celle d'Alquié et de Weil où il met en scène un débat en figeant de manière stéréotypée l'argumentation adverse d'un communiste naïvement matérialiste-objectiviste et anti-trotskiste[14] :

> Les trotzkystes [*sic*], lui dites-vous, se trompent ; mais ils ne sont pas, comme vous le prétendez, des indicateurs de police : vous savez bien qu'ils ne le sont pas. – Au contraire, vous répondra-t-il, je sais parfaitement qu'ils le sont : ce qu'ils pensent au fond m'indiffère ; la subjectivité n'existe pas. Mais *objectivement* ils jouent le jeu de la bourgeoisie, ils se *comportent* comme des provocateurs et des indicateurs, car il revient au même de faire inconsciemment le jeu de la police ou de lui prêter délibérément son concours. Vous lui répondez que, précisément, cela ne revient pas au même et que, en toute *objectivité*, les conduites du trotzkyste [*sic*] et du policier ne se ressemblent pas[15].

Malgré une volonté assumée de la part de ces différents auteurs de sortir des querelles stériles, ceux-ci reproduisent, dans leur rhétorique, une logique de combat se construisant au travers de leurs oppositions idéologiques. Alquié, en usant notamment de la formule univoque de « marxisme véritable » et en mobilisant les procédés rhétoriques évoqués ci-dessus, participe à un développement stéréotypé de la thèse adverse. Tout comme Sartre et Weil, il met en œuvre une stratégie énonciative qui consiste à attribuer des propos réducteurs à l'adversaire en les reformulant personnellement et en donnant l'apparence, par ces questions-réponses, qu'ils ont été prononcés ou suggérés par lui. Plus encore, dans l'extrait suivant, en citant tantôt des paroles décontextualisées de ceux qu'il attaque, tantôt des parties de l'œuvre de Marx, l'auteur effectue un brouillage entre

---

[14] Notons que Sartre précise en bas de page qu'il a résumé des conversations qu'il a eues avec des intellectuels communistes.
[15] Jean-Paul Sartre, « Matérialisme et Révolution I », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°9, juin, pp. 1559-1560.

Temps Modernes – à propos du matérialisme dialectique. Une rhétorique similaire à celles déjà évoquées y est mise en œuvre, usant de nombreuses allo-attributions que l'énonciateur reprend à son compte – notons la simple reformulation, à nouveau stéréotypée, de la thèse d'Étiemble : « Sa thèse est que le marxisme n'a pas de philosophie, et que cette philosophie, si par impossible c'en est une, ne peut pas déterminer une politique »[19] – et de questions rhétoriques – « Mais peut-être sommes-nous injustes ? M. Étiemble adresse cette critique de la dialectique matérialiste à ceux qui *cherchent* »[20]. Bien que l'auteur de cet article n'entende pas s'enfermer dans de simples luttes frontales entre personnes, son vocabulaire connote fortement une logique d'attaque et de défense (procédé plus affirmé et moins retors que l'allo-attribution ou que la question rhétorique) : « Alors il faut y aller prudemment, faire sien le point de vue de l'adversaire pour l'attaquer du bon côté, réfuter ce que l'autre dit et non ce que vous voudriez lui faire dire »[21].

Plus agressif encore et avec une ironie parfois cinglante, Claude Lefort note, dans « La déformation de la psychologie, du marxisme et du matérialisme ou les essais de M. Naville » (*Les Temps Modernes*, octobre 1946) : « Un marxiste ne saurait accueillir les essais de M. Naville sans agressivité. C'est une arme nouvelle donnée à l'adversaire pour attaquer le matérialisme dialectique et entretenir la confusion »[22]. Suivant une même logique ironique, Weil avance contre la vision réductrice qu'a Étiemble du marxisme ses connaissances du vocabulaire philosophique allemand dans l'optique d'attaquer l'adversaire : « […] une *Weltanschauung* (terme que M. Étiemble traduit – d'une façon, mettons, originale – par "système du monde") ? Contradiction chez l'inventeur, contradiction chez les "docteurs de l'école" ! »[23]. L'ironie peut être vue comme un nouveau procédé rhétorique participant à l'ancrage polémique des articles des revues, cette figure étant en effet souvent destinée à déconstruire une œuvre et son auteur plutôt qu'à véritablement argumenter en faveur d'une thèse personnelle. En ne disant pas explicitement la médiocrité d'une pensée mais en ironisant à son propos, les auteurs reproduisent une forme de rhétorique à la limite du pamphlétaire, à l'image de celle de Lefort : « […] personne n'obligeait Naville à écrire des Essais philosophiques […]. Mais s'il veut faire de la philosophie, qu'il ne prenne pas le ton du savant, qu'il ne vienne pas avec sa véracité préétablie du genre : deux et deux font quatre, ou bien : il suffit de se heurter à une chaise pour savoir que le monde existe »[24].

---

[19] Eric Weil, « À propos du matérialisme dialectique », p. 84.
[20] *Ibidem*, p. 89.
[21] *Ibidem*, p. 83.
[22] Claude Lefort, « La déformation de la psychologie, du marxisme et du matérialisme ou les essais de M. Naville », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n° 13, octobre, p. 141.
[23] Eric Weil, « À propos du matérialisme dialectique », p. 85.
[24] Claude Lefort, « La déformation de la psychologie... », p. 142.

Sortir de la polémique

Les articles qui viennent d'être évoqués, ceux d'Alquié, de Lefort et de Sartre dans *Les Temps Modernes* et ceux de Weil[25] dans *Critique*, explicitent une volonté commune de nuancer une perception réductrice du marxisme en invoquant d'autres possibles interprétations à partir de l'œuvre de Hegel et de Marx tout en se positionnant en réaction à des revues qu'ils jugent dogmatiques ou réductrices – communistes dans le cas *La Pensée* et des *Lettres françaises*, libérale et désengagée dans celui de *L'Arche*. Leur ambition est donc, telle qu'ils l'explicitent, de sortir des querelles et des disputes afin de mettre en œuvre une critique épistémique des œuvres philosophiques traitant de la dialectique en retournant aux textes de Marx et de Hegel. Dans « Christianisme et communisme » (*Critique*, août-septembre 1946), Alexandre Kojève présuppose véritablement l'analogie entre les deux philosophes allemands, le rapport entre leur dialectique révélant un *topos* propre aux années d'après-guerre et au milieu intellectuel s'exprimant dans les revues : « le contenu métaphysique de la doctrine communiste […] est ramené par M. Fessard à la dialectique de Marx, *donc* de Hegel »[26] [nous soulignons]. Dans une posture épistémologique à propos du terme de *dialectique*, les auteurs ont la volonté de construire une critique argumentée du dogmatisme marxiste en suivant un retour à la dialectique hégélienne, galvaudée selon eux par certains commentateurs : « La dialectique, pour Hegel, n'est donc ni science, ni logique (précision répondant à l'une des questions de M. Étiemble), mais mouvement de l'esprit dans la nature et dans l'histoire, allant de position à négation, pour arriver à la position de l'esprit absolu, qui se sait être tout »[27].

Le retour aux textes des philosophes allemands et non aux traditionnels commentaires dont ceux-ci sont l'objet (dans ce cas à propos de la conception holiste et totalisante de la dialectique hégélienne) permet aux auteurs d'inscrire leur discours dans un projet philosophique, voire philologique, à l'image de ce qu'initie Lefort en invoquant Marx contre le marxisme : « Il est à peine besoin d'insister sur le caractère réactionnaire de cette interprétation du marxisme [celle de Naville] cent fois rejetée par Marx lui-même »[28]. Cependant, dans le même mouvement d'explicitation et de précision philosophique, Lefort – tout comme la majorité des auteurs étudiés – reproduit, au travers de sa rhétorique, les querelles développées entre intellectuels : « Si nous défendons *avec acharnement* le matérialisme, c'est que l'action authentique sur tous les modes ne nous apparaît

---

[25] Nous nous sommes rapidement intéressé à « À propos du matérialisme dialectique », mais « Politique et bonne volonté » (*Critique*, juillet 1946) s'attèle également à une critique d'une interprétation marxiste, celle de Stephan Szende.

[26] Alexandre Kojève, « Christianisme et communisme », *Critique*, 1946, n° 3-4, août-septembre, p. 308.

[27] Eric Weil, « À propos du matérialisme dialectique », p. 87.

[28] Claude Lefort, « La déformation de la psychologie... », p. 145.

jamais comme le projet délibéré d'une conscience mais comme la réalisation d'une existence naturelle [nous soulignons] »[29]. À la suite de sa collaboration avec *Les Temps Modernes*, Lefort affirmera sa position matérialiste dans *Socialisme ou barbarie*, revue qu'il fonde avec Castoriadis en 1949, on y reviendra. Face à ce positionnement idéologique assumé, l'article de Kojève qui vient d'être cité est particulièrement intéressant. Précisant que son objectif est de proposer une « étude "objective" »[30] contre l'« ouvrage de propagande » de Gaston Fessard, l'auteur met en lumière et dénonce les mécanismes rhétoriques de persuasion induits par la position idéologique de son adversaire :

> Je voudrais montrer tout d'abord qu'il s'agit bien d'un ouvrage de propagande, en ce sens que l'action présumée de l'argument sur le lecteur y importe plus que l'adéquation de l'argument à la réalité. […] Dans un ouvrage de propagande il est parfaitement légitime d'user d'artifices, tout en reprochant à ses adversaires de s'en servir[31].

Kojève a bien relevé cette tendance d'époque, proposant les prémisses d'une analyse rhétorique attentive aux « traits ridicules ou révoltants, immédiatement contrôlables et accessibles à tous ; […] traits […] qui appartiennent à la surface et ne contribuent que médiocrement à caractériser l'essence profonde du phénomène »[32] – entendons, dans un vocabulaire d'analyse du discours, les *topoï* et les formules rhétoriques participant au figement rhétorique d'une philosophie. De même, Jean Pouillon, dans « Pour l'internationalisme » (*Les Temps Modernes,* décembre 1946), utilise les termes de « lieu commun » et d'« idée à la mode » – termes utilisés par Marc Angenot dans sa définition d'une hégémonie[33] – pour dénoncer le figement d'un idéologème représentatif d'un état du discours marxiste, à savoir l'internationalisme :

> L'internationalisme est devenu aujourd'hui une idée à la mode ; personne ne voudrait plus nier l'interdépendance des nations et par suite le caractère supranational des problèmes. C'est même devenu un tel lieu commun qu'on ressent une certaine gêne à utiliser un mot qui a gardé malgré tout une certaine résonance révolutionnaire, pour condenser des idées dont tout le monde se réclame, qu'en tout cas personne ne récuse, et surtout dont on ne voit plus très bien quelle peut être l'efficacité[34].

L'analyse de ces articles illustre l'importance qu'attribuent de nombreux intellectuels – qu'ils soient communistes, anticommunistes ou partisans d'une troisième voie – à une compréhension non biaisée et non dogmatique de la

---

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 150.
[30] Alexandre Kojève, « Christianisme et communisme », p. 309.
[31] *Ibidem*, pp. 309-311.
[32] *Ibidem*, p. 312.
[33] Marc Angenot, *1889. Un État du discours social*, pp. 22-26.
[34] Jean Pouillon, « Pour l'internationalisme », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°15, décembre, p. 434.

dialectique et à une dénonciation des mécanismes rhétoriques retors au profit d'un véritable dialogue philosophique hégéliano-marxien. Toutefois, la dialectique marxiste – obsession d'époque à laquelle n'échappent pas les revues d'après-guerre – mobilise une série d'idéologèmes forts et, partant, entraîne un figement stylistique et rhétorique qui rend difficile la mise en œuvre d'un débat débarrassé de toute lutte idéologique. Face à la volonté d'une nuance de l'intense production discursive et malgré le projet d'un retour aux textes dénonçant les interprétations erronées de ceux-ci, les collaborateurs des *Temps Modernes* et de *Critique* sont bel et bien situés dans un contexte d'énonciation hautement duel et oppositionnel, ils en perpétuent certains traits et participent simultanément à la reproduction et à la singularisation de la querelle relative à la dialectique marxiste. On peut donc observer une véritable tension entre le projet de singularisation et d'institutionnalisation rhétorique exprimé par les articles des revues qui tentent explicitement de sortir d'un figement formel et idéologique (perspective marxienne), et l'ancrage foncièrement polémique de leur discours, en tant qu'actualisations d'un imaginaire institué, exprimé par les questions rhétoriques, les allo-attributions et les attaques ironiques propres à une obsession discursive hautement idéologique (polémique marxiste). Cette dualité peut en quelque sorte signifier à la fois l'ancrage historique des revues dans un interdiscours structuré selon des luttes frontales et, en même temps, la volonté de s'en distancier en initiant un véritable dialogue philosophique et philologique.

La mise en scène de querelles autour du marxisme et de la dialectique d'héritage hégélien constitue la revue comme un organe au service d'une certaine orientation discursive, comme le vecteur praxique d'une polarisation idéologique et politique. Suivant le cadre théorique de la conception gramscienne que nous avons proposé en introduction, il est important de relever la dialectique structurante entre « la capacité de modification du réel propre aux acteurs en lutte et […] la capacité d'automodification de ces acteurs au cours de la lutte »[35]. La lutte rhétorique et argumentative qui se noue dans les revues constitue le questionnement autour de dialectique marxienne-hégélienne comme le vecteur d'une possible modification du réel, d'une institution, par différents acteurs discursifs. En retour, une capacité d'« automodification » des acteurs les amène à développer un questionnement critique en fonction de l'évolution du réel lui-même. Cette mise en débat réflexive, que l'on nommera *praxis* critique, corrélée à son pouvoir d'effectivité, que l'on nommera – dans une formulation volontairement pléonastique – *praxis* performative, correspondrait au dépassement dialectique gramscien entre idéalisme et matérialisme et à celui castoriadien entre imaginaire instituant et imaginaire institué.

---

[35] André Tosel, *Le Marxisme du XXᵉ siècle*, p. 129.

LE CAS SARTRE-ARON :
UNE TRAJECTOIRE REVUISTIQUE À VALEUR HEURISTIQUE

Une divergence idéologico-discursive

L'intensité des débats d'après-guerre qui viennent d'être évoqués crée une série de tensions entre les différentes revues mais également au sein même de leurs comités de rédaction, les difficultés d'une unanimité groupale semblant innombrables en raison de la diversité des collaborateurs[36]. Bien que les positions idéologiques des *Temps Modernes* et de *Critique* ne soient pas aussi tranchées que celles d'autres revues plus politiques (telles que *La Pensée, Les Lettres françaises* ou *Socialisme ou barbarie*), des divergences apparaissent entre leurs membres dont la plus connue est le cas de Raymond Aron qui quitte, avec Albert Ollivier, *Les Temps Modernes* en juin 1946. Si le second rejoint directement le comité de rédaction de *Critique*, le premier privilégie une collaboration avec des journaux tels que *Combat* puis *Le Figaro* tout en participant au développement de la revue de Bataille. Selon Pierre Verstraeten, cette rupture est foncièrement due à des divergences idéologico-politiques[37] qu'il est intéressant d'étudier à la lumière des querelles à propos du marxisme au cours de l'année 1946. Malgré une absence de rejet explicite des thèses marxistes chez Aron, les articles qu'il rédige pour *Les Temps Modernes* et pour *Critique* ainsi que sa dissension avec Sartre sont marqués par un besoin de se positionner par rapport aux théories politiques héritées de Marx et de Hegel – on le verra à propos de l'article « Une constitution provisoire » paru en juin 1946 dans *Les Temps Modernes*. Il est d'ailleurs remarquable que ce départ coïncide exactement avec la publication du texte de Sartre « Matérialisme et Révolution » dans lequel le directeur de la revue s'attèle à positionner l'existentialisme par rapport à une conception personnelle de la révolution. Si Sartre attaque une pensée bourgeoise analytique, son article n'en reste pas moins très critique à l'égard d'un marxisme orthodoxe, fort pauvre philosophiquement à ses yeux, parlant d'un véritable « mythe »[38]. On perçoit toutefois son projet d'un rapprochement entre sa philosophie de la liberté *en situation* et la philosophie marxienne des classes et du « mouvement révolutionnaire », qu'il entend mettre en regard de la dialectique hégélienne :

> La pensée révolutionnaire est une *pensée en situation* : elle est la pensée des opprimés en tant qu'ils se révoltent en commun contre l'oppression ; elle ne peut pas se reconstituer du dehors, on peut seulement l'apprendre une fois qu'elle est faite, en

---

[36] Rappelons que le comité de rédaction initial des *Temps Modernes* est composé de Sartre, Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Aron, Leiris, Ollivier et Paulhan tandis que celui de *Critique* réunit Bataille, Blanchot, Josserand, Monnerot, Ollivier, Weil et Prévost.

[37] Pierre Verstraeten, *L'Anti-Aron*, Paris, La Différence, coll. « Les Essais », 2008, p. 9.

[38] Jean-Paul Sartre, « Matérialisme et Révolution I », p. 1562.

reproduisant en soi le mouvement révolutionnaire et en la considérant à partir de la situation d'où elle émane[39].

C'est en quelque sorte le rapprochement inverse mais complémentaire qu'opère Kojève dans son article pour *Critique* « Hegel, Marx et le christianisme » (août-septembre 1946) en montrant les apports de Marx à l'hégélianisme et en soulignant l'aspect « matérialiste de la dialectique hégélienne »[40]. Face à l'évidence du caractère idéologique et partisan d'un commentaire de l'œuvre de Marx, il ne faudrait pas sous-estimer la dimension éminemment politique d'une réflexion sur le rapport entre Hegel et la philosophie contemporaine. Comme l'a bien noté Merleau-Ponty dans « L'existentialisme chez Hegel » (*Les Temps Modernes*, avril 1946), « on pourrait dire sans paradoxe que donner une interprétation de Hegel, c'est prendre position sur tous les problèmes philosophiques, politiques et religieux de notre siècle »[41].

À la suite de Marx et de Hegel, Kojève et dans une certaine mesure Sartre mettent en lumière une logique de luttes frontales entre discours idéologiques plus ou moins antagonistes, à l'image de la lutte qui se crée entre l'auteur de « Les limites de la théorie économique classique » et celui de « Matérialisme et Révolution », ce dernier notant : « […] dans le cas du prolétariat, […] le fils d'ouvrier, né dans un faubourg éloigné, au sein de la foule, n'a aucun contact direct avec l'élite possédante ; personnellement il n'a aucun devoir, sauf ceux qui sont définis par la loi, il ne lui est même pas défendu […] d'accéder à la classe supérieure »[42], cette loi étant définie par des mécanismes institutionnels étrangers au prolétariat. Sartre dénonce ici l'essentialisation qu'opère la classe dominante à propos du statut et de la définition des classes dominées (celles-ci étant définies de l'extérieur par la loi et le langage bourgeois), mettant en lumière l'impossibilité de toute auto-détermination notamment via un processus d'institutionnalisation discursive (au sens catoridadien), et donc de tout dialogue entre classes. Dans « Les limites de la théorie économique classique », premier article publié par Aron dans *Critique* en novembre, à la suite de son départ des *Temps Modernes*, le philosophe exemplifie en quelque sorte ce dialogue impossible en se fondant sur des bases radicalement opposées à celles de Sartre puisqu'il met en avant une réflexion sur l'économie de marché qui sert d'*a priori* à ses critiques :

> Je ne reproche ni à M. Lescure, ni à M. Rueff de tirer d'une comparaison historique ou d'une étude théorique la conclusion que le régime dont le fonctionnement

---

[39] Jean-Paul Sartre, « Matérialisme et Révolution II », », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°10, juillet, pp. 4-5.
[40] Alexandre Kojève, « Hegel, Marx et le christianisme », *Critique*, 1946, n°3-4, août-septembre, p. 356.
[41] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, « L'existentialisme chez Hegel », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°7, avril, p. 1312.
[42] Jean-Paul Sartre, « Matérialisme et Révolution II », p. 7.

est assuré par les mécanismes du marché est préférable à tout autre. Dans certaines limites et sous certaines réserves, je serais prêt à leur donner raison[43].

Bien que Sartre et Aron soient issus d'une même classe sociale et que leurs discours soient le fruit d'une connaissance de classe commune, leur idéologie n'en est pas moins fondée sur des *a priori* distincts, prétendant parler – parfois naïvement – au nom de classes différentes prises dans un rapport de luttes et de forces antagoniques[44].

Si Aron avance la nécessité, dans les moments de crise ou de récession, d'une régulation des marchés, ceux-ci n'en sont pas moins le point de départ politique et économique de sa réflexion qui se fonde sur un économisme techniciste plutôt que sur un questionnement philosophico-politique des rapports de domination qu'il engendre. Bien qu'il reproche à Jean Lescure son apologie du « triomphe des nécessités naturelles » et la croyance en l'existence d'un « capitalisme éternel », Aron construit tout son développement à partir d'arguments fondés sur une économie de marché, de consommation et d'utilisation de main-d'œuvre : il est question de hausses salariales, d'ajustement des prix, de régulation des exportations, de redistribution des richesses, etc. Contre un vocabulaire assumant la logique marxienne de la lutte de classes chez Sartre, Aron ne questionne pas explicitement ce point de vue et cherche au contraire, selon le commentaire « La pensée politique de Raymond Aron » de Roland Caillois dans *Critique* (octobre 1946), à définir une organisation politique hiérarchisée fondée sur une « élite » attentive aux intérêts des classes subalternes, sorte de despote éclairé au service des « masses » : « L'idée d'élite ne peut être fondée sur le mépris des masses »[45]. Si l'on attache ici une importance particulière à la constitution du langage en discours de classe, dans sa dimension polémique et oppositionnelle, ainsi qu'aux présupposés qu'induit chaque position idéologique, c'est pour insister sur la force pragmatique que ce discours a sur le monde historique et social. Tosel note à ce propos :

> Né du besoin de signifier et de communiquer qui traverse tous les rapports sociaux en leurs divers moments, le langage est le milieu concret, l'attribut du toute l'historicité

---

[43] Raymond Aron, « Les limites de la théorie économique classique », *Critique*, 1946, n°6, novembre, p. 511.

[44] La théorie marxiste a repris à Engels les logiques des forces réciproques régissant le monde social, amalgamant la théorie physique des forces et l'analyse sociologique. Sans vouloir ici reproduire ce débat, nous pensons intéressant de concevoir les discours dans une analogie avec cette interprétation où les luttes idéologico-discursives se structurent en fonction d'un espace oppositionnel prédéfini et agissant constamment sur chaque production. Les assertions discursives s'entre-structureraient de manière systématique et se développeraient selon des rapports de forces, des prises de positions plus ou moins affirmatives et violentes, des luttes plus ou moins dures. Il est évident que cette structure est bien plus complexe qu'un simple rapport d'action-réaction et que, comme dans la logique physique, des forces peuvent être dirigées de manière oblique et différentielle.

[45] Roland Caillois, « La pensée politique de Raymond Aron », *Critique*, 1946, n° 5, octobre, p. 434.

humaine définie comme acte d'autoproduction du monde humain. Le langage est toujours présent comme langue particulière. Sans le langage en général, sans une langue particulière, nulle passion, nulle action ne peuvent exister, nul préjugé, nul jugement ne peuvent se formuler[46].

Si Tosel insiste sur les particularités d'une langue nationale, il faut aussi accentuer la dimension idéologique qui fonde tout discours doxique de classe, tout sociolecte, selon ses passions et ses jugements. En étant structurés selon des *a priori* distincts, on peut soutenir que les discours sartrien et aronien construisent deux visions du monde distinctes, deux autoproductions du monde humain, deux actions sur celui-ci. Bien que leurs textes mettent l'accent sur des questions d'ordre économique et politique, il est essentiel de noter que ces différents pôles communiquent indissociablement avec leur formulation, c'est-à-dire avec le pôle discursif, selon une logique de détermination et d'institutionnalisation réciproque entre la perception d'une réalité et sa formalisation :

> La philosophie de la praxis tisse les liens entre les quatre pôles de l'ensemble socio-historique que sont l'économie, la politique, la culture et le langage. Elle tend à constituer le réseau des relations de détermination, de conditionnement qui unissent ces pôles et les font exister les uns avec les autres[47].

Toutes ces remarques illustrent le contraste entre deux rhétoriques concurrentes, soutenant deux visions du monde distinctes : les deux auteurs construisent leur pensée sur des *a priori* clairement opposés et, comme le note Pierre Verstraeten, leurs idéologies sont incompatibles, le dialogue étant devenu impossible dans une période aussi radicalement clivée.

Par ailleurs, en dénonçant le marxiste qui « croit en Marx, en Lénine, en Staline, […] admet le principe d'autorité et, pour finir, […] conserve la foi aveugle et tranquille que le matérialisme est une certitude »[48], Sartre entend questionner la possibilité d'une lecture idéaliste, au sens hégélien, et existentialiste de l'idéologie révolutionnaire – à contre-courant du dogmatisme communiste. C'est la même attitude qu'adopte Merleau-Ponty dans « Le yogi et le prolétaire » (*Les Temps Modernes*, octobre 1946), critiquant l'interprétation de la formule hégélienne « Tout ce qui est réel est rationnel » comme justification par les marxistes orthodoxes de la violence révolutionnaire au nom d'un prétendu objectivisme rationaliste. Sartre et Merleau-Ponty souhaitent mettre en œuvre une troisième voie critique entre bolchévisme et capitalisme. De son côté, Aron s'oriente vers une idéologie dont les *a priori* se fondent sur un économisme et une théorie juridico-politique de la liberté tout en jouant sur le *topos* d'un « régime futur » dystopique où l'amalgame est fait entre l'interventionnisme d'état et la violence du dirigisme

---

[46] André Tosel, *Le Marxisme du XXe siècle*, p. 141.
[47] *Ibidem*, p. 144.
[48] Jean-Paul Sartre, « Matérialisme et Révolution I », p. 1559.

soviétique, au profit d'un moindre mal libéral et d'une « conservation » du « régime actuel » :

> Ils [les théoriciens libéraux] appellent une analyse aussi précise et rigoureuse que les relations de l'économie pure. Et peut-être, si l'on parvenait à les comprendre, comprendrait-on du même coup pourquoi les hommes méconnaissent les conseils des libéraux. […] Singulièrement plus agissante, à n'en pas douter, est l'argumentation de F. von Hayek dans la *Route de la servitude*. Ce petit livre, sorte de pamphlet antidirigiste qui, avec beaucoup de force et de talent, dénonce dans le glissement vers l'économie dirigée la fatalité du totalitarisme, mériterait une autre étude. Le problème est grave et difficile. Bornons-nous à constater que la seule argumentation en faveur du régime actuel qui trouve réellement écho est celle qui se borne à dénoncer les vices du régime futur. La crainte de l'avenir devient la suprême force de conservation[49].

Loin de vouloir reproduire un débat caricatural entre les mérites et les erreurs des deux philosophes, il est toutefois utile de préciser qu'Aron ne questionne pas nettement, du moins dans les articles qu'il donne à *Critique* et aux *Temps Modernes*, ses partis pris idéologiques et ses choix rhétoriques, ce que fait constamment Sartre dans les deux parties de « Matérialisme et Révolution » en explicitant ses propres *a priori* (le terme est utilisé à de nombreuses reprises) mais également ceux de la société bourgeoise et des marxistes orthodoxes :

> Lorsque le matérialiste se prétend *certain* de ses principes, son assurance ne lui peut venir que d'intuitions ou de raisonnements *a priori*, c'est-à-dire de ces spéculations mêmes qu'il condamne. […] Pour éviter toute présupposition, nous adopterons la définition *a posteriori* qu'un historien, A. Mathiez, donne de la révolution […]. De la même façon nous ne nommerons pas révolutionnaires les peuples coloniaux ou les noirs d'Amérique[50].

Selon une même perspective autocritique et autoréflexive (qui questionne les idéologies par rapport auxquelles elle se positionne), dans « Le yogi et le prolétaire », Merleau-Ponty dénonce le dogmatisme anticommuniste qui « refuse de voir que la violence est partout »[51], y compris dans l'économie libérale, tout comme le communiste qui rechigne à analyser le régime bolchévique comme une variante de l'aliénation par le travail, en tant que système politique hiérarchisé et structuré autour d'une élite dominant des masses laborieuses et non comme un état sans classe. À la suite de Merleau-Ponty et des *Temps Modernes*, et suivant une variante beaucoup plus radicale et militante, le groupe *Socialisme ou barbarie*, à la tête duquel on retrouve Lefort et Castoriadis, développe dès 1946 cette théorie qu'il exprimera au sein de sa revue à partir de mars-avril 1949. Tandis qu'Aron continuera sa critique du communisme en la confrontant au modèle soviétique au

---

[49] Raymond Aron, « Les limites de la théorie économique classique », pp. 517-519.
[50] Jean-Paul Sartre, « Matérialisme et Révolution I et II », p. 1, 1540.
[51] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, « Le yogi et le prolétaire I », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n° 13, octobre, p. 2.

profit du moindre mal libéral, qu'il critique dans sa dimension uniquement capitaliste – notamment dans sa collaboration avec la *Table ronde* dès 1948 –, les membres du groupe de Castoriadis et Lefort accentueront la critique interne au marxisme initiée par Sartre et Merleau-Ponty dans *Les Temps Modernes*. Daniel Blanchard explicite en ces termes le projet de la revue *Socialisme ou barbarie* :

> Il faut donc regarder en face et dénoncer la Russie stalinienne comme une société dans laquelle une nouvelle classe, la bureaucratie, s'est emparée collectivement des moyens de productions et impose au prolétariat et à la paysannerie une exploitation et une oppression pires que sous le capitalisme bourgeois[52].

Ces remarques à propos de la *Table ronde* et de *Socialisme ou barbarie*, ne nous détournant nullement de l'objet étudié (celui de la dualisation des débats politiques autour du marxisme), sont essentielles pour comprendre l'évolution du champ politique et la radicalisation des positions exprimées en 1946 par *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique* (radicalisation symbolisée, dans une certaine mesure, par la lutte entre Sartre et Aron). En effet, la revue de Mauriac et celle de Lefort, respectivement créées en janvier 1948 et en mars 1949, marquent une réelle rupture du dialogue entre deux polarités du monde intellectuel, celle qui questionne le marxisme de l'intérieur en en critiquant les dérives et celle qui se positionne contre lui dans une volonté de rupture, évidemment illusoire, avec tout *a priori* idéologique[53].

Un dialogue de sourds

Dans ses *Mémoires*, Aron omet, certainement volontairement, de mentionner le dernier article qu'il publie dans *Les Temps Modernes* en juin 1946, « Une constitution provisoire » : « Dans *les Temps Modernes*, j'écrivis trois articles : "Les désillusions de la liberté" ; "Après l'événement, avant l'Histoire" ; "La chance du socialisme" »[54]. Dans ce texte, le philosophe libéral semble encore laisser une place aux réflexions marxiennes et hégéliennes, ceci pouvant justifier son « oubli » *a posteriori* : « La philosophie historique, d'inspiration hégélienne ou marxiste, nous a appris à voir dans les formules juridiques l'expression de réalités économiques ou sociales plutôt qu'une cause, par elle-même efficace, de la destinée des peuples »[55]. L'article de Jean Domarchi dans *Les Temps Modernes* d'octobre 1946 intitulé « Économie politique marxiste et économie politique

---

[52] Daniel Blanchard, « Préface », in *Socialisme ou barbarie. Anthologie*, La Bussière, Acratie, 2007, p. 8.
[53] Nous avons vu en quoi le recours constant à la liberté d'expression hors de toute contrainte idéologique et sociologique est en soi un *a priori* idéologique. *La Table ronde* use, de manière récurrente, de cet argument en opposition au dogmatisme de tout parti et de toute école de pensée.
[54] Raymond Aron, *Mémoires,* Paris, Robert Laffont, coll. « Bouquins », 2010, p. 274.
[55] Raymond Aron, « Une constitution provisoire », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°9, juin, p. 1628.

bourgeoise » est dédié à Raymond Aron et insiste sur le fait que les camps marxiste et bourgeois sont dans un constant rapport de « défiance et [de] mépris »[56]. La position de Domarchi est intéressante puisque celui-ci collabore aux *Temps Modernes* et à *Critique* ; sa dédicace peut sonner tantôt comme une pique ironique tantôt comme un réel hommage au philosophe dissident. Ce débat impossible entre deux intellectuels, et plus largement entre deux revues, est en quelque sorte une illustration de ce que l'analyse du discours nomme un dialogue de sourds[57], c'est-à-dire un combat fondé sur des luttes plutôt que sur un échange argumenté. Ce dialogue de sourds est constitué par une rhétorique fondée sur des logiques de luttes, d'affrontements, d'attaques et de contre-attaques empêchant un réel débat et se focalisant sur des idéologèmes structurant un interdiscours.

Alors qu'il souhaite, à la suite d'Aron, une démocratie libérale fondée sur le « respect des idées contradictoires »[58], Caillois montre que tout choix idéologique et discursif se pose suivant des ensembles qui s'affrontent de manière incompatible, notant une certaine innocence dans la pensée libérale d'Aron : « …la liberté n'est plus réclamée par les uns et les autres mais elle est l'enjeu de la lutte, la "libre" discussion n'est plus qu'un aspect de la lutte à mort, on ne la réclame qu'à des moments opportuns et pour des raisons précises »[59]. La « libre discussion » est donc relativisée, celle-ci se fondant sur un *a priori* en lui-même idéologique du consensus et de l'absence de lutte pour les intérêts de classe et de tout processus de domination idéologico-discursive (comme l'a fort bien analysé Pêcheux dans sa théorisation des formations discursives et idéologiques). Le rapport entre le point de vue philosophique et idéologique des intellectuels étudiés et la rhétorique qu'ils mettent en œuvre se construit, comme l'a relevé Kojève et à l'image de ce que théorie Tosel au départ de Gramsci, de manière indissociable : « Étant Action, il [l'homme] est aussi Discours ayant un sens, discours qui *révèle* par son sens tant le réel opposé à l'homme que celui qui se crée en tant que réalité humaine. Ainsi, étant Homme-dans-le-monde, l'Esprit est "chair" devenue "Logos" »[60]. Les pensées des hommes, en tant qu'elles sont des matérialités discursives[61], construisent une mise en forme particulière de la réalité, une vision et une trans-formation de celle-ci rendant difficile, voire impossible, toute logique consensuelle. Tosel observe à ce propos, dans la continuité de la notion sartrienne de situation, que « le sujet collectif n'est pas démiurge : il ne peut pas créer le réel

---

[56] Jean Domarchi, « Économie politique marxiste et économie politique bourgeoise », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n° 13, octobre, p. 81.

[57] Voir notamment Marc Angenot, *Dialogues de sourds. Traité de rhétorique antilogique*, Paris, Mille et Une Nuits, 2008.

[58] Roland Caillois, « La pensée politique de Raymond Aron », p. 435.

[59] *Ibidem*, p. 436.

[60] Alexandre Kojève, « Hegel, Marx et le christianisme », pp. 344-345.

[61] Voir Michel Pêcheux, *Les Vérités de la Palice*.

à son gré ; il doit prendre en compte le moment de la tension inscrite dans l'objet. On a bien en ce sens un projet antimétaphysique de construction du réel social où la subjectivité se différencie en divers groupes sociaux… »[62], c'est-à-dire en sociolectes distincts, en visions du monde divergentes dépendant d'une objectivité sociologique. La discursivité propre aux années d'immédiat après-guerre, telle qu'on peut l'analyser mais aussi telle que la conçoivent les intellectuels, se trouve située dans un contexte d'antagonismes sociologiques, idéologiques et politiques qui fondent et structurent les pensées pouvant, en retour, agir sur la situation donnée mais ne parvenant pas à réellement dialoguer.

Il est significatif de noter que, dans l'opposition entre Sartre et Aron, chacun durcit ses positions idéologiques, participant à la rupture du dialogue : le premier, plus sévère à l'égard du marxisme dans sa « Présentation » d'octobre 1945, revendique clairement l'importance d'une confrontation de la philosophie révolutionnaire et de l'existentialisme dans son article de juin 1946 tout en continuant de critiquer la pauvreté d'un certain marxisme orthodoxe. Il n'est toutefois nullement question pour Sartre d'une conversion au marxisme, celle-ci ne s'opérant réellement qu'à partir de 1952 avec son article « Les communistes et la paix » (à l'origine de sa rupture avec Merleau-Ponty qui quitte à son tour *Les Temps Modernes* l'année suivante) et plus encore en 1960 avec la *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Au contraire, Sartre souhaite critiquer le sectarisme idéologique du Parti Communiste – de plus en plus puissant en 1946 – mais, en se positionnant contre lui, il se place en même temps par rapport à lui, c'est-à-dire au cœur d'une situation idéologique de critique radicale du capitalisme. Il faut toutefois noter que l'insistance constante de la philosophie sartrienne sur la notion de totalité et de synthèse, dès 1945-1946, relève d'un héritage foncièrement marxiste, l'appréhension de la réalité sociale comme une totalisation des parties s'opposant à la vision analytique et fragmentée du capitalisme bourgeois. À ce propos, Jean-Marc Durand-Gasselin commente une conception marxiste de la totalité, propre à Lukács et à Korsch (plus généralement à la première École de Francfort), que l'on peut étendre à Sartre ayant subi leurs influences :

> La saisie du tout est une condition nécessaire à la saisie des parties du tout. Une saisie partielle étant partiale et complice de l'état de la société et de sa manière de diviser le travail en général et le travail intellectuel en particulier. La science bourgeoise sépare les différentes parties de la société en touts apparemment autonomes, elle éternise les lois de fonctionnement de ces parties[63].

Aron, d'abord plus philosophiquement et politiquement libéral, notamment dans « Les désillusions de la liberté », paru dans le premier numéro d'octobre 1945 des *Temps Modernes* ainsi que dans « Une constitution provisoire » paru dans *Les*

---

[62] André Tosel, *Le Marxisme du XXᵉ siècle*, p. 110.
[63] Jean-Marc Durand-Gasselin, *L'École de Francfort*, Paris, Gallimard, coll. « Tel », 2012, p. 28.

Temps Modernes de juin 1946, s'oriente quant à lui vers le libéralisme économique (entre keynésianisme social-libéral et libéralisme hérité de von Hayek) et, en quittant *Les Temps Modernes*, il sort de sa polarité idéologique pour s'inscrire dans celle de l'économisme de marché. Tout comme Sartre le fait à propos du marxisme, il élabore une critique des théories libérales en se situant au sein de leurs débats internes.

La position libérale d'Aron s'exprimera encore plus clairement dans son « Discours à des étudiants allemands sur l'avenir de l'Europe », paru en 1948 dans le premier numéro de *La Table ronde*, dans lequel sa lutte contre le totalitarisme (sans réelle distinction entre bolchévisme et nazisme) sert de caution à l'expression de son anticommunisme. Ce durcissement conjoint des positions, doublé d'un développement critique, rend impossible tout échange réel de point de vue entre les auteurs puisque tous deux se fondent sur des présuppositions discursives distinctes, entraînant une rupture nette qui se symbolise dans le transfert d'un auteur d'une revue à une autre. Il est important de noter que nous ne nous sommes pas attardé, par souci de précision, sur la revue *Esprit* qui développe elle aussi une réflexion sur le marxisme, plutôt motivée par un relatif anticommunisme chrétien. Il serait intéressant de confronter, à la suite de cette recherche, plusieurs de ses articles à ceux que nous avons étudiés, dont « Critique du communisme » d'Emmanuel Mounier (octobre 1946) et « Liberté et révolution économique » de Dominique Olivier (décembre 1946).

La lutte pour la reconnaissance comme ouverture au dialogue ?

Malgré l'apparence d'un dialogue de sourds, il est intéressant de relever les commentaires de Sartre et de Kojève à propos de la lutte pour la reconnaissance, théorie développée avant eux par Hegel, nuançant (mais ne réfutant pas) l'hypothèse d'une lutte frontale entre les discours et d'un antagonisme net entre idéologies de classe. Cette notion de reconnaissance, longuement traitée par Kojève dans « Hegel, Marx ou le christianisme », illustre à partir d'un rapprochement entre Hegel et Marx l'éventualité d'une résolution du conflit social par reconnaissance d'un discours de classe par une autre :

> …dans son fond, l'Histoire est l'histoire des luttes sanglantes de pur prestige menées en vue de la reconnaissance universelle. D'une part, chaque maître cherche à être reconnu par *tous* les hommes. Aussi l'« État » dont il est citoyen est essentiellement guerrier et aspire à l'empire universel. D'autre part, l'esclave ne se contente pas indéfiniment des satisfactions imaginaires que lui donnent l'art et l'au-delà religieux. Il essaye de se faire reconnaître par ses maîtres. Il cherche donc à les supprimer en tant que maîtres. Et c'est pourquoi les États où il y a des esclaves quels qu'ils soient (c'est-à-dire des « classes »)

sont l'arène de luttes sanglantes qui ont pour but d'établir en lui l'*homogénéité sociale*[64].

De même, Sartre précise que la lutte révolutionnaire est une lutte qui se veut universelle en tant qu'elle est une philosophie de l'unité de tous, de la libération des oppressions et de l'universalité humaine : « Ainsi la philosophie révolutionnaire, dépassant à la fois la pensée idéaliste qui est bourgeoise et le mythe matérialiste qui a pu convenir un temps aux masses opprimées, réclame d'être la philosophie de *l'homme* en général »[65]. Dès lors, suivant Sartre et Kojève, le bourgeois en tant qu'il est un homme n'est pas nécessairement étranger au discours révolutionnaire de même que tout prolétaire peut reproduire le discours réactionnaire de la classe dominante. Selon la théorie de la lutte pour la reconnaissance[66], tout discours, bien qu'il soit pris dans des rapports de luttes antagonistes, viserait une forme de consensus par reconnaissance de l'universalité humaine. Ainsi toute classe prise dans un rapport de force tendrait à se faire reconnaître par la classe dominante, atténuant dès lors les logiques de luttes idéologiques au profit d'un réajustement de la part des deux parties.

Nous n'aurons pas ici l'occasion de prolonger cette réflexion, certes fondamentale, mais nous noterons que l'idée d'universalité et de reconnaissance est en elle-même située discursivement et idéologiquement et qu'elle se pose toujours comme un point de vue déterminé (dans le cas de Sartre et de Kojève, c'est le point de vue révolutionnaire de l'universalité). La philosophie de la reconnaissance, fondée elle aussi sur un *a priori* idéologico-discursif (de consensus et d'atténuation des luttes), ne sortirait pas réellement du registre polémique que les revues d'après-guerre développent de manière récurrente et presque inévitable en raison de leur ancrage dans un contexte en lui-même régi par des clivages discursifs, mais elle manifeste une nouvelle fois la volonté explicitée de dépasser ces tensions rhétoriques au travers d'une possible universalité philosophique. En revenant une nouvelle fois à Gramsci et au commentaire de Tosel, il est intéressant de relever l'importance que tous deux accordent aux rapports de force constitutifs des tensions politico-langagières dans la conception de la *praxis* :

> [La philosophie de la praxis] développe un paradigme original politico-langagier transformationnel qui ne fait l'impasse ni sur les rapports de force ni sur les rapports de sens. […] L'unification linguistique est toujours moléculaire, *in fieri*, et implique un type d'unification souple. Elle ne peut se limiter à une simple dissémination des grammaires spontanées ; elle exige des grammaires normatives qui sont aussi

---

[64] Alexandre Kojève, « Hegel, Marx et le christianisme », p. 355.
[65] Jean-Paul Sartre, « Matérialisme et Révolution II », p. 30.
[66] Voir Axel Honneth, *Ce que social veut dire. Le déchirement du social*, Tome 1, Paris, Gallimard, coll. « Nrf Essais », 2013.

historiques, qui imposent la référence à des cadres élargis, dans le maintien des singularités langagières…[67].

On pourrait dès lors postuler que la lutte pour la reconnaissance ne tend pas à renverser les rapports de lutte idéologico-discursive mais à atténuer, par reconnaissance réciproque, ceux-ci. Si une classe dominée se voit reconnue, c'est par l'intégration d'une série de codes et par l'acceptation d'une classe dominante, celle-ci ajustant sa position et décidant d'accorder ou non cette reconnaissance. Ce processus aboutit à une nouvelle configuration des luttes en intégrant la position réajustée du dominé, qui ne s'impose jamais complètement comme nouveau dominant en raison de la logique de consensus propre à la reconnaissance réciproque : si le dominant admet un déplacement de la position du dominé, concédant en même temps un déplacement de sa propre position proportionnel au premier, cette négociation tend à préserver un rapport inégal, d'autant plus pervers qu'il se cache derrière une reconnaissance mutuelle. Toutefois cette reconnaissance est toujours dépendante de la volonté supérieure ainsi que d'une prétendue « libre discussion » débarrassée de tout *a priori*, ceci servant de prétexte à l'atténuation des revendications idéologiques et participant à la croyance bourgeoise en un langage clair, transparent et consensuel, qui soit exempt de tout intérêt de classe[68]. Il apparaît ainsi difficile de soutenir, dans le cas de l'intense polémique marxiste développée dans l'immédiat après-guerre, l'éventualité d'une reconnaissance et d'un dialogue entre les différents discours idéologiques qui prétendent agir au nom de classes antagonistes. La discursivité du champ intellectuel français tend au contraire à se structurer selon des rapports de forces et d'affrontements tout en tentant explicitement d'ouvrir chaque partie au dialogue.

LE POUVOIR INSTITUANT DES REVUES :
QUELQUES RELANCES À PARTIR DES NOTIONS DE PRAXIS ET D'IMAGINAIRE

On l'a déjà relevé, le contexte socio-politique de l'année 1946 voit une progression sans précédent du P.C.F. qui devient la première force politique à la fin de celle-ci, devançant le M.R.P. Loin de vouloir établir une analogie et un rapport de causalité entre la mise en débat du marxisme et de l'hégélianisme dans les revues et la vie politique française, nous souhaitons comprendre, pour finir, la manière dont *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique* sont à la fois influencées par cette vie politique, jusque dans leur rhétorique même, et déterminantes dans la

---

[67] André Tosel, *Le Marxisme du XXᵉ siècle*, p. 112.
[68] Voir Michel Pêcheux, *Les Vérités de la Palice*, pp. 146-166 et Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et Pouvoir symbolique*, Paris, Seuil, coll. « Points Essais », 2001.

polarisation idéologique entre M.R.P., S.F.I.O et P.C.F. L'hypothèse prolongeant ces réflexions serait la suivante : conscientes que les débats politiques au sein du monde intellectuel se structurent majoritairement autour d'un dialogue entre les gauches, le marxisme du P.C.F. contre le centre-gauche catholique du M.R.P.[69] et le socialisme de S.F.I.O., les revues, par leur mise en débat du marxisme, auraient non déterminé mais du moins influencé une radicalisation du débat politique autour de ces partis. En retour, l'évolution et les succès politiques et idéologiques des communistes auraient amené les revues à élaborer une critique du marxisme orthodoxe, les intellectuels étant conscients tantôt du danger du dogmatisme communiste, tantôt de l'importance d'un renouvellement des thèses de Marx et de Hegel.

La vérification ou l'invalidation de ce rapport entre vie revuistique et vie politique entraînent une série d'interrogations qui seront évoquées en guise de prolongement de ces recherches, parallèlement à une réflexion à propos des notions de *praxis* et d'imaginaire. Il semble en effet essentiel de tenter de cerner l'impact politique qu'ont eu les interrogations idéologiques entre *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique* en étudiant, à la suite de l'analyse de leurs articles, leur réception et les commentaires critiques dont elles ont fait l'objet ainsi que leurs particularités éditoriales – nombre de numéros vendus, progression des ventes, spécificité et diversité du lectorat, etc. Bien que les noms de Sartre et des existentialistes soient incontournables dans l'immédiat après-guerre, il peut paraître audacieux de postuler une telle importance des revues dans la vie sociale et politique. Nous relèverons toutefois cette remarque fondamentale d'Anna Boschetti dans son ouvrage consacré à une analyse des conditions sociologiques déterminant le « champ des revues »[70] et aux rapports de position entre *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique* :

> Une époque devient pour une fois directement, ouvertement, l'objet de la médiation de ses intellectuels. C'est pourquoi leurs revues constituent un répertoire et un inventaire exceptionnels, et en même temps, le reflet d'une concorde-discorde […].

---

[69] Jean-Jacques Becker précise toutefois que, si la direction du parti est plutôt située à gauche, ses électeurs sont majoritairement des conservateurs de droite, ceci s'expliquant notamment par l'absence de réels partis de droite, compromis par leur collaboration.

[70] Nous n'évoquerons pas ici tous les problèmes liés à cette appellation qui présuppose une homogénéité et une autonomie par rapport à d'autres champs. Sommairement, il nous semble que la notion de « champ des revues » soulève deux problèmes majeurs liés à la parenté bourdieusienne du terme : d'une part, l'objet revue est foncièrement pluriel et hétérogène, ne pouvant être réuni en un champ défini et, d'autre part, il apparaît que la théorisation héritée de Bourdieu quant à l'autonomie du champ littéraire ne correspond pas à la grande dépendance des revues envers les champs économique, politique et idéologique. Cette recherche le montre, si la revue se définit avant tout par un projet intellectuel, relativement autonomisé, il est tout aussi évident que l'évolution socio-historique et les événements politiques de même que les contraintes économiques et matérielles sont déterminants dans la constitution d'un ensemble d'articles et de prises de position de la revue.

L'actualité politique et sociale commande directement pour une bonne part les contenus des revues, si bien que leur chronologie pourrait se superposer, certes avec des décalages et des lacunes qui […] sont significatives, à la chronologie des événements français et internationaux de l'époque. […] Même les grands essais sur les rapports entre morale et politique, si caractéristiques des *T.M.*, et qui peuvent apparaître comme le tribut payé par l'existentialisme à un thème sacro-saint de la tradition philosophique, révèle, si on les rapporte à leur contexte (les discussions sur l'épuration, l'importance prise par le Parti communiste, les révélations sur le stalinisme), leurs racines contingentes, et leur fonction de morale laïque pour intellectuels désorientés. Cet étroit rapport avec l'époque est confirmé par la comparaison avec les autres revues, par l'attention que toutes accordent aux mêmes sujets[71].

La sociologue avait bien relevé cette obsession – « l'attention que toutes accordent aux mêmes sujets » – propre au contexte des années 1945-1946, à savoir celle d'une mise en question de l'importance du P.C.F. et des réflexions idéologiques que celui-ci suscite. Bien que *Critique* ne soit lue que par un public restreint d'universitaires, il est important de noter l'hégémonie intellectuelle des *Temps Modernes* dans une période où les revues sont nombreuses et importantes. Un manuscrit inédit de Sartre[72] fait état du nombre d'invendus (presque nul), d'abonnés et de lecteurs des *Temps Modernes*, ceux-ci s'élevant, selon ses dires, à 10.000 individus, ce qui semble considérable pour une si jeune revue et tenant compte de la pénurie et de la mauvaise qualité du papier. Il ne faudrait toutefois pas sur-interpréter le pouvoir performatif de la revue existentialiste sur la vie politique française, qui compte plusieurs dizaines de millions d'électeurs. Les jeux d'influence réciproque entre celles-ci apparaissent toutefois structurants, les articles parus se définissant plus ou moins explicitement en fonction des grandes tendances idéologiques et des grands conflits en cours, conflits sur lesquels ces articles tentent d'influer. Le constat fait par Jean Domarchi, dans « L'économie politique marxiste aux États-Unis » (*Critique*, décembre 1946), résumerait assez bien, dans une analogie entre les pays anglo-saxons et la France, le rapport entre le contexte socio-politique et la récurrence discursive de l'année 1946 :

À dire le vrai, l'éclosion des études marxistes dans ces pays ne fait que traduire, sur le plan de l'idéologie, les incertitudes d'une phase particulièrement critique du capitalisme, et ce n'est pas par hasard que l'attention que l'on porte à l'œuvre de Marx est exactement contemporaine de la crise profonde subie par l'économie politique

---

[71] Anna Boschetti, *Sartre et « Les Temps Modernes »*, Paris, Minuit, coll. « Le sens commun », 1985, pp. 195-196.
[72] Ce manuscrit, intitulé « Enquête auprès des lecteurs » est conservé à la B.N.F. dans le dossier « *Qu'est-ce que la littérature ?* [*Situations*, II] (1947-1948), ES 47-125 et 48-155, DS 407-408 ».

bourgeoise durant les années qui ont immédiatement précédé la dernière guerre mondiale[73].

Parallèlement à l'importance déterminante du contexte plus général de critique du capitalisme et d'émergence des travaux marxistes et conjointement à l'influence relative des revues dans la polarisation politique et idéologique, il est aussi remarquable de noter une volonté de leur part de lutter contre une évolution politique (notamment contre le P.C.F.) en nuançant plusieurs dualismes, en invoquant tantôt l'œuvre de Hegel en tant qu'elle complexifie celle de Marx, tantôt en construisant une critique du libéralisme philosophique, politique et économique. On a vu en quoi cette dernière position était plus minoritaire dans l'étude des deux revues, Aron notant lui-même dans « Une constitution provisoire » : « Pour ou contre la prise du pouvoir par les communistes, la question décisive s'est trouvée, indirectement mais clairement, posée. […] Le marxisme a fait école, même chez ses adversaires »[74]. Par ailleurs, les revues participent aussi, par leurs critiques théoriques, au débat quant à la possibilité d'une troisième voie, hors du dualisme bolchévisme/ capitalisme.

Les revues peuvent véritablement jouer un double rôle dans leur rapport à l'évolution politique, idéologique et discursive de la réalité sociale : pouvant à la fois influencer la victoire d'une forme de marxisme et en même temps la freiner par sa critique interne, elles doivent aussi être pensées dans leur autonomie et leur singularité, en tant que déterritorialisations discursives et qu'imaginaires radicaux, comme lieux d'une mise en mouvement de la réflexion philosophico-politique. Si, par l'orientation de leurs débats internes et externes, *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique* ont pu influer sur le champ politique et sur l'importance de l'extrême gauche, elles ont en même temps permis, par leur réflexivité, une critique de celle-ci pouvant donner lieu, sinon au rejet, du moins à la nuance de certaines de ses thèses, suivant un rapport dialectique de détermination/ singularisation discursive avec le contexte sociologique dans lequel elles évoluent. Michel Pêcheux parle quant à lui, dans une reprise du vocabulaire althussérien, d'un rapport de reproduction/ transformation à propos des appareils idéologiques d'État, réflexion que l'on peut étendre, en suivant l'analyste du discours, aux structures langagières, aux formations discursives, ou encore à l'influence d'une production revuistique singulière sur un interdiscours plus général[75]. On soutiendra dès lors, dans une reformulation de l'hypothèse initiale de cette recherche et au détour de la philosophie de la *praxis* chez Gramsci et des notions d'imaginaire et d'institution chez Castoriadis, que les revues de critique philosophique et politique, telles

---

[73] Jean Domarchi, « L'économie politique marxiste aux États-Unis », *Critique*, 1946, n°7, décembre, p. 632.
[74] Raymond Aron, « Une constitution provisoire », p. 1627.
[75] Voir le chapitre intitulé « Discours et idéologie » (Michel Pêcheux, *Les Vérités de la Palice*, pp. 127-166).

qu'elles viennent d'être étudiées au travers des exemples des *Temps Modernes* et de *Critique*, seraient le lieu d'une mise en mouvement du savoir théorique et critique conçu comme une *praxis* double et dialectique[76] – cette *praxis* s'inscrivant dans le projet d'*imaginaire radical* prenant en compte à la fois l'imaginaire institué et le pouvoir instituant de tout sujet, de toute psyché singulière :

> La société est œuvre de l'imaginaire *instituant*. Les individus sont faits par, en même temps qu'ils font et refont, la société chaque fois *instituée* : en un sens, ils la *sont*. Les deux pôles irréductibles sont l'imaginaire radical instituant – le champ de création social-historique – d'une part, la psyché singulière d'autre part. À partir de la psyché, la société instituée fait chaque fois des individus – qui, comme tels, ne peuvent plus faire que la société qui les a faits. Ce n'est que pour autant que l'imagination radicale de la psyché arrive à transpirer à travers les strates successives de la cuirasse sociale qu'est l'individu qui la recouvre et la pénètre jusqu'à un point-limite insondable, qu'il y a action en retour de l'être humain singulier sur la société[77].

Les revues intellectuelles agiraient tantôt de manière performative sur les luttes sociétales et sur la polarisation du champ politique français en reproduisant plusieurs mécanismes argumentatifs propres à un interdiscours polémique – c'est là toute l'importance d'une analyse rhétorique en tant qu'elle illustre le pouvoir performatif d'un discours –, tantôt de manière réflexive en se distanciant explicitement de ces querelles au profit d'un dialogue philosophique, philologique et critique remettant en question une certaine évolution idéologico-discursive de l'immédiat après-guerre. Dans une prise en compte de la matérialité sociale comme constitutive des matérialités discursives et de leurs idéologies, Tosel note qu'« il ne s'agit pas pour [Gramsci] de proposer à nouveau la grandiose et indépassable spéculation de Hegel, mais d'en hériter sur un *mode historique et pragmatique* [nous soulignons] »[78]. Cette distinction correspond au dépassement dialectique que développent la philosophie de la *praxis* entre idéalisme et matérialisme ainsi que la philosophie de l'*imaginaire radical* entre imaginaire instituant et imaginaire institué. Ainsi une certaine philosophie marxiste de l'action qui entend ne pas se détacher complètement d'une philosophie hégélienne plus spéculative se dégage des analyses ici posées :

> La philosophie de la praxis entend à la fois sentir et penser, unir une profonde réforme technique de la conceptualité philosophique et une conception du monde. […] *Cet effort critico-systématique a une portée pratique* en ce qu'il vise à une juste formulation des problèmes de la lutte politique hégémonique et individualise de nouveaux instruments théoriques [nous soulignons] [79].

---

[76] La réflexivité agissant comme performativité et vice-versa.
[77] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Le Monde Morcelé*, p. 115.
[78] André Tosel, *Le Marxisme du XXᵉ siècle*, p. 146.
[79] *Ibidem*, p. 144.

À partir des réflexions initiées au détour des revues intellectuelles de l'immédiat après-guerre, le rapport entre ce que nous avons nommé la « *praxis* performative » et la « *praxis* critique » correspond, dans un certain sens, au mouvement dialectique de la philosophie de la *praxis*. Celle-ci se construit suivant un va-et-vient entre un « effort critico-systématique » d'une part et une « portée pratique » d'autre part et peut être singularisée par le double pouvoir des revues, d'orientation idéologico-discursive et de réflexivité critique, permettant grâce au pouvoir instituant de l'imaginaire radical de constituer de « nouveaux instruments théoriques » tout en servant un projet pratico-critique.

ANNEXE

	Les Temps Modernes	*Critique*
Avril 1946	- MERLEAU-PONTY (Maurice), « L'existentialisme chez Hegel »	
Mai 1946	- ALQUIÉ (Ferdinand), « Marxisme ou cartésianisme ? »	
Juin 1946	- SARTRE (Jean-Paul), « Matérialisme et Révolution I » - ARON (Raymond), « Une constitution provisoire »	- WEIL (Eric), « À propos du matérialisme dialectique »
Juillet 1946	- SARTRE (Jean-Paul), « Matérialisme et Révolution II »	- WEIL (Eric), « Politique et bonne volonté »
Août-Septembre 1946		- KOJÈVE (Alexandre), « Hegel, Marx et le christianisme » - KOJÈVE (Alexandre), « Christianisme et communisme » - PIEL (Jean), « Du capitalisme au socialisme selon Schumpeter »
Octobre 1946	- MERLEAU-PONTY (Maurice), « Le yogi et le prolétaire I » - DOMARCHI (Jean), « Économie politique marxiste et économie politique bourgeoise » - LEFORT (Claude), « La déformation de la psychologie, du marxisme et du matérialisme ou les essais de M. Naville »	- CAILLOIS (Roland), « La pensée politique de Raymond Aron »
Novembre 1946	- MERLEAU-PONTY (Maurice), « Le yogi et le prolétaire II »	- BATAILLE (Georges), « La guerre en Chine : la Chine communiste » - ARON (Raymond), « Les limites de la théorie économique classique »
Décembre 1946	- POUILLON (Jean), « Pour l'internationalisme »	- CHEVALLEY (Claude), « Une nouvelle théorie américaine de la révolution » - DOMARCHI (Jean), « L'économie politique marxiste aux États-Unis »

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

CORPUS PRIMAIRE

ALQUIÉ, Ferdinand, « Marxisme ou cartésianisme ? », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°8, mai.

ARON, Raymond, « Une constitution provisoire », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°9, juin.

ARON, Raymond, « Les limites de la théorie économique classique », *Critique*, 1946, n°6, novembre.

BATAILLE, Georges, « La guerre en Chine : la Chine communiste », *Critique*, 1946, n°6, novembre.

CAILLOIS, Roland, « La pensée politique de Raymond Aron », *Critique*, 1946, n°5, octobre.

CHEVALLEY, Claude, « Une nouvelle théorie américaine de la révolution », *Critique*, 1946, n°7, décembre.

DOMARCHI, Jean, « Économie politique marxiste et économie politique bourgeoise », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°13, octobre.

DOMARCHI, Jean, « L'économie politique marxiste aux États-Unis », *Critique*, 1946, n°7, décembre.

KOJÈVE, Alexandre, « Christianisme et communisme », *Critique*, 1946, n°3-4, août-septembre.

KOJÈVE, Alexandre, « Hegel, Marx et le christianisme », *Critique*, 1946, n°3-4, août-septembre.

LEFORT, Claude, « La déformation de la psychologie, du marxisme et du matérialisme ou les essais de M. Naville », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°13, octobre.

MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, « L'existentialisme chez Hegel », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°7, avril.

MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, « Le yogi et le prolétaire I », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°13, octobre.

MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, « Le yogi et le prolétaire II », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°14, novembre.

PIEL, Jean, « Du capitalisme au socialisme selon Schumpeter », *Critique*, 1946, n°3-4, août-septembre.

POUILLON, Jean, « Pour l'internationalisme », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°15, décembre.

SARTRE, Jean-Paul, « Matérialisme et Révolution I », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°9, juin.

SARTRE, Jean-Paul, « Matérialisme et Révolution II », *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946, n°10, juillet.

WEIL, Eric, « À propos du matérialisme dialectique », *Critique*, 1946, n°1, juin.

WEIL, Eric, « Politique et bonne volonté », *Critique*, 1946, n°2, juillet.

SOURCES SECONDAIRES

AMOSSY, Ruth, *L'Argumentation dans le discours : discours politique, littérature d'idées, fiction*, Paris, Nathan, coll. « Fac Linguistique », 2000.

AMOSSY, Ruth, « Modalités argumentatives et registres discursifs : le cas du polémique », in Lucile Gaudin-Bordes et Geneviève Salvan (dir.), *Les Registres. Enjeux stylistiques et visées pragmatiques*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Bruylant Academia, coll. « Au cœur des textes », 2008.

ANGENOT, Marc, *1889. Un État du discours social*, Québec, Le Préambule, coll. « L'Univers du discours », 1989.

ANGENOT, Marc, *Dialogues de sourds. Traité de rhétorique antilogique*, Paris, Mille et Une Nuits, 2008.

ANGENOT, Marc, *L'Histoire des idées. Problématiques, objets, concepts, méthodes, enjeux, débats*, Liège, Presses Universitaires de Liège, coll. « Situations », 2014.

ARON, Raymond, *Mémoires*, Paris, Robert Laffont, coll. « Bouquins », 2010.

BECKER, Jean-Jacques, *Histoire politique de la France depuis 1945*, Paris, Armand Colin, coll. « Cursus », 1988.

BOSCHETTI, Anna, *Ismes, Du réalisme au postmodernisme*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, coll. « Culture et Société », 2014.

BOSCHETTI, Anna, *Sartre et « Les Temps Modernes »*, Paris, Minuit, coll. « Le sens commun », 1985.

BOURDIEU, Pierre, *Langage et Pouvoir symbolique*, Paris, Seuil, coll. « Points Essais », 2001.

CASTORIADIS, Cornelius, *L'Institution imaginaire de la société*, Paris, Seuil, coll. « Essais Points », 1975.

CASTORIADIS, Cornelius, *Les Carrefours du labyrinthe. Le monde morcelé*, Tome 3, Paris, Seuil, 1990.

CURATOLO, Bruno, Jacques POIRIER, *Les Revues littéraires au XXᵉ siècle*, Dijon, Éditions Universitaires de Dijon, coll. « Le texte et l'édition », 2002.

DURAND-GASSELIN, Jean-Marc, *L'École de Francfort*, Paris, Gallimard, coll. « Tel », 2012.

FOUCAULT, Michel, *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969.

GUINZBURG, Carlo, *Rapports de force : histoire, rhétorique, preuve*, Paris, Seuil, coll. « Hautes Études », 2003.

HONNETH, Axel, *Ce que social veut dire. Le déchirement du social*. Tome 1, Paris, Gallimard, coll. « Nrf Essais », 2013.

LACROIX, Michel, Jean-Philippe MARTEL (éds.), *Mémoire du livre/ Studies in Book Culture*, IV, 2012, 1 : « Écrire ensemble : réseaux et pratiques d'écriture dans les revues francophones du XXᵉ siècle ».

PÊCHEUX, Michel, *Les Vérités de la Palice*, Paris, Maspero, coll. « Théorie », 1975.

PÊCHEUX, Michel, « Analyse de discours. Trois époques », in Denise Maldidier (éd.), *L'Inquiétude du discours. Textes de Michel Pêcheux*, Paris, Éditions des Cendres, 1990.

POPOVIC, Pierre, *La Mélancolie des* Misérables. *Essai de sociocritique*, Québec, Le Quartanier, coll. « Erres Essais », 2013.

RABATEL, Alain, *Homo narrans. Pour une analyse énonciative et interactionnelle du récit*, Limoges, Lambert-Lucas, 2008.

TOSEL, André, *Le Marxisme du XXᵉ siècle*, Paris, Syllepse, coll. « Mille marxismes », 2009.

VERSTRAETEN, Pierre, *L'Anti-Aron*, Paris, La Différence, coll. « Les Essais », 2008.

MARXIST CONTROVERSY AS *PRAXIS*: THE PART OF REVIEWS IN THE RADICALISATION OF POLITICAL IMAGINARY
(*Abstract*)

On the basis of Antonio Gramsci's *praxis* philosophy, taken up by André Tosel, and Cornelius Castoriadis' works on radical imaginary, this article analyses the debate about Marxism, during the year 1946, between two intellectual reviews: *Les Temps Modernes* and *Critique*. If the creation of those reviews is deeply related to a social context and an interdiscourse influenced by the political and ideological rise of extreme left – particularly the French Communist Party –, their project consists in a critical questioning of communist discourses, returning to Marx's and Hegel's texts. References to these philosophies induce different rhetorical and argumentative particularities that we intend to study in order to understand the complex relations between the rhetoric of a sociohistorical interdiscourse and his ideological substructure.

Keywords: *Temps Modernes*, *Critique*, Discourse Analysis, Marxism, *Praxis* Philosophy, Antonio Gramsci, Cornelius Castoriadis, Radical Imaginary.

POLEMICA MARXISTĂ CA PUTERE A *PRAXIS*-ULUI: ROLUL REVISTELOR ÎN RADICALIZAREA UNUI IMAGINAR POLITIC
(*Rezumat*)

Plecând de la teoreticienii gramscieni ai *praxis*-ului, preluaţi de André Tosel, şi de la reflecţiile lui Cornelius Castoriadis asupra raportului dintre imaginarul care instituie şi imaginarul instituit, articolul analizează dezbaterea iscată în jurul marxismului, în cursul anului 1946, în paginile a două reviste intelectuale: *Les Temps Modernes* et *Critique*. Dacă crearea acestora se înscrie într-un context şi un discurs în mod fundamental marcate politic şi ideologic de extrema stângă (Partidul Comunist Francez), proiectul lor implică, în egală măsură, o punere în dezbatere critică a discursurilor comuniste, cu revenire la textele lui Marx şi Hegel. Recursul la filosofia marxistă şi la cea hegeliană produce o serie de trăsături retorice şi argumentative pe care articolul de faţă îşi propune să le pună în lumină, pentru a înţelege complexitatea raporturilor dintre retorica unui discurs socio-istoric şi subtratul său ideologic.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Temps Modernes*, *Critique*, analiză de discurs, marxism, filosofia *praxis-ului*, Antonio Gramsci, Cornelius Castoriadis, radicalizarea imaginarului politic.

LIGIA TUDURACHI

COMMUNAUTÉ POLITIQUE,
COMMUNAUTÉ POÉTIQUE

Dans cet article, je propose une comparaison entre deux projets de communauté élaborés par Ion Biberi et Ilarie Voronca, auteurs roumains de l'entre deux guerres. Les deux écrivains appartiennent à la même génération (Ion Biberi est né en 1904, Ilarie Voronca en 1903) et font l'expérience de la vie littéraire dans le même cénacle – le cénacle de *Sburătorul*, qui a fonctionné à Bucarest entre 1919 et 1943. Voronca y participe depuis 1921 (il y débute, à 18 ans), Biberi le fréquente à partir de 1927. Leurs réflexions en marge de la communauté sont pourtant générées dans des contextes différents. Poète avant-gardiste, Ilarie Voronca s'exilait en 1932 à Paris. Il développe sa rêverie dans deux textes des années 30, rédigés en français. Il s'agit de *La poésie commune*, publié en 1936[1] et du *Petit Manuel du parfait bonheur*[2], un texte commencé en 1939 et finalisé peu de temps avant sa mort, en 1946 ; le manuscrit était resté inédit jusqu'en 1972, quand, récupéré par une maison d'édition roumaine, est restitué dans une version bilingue[3]. Le poète s'était bien fait assimilé dans l'avant-garde française. En 1938, il avait déjà onze volumes publiés en France. Pendant l'occupation, adhérant au communisme, il avait combattu pour la résistance française, comme Paul Éluard, Louis Aragon et Tristan Tzara. Par contre, Ion Biberi, romancier et homme de lettres, de formation psychiatre, fait sa rêverie communautaire dans l'espace culturel roumain, fin des années 1960[4]. Les textes qui m'intéresseront dans son cas

---

[1] Ilarie Voronca, *La poésie commune*. Avec une préface de Jean Pierre Begot, Paris, Plasma, 1936.

[2] Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă. Petit manuel du parfait bonheur.* Édition bilingue roumaine-française. Traduit du français par Saşa Pană, Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 1972.

[3] Relevante pour l'empreinte « française » de la réflexion communautaire de Voronca est la traduction que le poète a fait lui-même pour les titres de deux volumes des poèmes qu'il avait auparavant publiés en roumain : *Petre Schlemihl* (1932) devient dans l'édition française *Poèmes parmi les Hommes* (Illustration d'Edmond Vandercammen, Paris, Cahier du Journal des Poètes, 1934), *Ulise* (1928) devient *Ulysse dans la Cité* (Traduit du roumain par Roger Vailland, préface de Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, illustration de Marc Chagal, Paris, Le Sagittaire, 1933).

[4] Dans l'époque entre les deux guerres, Ion Biberi avait montré un intérêt particulier à la question de la *personnalité*, aux possibilités et aux limites de la formation de la distinction individuelle (*Individualitatea şi destin* [*Individualité et destin*], Bucureşti, Fundaţia Regele Mihai I, 1945). En 1945, nourri par une extraordinaire soif d'anticipation, il réalisait un volume d'interviews qui interrogeait 22 des plus importants écrivains du moment sur la manière dont ils s'imaginaient le monde à venir (*Lumea de mâine* [*Le monde à venir*], Bucureşti, Forum, 1946). Ce fut l'un des plus étonnants échecs de prévision de la culture roumaine, qui allait très bientôt commencer sa période communiste.

se publient dans l'intervalle 1968-1971: *Poezia, mod de existenţă* [*La Poésie, mode d'existence*] (1968), *Arta de a tră*i [*L'Art de vivre*] (1970) et *Arta de a scrie şi a vorbi în publi*c [*L'Art d'écrire et de parler en public*] (1971). Ils se nourrissent de l'atmosphère du communisme « libéral »[5]. Il n'y a donc pas de raison immédiate pour expliquer la résonance entre ces deux fantasmes. Sinon le fait que, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, la définition communautaire veut échapper à un climat de vie totalitaire : le régime fasciste chez Voronca, le régime communiste chez Biberi.

On peut remarquer deux particularités de ce modèle de communauté politique. La première tient de la figuration de la communauté comme une foule qui s'accumule, spontanément, dans la rue : un ensemble de corps. Biberi, comme Voronca, se préoccupe à rendre aussi concrète que possible l'impression visuelle que produit le rassemblement physique des individus et les voisinages qui se constituent sur place. C'est donc un ethos collectif qui s'appuie sur une représentation somatique. L'autre particularité tient de la configuration de la communauté politique comme un ensemble de solitaires. Les corps se ramassent dans le même espace, mais non pas pour s'unifier dans un mouvement collectif et constituer un seul organisme ; ni pour partager une cause commune. Chaque corps conserve sa manière de bouger, et son rythme, ne se synchronise pas avec les autres. On insiste sur l'effort de chacun à maintenir et à renforcer sa différence. Avec un tel accent sur la singularité, la foule est représentée comme la somme des individus qui exhibent leur unicité. Elle est un « théâtre » de la multitude.

Si on cherche à identifier le *genre prochain* d'une telle communauté politique, on constate que les pratiques contemporaines à Voronca et Biberi ne puissent pas le fournir. Pour les manifestations publiques existaient jusqu'à la fin des années 1970 trois modèles. Pour l'époque entre les deux guerres il y avait deux scénarios différents voire opposés. D'une part, on descendait dans la rue pour manifester contre le fascisme. D'autre part, les parades fascistes et mussoliniennes faisaient elles aussi défiler dans une marche sportive toute une population qui ovationnait le leader. Le communisme n'allait que reprendre, dans l'Europe de l'Ouest des années 50, ce même genre de parade. Une troisième manière dont la foule utilise la rue apparaît les années 50, une fois avec la grève. L'Europe de l'Ouest et de l'Est en font l'expérience en même temps. Au-delà des différences, commun à ces trois exercices populaires est la synchronisation des corps individuels. Les foules sont possédées par une volonté unique, actionnent comme un seul corps. Il y a une « cause » commune, identifiée et formulée à travers des slogans et cette cause devient l'agent de l'action collective et indique en même temps la direction de la

---

[5] On appelle communisme « libéral » l'époque qui commence dans le communisme roumain immédiatement après l'installation au pouvoir de Nicolae Ceaşescu, en 1965, associée à une diminution de la répression interne, à un plus de liberté de la presse et à un phénomène de croissance économique.

marche. Les principes de la psychologie collective que Gustave Le Bon décrivait en 1895[6] étaient encore parfaitement valables pour tous ces trois modèles.

C'est, en échange, une formule toute récente de l'engagement collectif qui peut être mise en relation avec les rêveries communautaires de Biberi et Voronca : celle de la communauté de type *Occupy* (de ce point de vue, le moment actuel devient le plus favorable pour la compréhension de l'investissement que font les deux auteurs roumains dans l'idée de *commun*). Le premier mouvement de ce genre, *Indignatos*, avait lieu à Madrid en mai 2011. Immédiatement après, en septembre 2011, le modèle était repris par « *Occupy* Wall Street » et se généralise assez vite partout dans le monde. La descente spontanée dans la rue et le rassemblement des corps (des milliers de personnes) s'y associe cette fois-ci non pas à la marche, mais à une installation durative dans le territoire. On y passe des jours, sinon des semaines entières. Par la persistance de l'installation, on cherche à transmettre en même temps le sérieux de l'engagement dans l'action et la volonté de parvenir effectivement à un changement de régime politique ; sans pour autant manifester aucune violence. Or, « occupée » par une telle communauté, la rue/ la place se transforme non pas seulement dans un lieu symbolique, mais également dans un milieu de vie. La foule s'y accommode à un vivre ensemble, invente des pratiques de cohabitation. Si la cause commune ne manque pas, elle devient tout de même plus diffuse et ne s'exprime point à travers des slogans. Plus importants que les mots sont les corps, par eux-mêmes ; le fait qu'ils sont visibles et tangibles, qu'ils s'exposent dans une forme collective de présence. La réussite de l'action politique dépend, au lieu de la performance verbale, de cette performance d'ordre physique.

Dans un article publié en 2013 dans un petit volume collectif qui, sous le titre *Qu'est-ce qu'un peuple?*, s'intéressait aux changements qui interviennent ces dernières années dans la définition de la notion de *peuple*, Judith Butler[7] décrit le modèle d'une telle communauté politique à travers la formule du « peuple incarné », insistant sur le fait que ce sont surtout les corps qui comptent dans ce scénario : « un groupe de corps visibles, audibles, tangibles, exposés, obstinés et interdépendants »[8]. La nouvelle image du « peuple » se constituerait en vertu de la « liberté de réunion » qui est inscrite dans la *Déclaration des droits de l'homme*. « Le "nous" qu'exprime le langage – dit Butler – est déjà réalisé par la réunion des corps, leurs mouvements, leurs gestes, leur façon d'agir »[9]. Occupant ensemble un espace commun (de vie), les gens s'approchent physiquement, se connectent, interagissent. Ce genre de dispositif, n'est pourtant pas, selon Butler, de nature à

---

[6] Gustave Le Bon, *La psychologie des foules*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1895.

[7] Judith Butler, « 'Nous, le peuple' : réflexions sur la réunion », in *Qu'est-ce qu'un peuple?*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2013, pp. 53-76.

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 53.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 54.

créer de l'empathie, dans la frénésie d'un mouvement commun. Elle occasionne plutôt une perception de la distinction. D'où la formule d'une sociabilité en même temps incarnée et plurielle :

> Même au cœur d'une foule qui s'exprime, il faut être assez près les uns des autres pour percevoir les voix, pour régler sa propre vocalisation ; pour aboutir à un certain rythme, une certaine harmonie, à une relation à la fois auditive et corporelle avec ceux qui sont engagés dans l'action ou l'acte de parole. Nous commençons à parler *maintenant* et arrêtons *maintenant.* Nous commençons à bouger *maintenant* ou à un certain moment, mais sûrement pas comme un organisme unique. Nous tentons de nous arrêter tous ensemble mais certains continuent à avancer, d'autres vont à leur propre rythme. Sérialité temporelle et coordination, proximité des corps, registres des voix, synchronisation vocale – telles sont les dimensions essentielles d'une réunion, d'une manifestation[10].

Tout en retenant de Judith Butler cette formule qui me parait prégnante – d'une communauté *incarnée* et *plurielle*, je reviens sur la manifestation *Occupy*, pour synthétiser trois caractéristiques qui se retrouvent dans les rêveries du *commun* de Biberi et Voronca.

En tout premier, c'est l'accent que la manifestation de type *Occupy* met sur la singularité du corps et sur la spécificité de son mouvement. C'est un collectif qui maintient les rythmes individuels, un collectif qui se constitue comme somme des corps singularisés, qui refusent de se synchroniser. Il n'y a point de direction d'avancement pour cette foule, car il n'y a pas d'action commune pour tout le groupe, qui fasse les corps bouger ensemble. L'installation « sur place » décide sur l'état statique du collectif. Les mouvements engagés tiennent exclusivement de l'installation dans l'espace pour organiser la vie commune. Des actions diverses, nécessaires pour cette installation, définissent des positions distinctes à l'intérieur du groupe. Chacun assume ce à quoi il se sent le plus capable. Qui plus est, dans le cadre commun, on finit par reprendre ses habitudes quotidiennes, et par réitérer un mode de vie familier. Il n'y a pratiquement pas de « corps commun ».

Un deuxième changement tient du remplacement de la voix collective par les voix individuelles, qui se proposent elles aussi, tout comme les corps, dans la multitude de leurs manifestations. La disparition de l'instance plurielle de discours (le *nous*) indique la perte de la position de représentation. Personne ne peut parler au nom de *nous*, par conséquent il n'y a point de discours qui soit dominateur, qui synthétise les autres. On formule des besoins, dans leur grande majorité personnels et insignifiants. Mais au lieu de se réaliser à travers l'uniformisation et l'unification de ces besoins, la solidarité s'y obtient comme somme des doléances et se manifeste comme une attitude flexible et perméable, qui n'exclue rien. C'est la

---

[10] J. Butler, *« 'Nous, le peuple' »*, pp. 63-64.

raison même pour laquelle la cause qui détermine la descente dans la rue de cette foule reste le plus souvent diffuse et incertaine.

Enfin, une dernière caractéristique tient du fait que, comme ces communautés ne se proposent pas effectivement une action révolutionnaire et l'institution d'un « nouvel ordre », le changement qui se produit n'est souvent pas beaucoup plus qu'un sentiment de « bien être ». Un discours qui rend explicite un tel sentiment, du genre « je suis content de me trouver à présent ici, dans ce groupe, sur cette place » peut se prouver bien satisfaisant. Il y a, certes, des cas où l'on avance vers des revendications plus précises ; mais cela ne veut pas dire que ce moment premier, qui est déjà celui d'une satisfaction obtenue, ne reste pas le plus important.

Le pas de chacun

Le *Petit Manuel* de Voronca commence avec cette phrase : « Que sait un homme seul, penché dans ses rêveries, des foules qui bruissent autour de sa demeure? »[11] ; pour continuer par la représentation de cette foule dans une « attente » du moment où l'individu solitaire se décide de la rejoindre (« Et pendant ce temps, le monde, les foules, l'attendent au dehors »[12]). Si la descente dans la rue ne tarde pas, c'est que cet individu s'y sent attiré d'une manière irrépressible. Or, la source de la fascination la constitue une particularité en quelque sorte inattendue du mouvement qui se produit dans le corps collectif : le refus de toute fusion. Au début des années 1960, dans une société qu'il caractérisait par la phobie des contacts, Elias Canetti voyait la foule comme une dernière « situation » où les gens puissent inverser cette phobie à son contraire. « C'est dans la *masse* seulement que l'homme peut être libéré de toute phobie de contact […]. C'est la masse compacte qu'il faut pour cela »[13]. Se laisser emporter par les corps des autres, fusionner avec eux, se synchroniser dans un mouvement commun restait une expérience positive. Se confondre dans un corps collectif offrait protection, faisait refuge. Or, dans la foule humaine qu'imaginent Voronca et Biberi, les corps restent séparés, conservent chacun sa manière d'être. S'ils bougent dans le même espace, ils ne le font pas ensemble. Au lieu de dissoudre la singularité, la masse, ici, la renforce. On insiste sur la situation distinctive des individus accumulés dans la rue ; sur le fait que chacun a sa marche à lui et sa propre direction d'avancement. Ou, avec une image qui est aussi commune aux deux auteurs roumains, chacun a son *pas* à lui[14]. C'est un « pas » qui se transcrit immédiatement comme *rythme*.

---

[11] Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 20.

[12] *Ibidem*, p. 26.

[13] Elias Canetti, *Masse et puissance*. Traduit de l'allemand par Robert Rovini, Paris, Gallimard, 1966, p. 12.

[14] Dans une lettre envoyée de Paris le 14 janvier 1929 à Geo Bogza, Voronca invoquait déjà la qualité rythmique du « pas », pour caractériser, justement, une formule littéraire tout à fait singulière :

> Il se peut qu'à notre réveil, le matin, la chambre soit hostile et froide. Des soucis nous attendent suspendus avec nos habits sur le dossier d'une chaise. Mais un pas résonne sur le trottoir. Il chante ce pas, patient. Comme un tam-tam lointain auquel s'ajoute d'autres tam-tam[15].

Non-homogène, le mouvement du corps communautaire relève selon Voronca d'une essence musicale ; il évoque les tons dans une symphonie, ou les instruments dans une fanfare. C'est la différence qui est rythmique et non pas la répétition – affirmeront plus tard Deleuze-Guattari[16] : « Le tam-tam n'est pas 1-2, la valse n'est pas 1-2-3, la musique n'est pas binaire ou ternaire, mais plutôt 47 temps premiers, comme chez les Turcs »[17]. Pour caractériser ce rythme qui conserve la spécificité tout en se composant avec les rythmes des autres, Voronca s'appuie sur l'exemple animal. Sans nier tout à fait l'esprit grégaire, l'animal est ici représenté comme un corps qui, trouvant son impulsion première dans le mouvement des autres, suit sa propre trajectoire (« Et voici en effet que ce pas qui a quelque chose du cri d'une fermière appelant ses volailles, fait s'approcher d'autres pas, comme des poulets timides d'abord, exigeants ensuite et qui finissent par couvrir de leurs clameurs la voix qui les a réunis »[18]). Ces rythmes décalés et disjoints, sont également inégales par rapport à eux mêmes, variables, ouverts au hasard. La foule les accumulent (« Dix, cent, mille *pas* résonnent maintenant »), pour se constituer, à travers la maintenue de cette diversité, comme « multitude » (« Ecarte donc les rideaux de tes fenêtres et jette un regard sur cette *multitude* qui s'enfièvre »[19]).

Le terme d'*idiorrythmie*, que Roland Barthes proposait en 1976[20], était censé rendre compte d'une telle mise ensemble des rythmes qui restaient distincts. Dans le cours qu'il donnait au Collège de France en 1976, Barthes suivait le fantasme d'un régime de vie qui n'était ni solitaire, ni collectif (« quelque chose comme une solitude interrompue d'une façon réglée »[21]), l'aporie d'une mise en commun des distances. Partant de l'exemple de quelques communautés religieuses des cénobites du mont Athos (des moines en même temps isolés et reliés à l'intérieur de leur structure interne), il lui opposait une image contemporaine prise, de sa fenêtre, sur la rue.

« combien il m'est cher l'enthousiasme et le rythme de ton pas, tout comme me sont chers ton regard et ta pensée » (*Epistolar avangardist* [*Epistolier avangardist*]. Édition et postface de Mădălina Lascu, avant-propos de Ion Pop, Bucureşti, Tracus Arte, 2012, p. 161).

[15] Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 203.

[16] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, Paris, Minuit, 1980, p. 385.

[17] *Ibidem*.

[18] Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 202.

[19] *Ibidem*.

[20] Roland Barthes, *Comment vivre ensemble*. Cours et séminaires au Collège de France (1976-1977). Sous la direction d'Éric Marty, texte établi, annoté et présenté par Claude Coste, Paris, Seuil, 2002.

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 37.

De ma fenêtre (1er décembre 1976), je vois une mère tenant son gosse par la main et poussant la poussette vide devant elle. Elle allait imperturbablement à son pas, le gosse était tiré, cahoté, contraint à courir tout le temps, comme un animal ou une victime sadienne qu'on fouette. Elle va à son rythme, sans savoir que le rythme du gosse est autre. Et pourtant, c'est sa mère![22].

Pour Voronca et Biberi, comme pour Barthes, toute forme d'unification rythmique semble s'associer à une imposition, à un sacrifice. De la fenêtre de laquelle on regarde ici la rue, c'est surtout le paysage (prévisible) d'une synchronisation des corps qui ne doit absolument pas devenir visible. L'exercice d'un pouvoir politique, qui n'est pas nommé, se laisse pressentir dans les formes physiques d'un tel « accord ». En contre-poids, la rue imaginaire juxtapose des rythmes singuliers, fluides et improvisés, incertains. Et la communauté se définit comme une foule de passants qui ne se connaissent pas. Il n'y a aucune régularisation de ces marches, aucune « norme » qui les unifie. Au lieu de se fonder sur la perception d'un « commun », la foule expose ainsi des irréductibles. C'est d'ailleurs dans la solitude même qu'elle se génère : une solitude qui ne se suffit plus à elle-même, qui a besoin de la multitude pour s'accomplir. « L'homme non pas en tant qu'individu mais en tant qu'individu dans la foule »[23].

Une communauté à travers des objets

De la représentation de cette communauté « de marches », on passe assez facilement chez les deux écrivains roumains à la représentation d'une communauté de travail. Le « pas » résonnant singulièrement sur les trottoirs s'associe tôt ou tard à un engagement lucratif. Il est la préfiguration d'une activité de production ; se transfigure en *geste* de travail. On insiste encore une fois sur la distinction qu'acquiert l'individu par l'intermède d'un tel mouvement corporel. Un seul geste est suffisant pour que l'homme soit associé à une profession (« Le chanteur, l'artisan, l'homme qui sait guérir/ Et celui qui connaît le secrète des racines/ Et l'homme de science et le découvreur des fontaines/ Et celui qui apporte un remède nouveau, une parole fraîche// Tous, tous seront à l'honneur »[24]). La marche dans la foule, telle que l'imaginent Voronca et Biberi, configurait déjà l'espace de la rue non pas comme espace de passage, mais comme un lieu où on s'installe. Les corps bougeant en désordre ne sont pas des corps errants, comme chez Baudelaire[25], sinon des corps qui revenaient sur leurs trajectoires et restaient à l'intérieur du

---

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 40.

[23] Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 221.

[24] Ilarie Voronca, *L'heure de l'esprit*, in *La poésie commune*, p. 16.

[25] Voir à ce titre Jérôme David, « Baudelaire à Bruxelles. Style de la flânerie et individuation esthétique », in *Le style en acte. Vers une pragmatique du style.* Sous la direction de Laurent Jenny, Genève, Metis Presses, 2011, p. 94.

même territoire (comme dans l'image des poulets appelés aux grains). Une fois avec la définition de la dynamique corporelle comme travail, cette installation dans l'espace devient encore plus claire. C'est ici un point important que les fantasmes communautaires des deux écrivains roumains ont en commun avec la manifestation *Occupy*. Etrangère à tout but lucratif au moment de sa constitution, la foule semble découvrir cette forme pratique d'existence une fois avec le partage non-solidaire de l'espace.

Le tableau qui se figure est celui d'une multitude dont une gamme apparemment infinie de professions produit des objets infiniment variables.

> En ce moment même des milliers et des milliers d'êtres humains trouent, creusent, martellent, défont et refont la face du monde. Et ce qu'il y a de plus surprenant, c'est l'harmonie de ces efforts, en apparence disparates. Ici, un homme ne forge qu'un petit clou, là-bas, un autre homme fait fondre une plaque d'acier, ailleurs, un orfèvre arrondit une pierre, plus loin, un savant regarde à travers un microscope, et voici que tous ces gens *indépendants* l'un de l'autre et *d'autres gestes plus dissemblables encore*, arrivent à se conjuguer et à prendre leur place dans un ouvrage commun[26] (c'est Voronca qui souligne).

De cette manière, la communauté arrive à inclure, à côté de la pluralité des gens, la diversité des objets qu'ils ont jamais produits ou utilisés. Toute une gamme d'objets aussi singuliers que les individus qui leur sont attachés.

> Mais il y a encore l'homme, la *foule humaine* où se mêlent les femmes avec les palais, les tableaux, les bijoux, les fourrures, les objets gratuits dans leur scintillement, les bateaux, les fenêtres, les cendriers, les tasses, et la théière, et les assiettes plus fines qu'une dentelle[27].

Si, donc, une puissance d'être soi se révèle au milieu de la foule, si une individualisation prend consistance à travers les gestes du corps singulier à l'intérieur du corps collectif, c'est aussi parce que celui-ci se lie à certains objets qui lui soient caractéristiques. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas rare que la « fraternité » vient nommer l'affinité entre l'individu et son objet (« Car me voici en complète fraternité avec les choses qui acceptent mes caresses et préviennent mes désirs »[28]).

Chez Biberi, on a affaire à des objets utiles, qui tiennent tous de la vie pratique. Le plus souvent, ce sont des objets indispensables. « Outils, parures, vêtements, nourriture, pont jeté sur la rivière, panier, tuyau d'usine, champ labouré, machine électronique »[29]. Chez Voronca, l'intérêt va plutôt vers des objets inouïs, qui rappellent les « trouvailles » avant-gardistes. Les actions humaines se

---

[26] Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 222.

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 224.

[28] *Ibidem*.

[29] Ion Biberi, *Poezia, mod de existenţă*, p. 318.

diversifient et se singularisent dans son cas à tel point, qu'elles sortent du périmètre de l'existent[30].

C'est ensuite en vertu de la capacité des objets de « faire système », de se réunir dans un « ouvrage » commun, qu'une forme de solidarité humaine se fasse l'apparition et, une fois avec elle, la possibilité d'une communauté. Pour ces gens qui ne se touchent pas, qui ne se regardent même pas, produire/ utiliser chacun ses objets dans le même espace ouvre vers un vivre-ensemble par l'intermédiaire des rapports que leurs objets se définissent les uns par rapport aux autres. « Comment pourrait-on encore concevoir que l'homme fut l'ennemi de l'homme, quand dans un élan si unanime les multitudes se sont unis pour bâtir? Que l'on pense à l'infinité des objets qu'il a fallu inventer les uns après les autres, depuis la vis minuscule jusqu'à la rue géante pour que ces immenses constructions enchantent nos yeux »[31].

Une communauté poétique

Un autre élément important que la figuration de la communauté chez les deux auteurs roumains a de commun avec le modèle *Occupy* tient de l'inexistence d'une instance collective de discours. Cette foule qui ne fusionne pas n'arrive ni à articuler un discours commun. Elle n'assume pas le *nous*. Au lieu des slogans (formules qui commencent par être individuelles pour devenir unanimes), ce sont des mots individuels qui s'y produisent. A des individus singuliers – qui font singulièrement usage de leur corps et de leurs objets – s'associent des mots singuliers. Ces discours ont le caractère d'instantanés : se produisent spontanément, en stricte dépendance de l'endroit qui les suggestionne. « Et chaque nom de la chose se forme en même temps dans ton esprit, dans ta bouche et dans l'espace »[32] – formule Voronca.

A la différence de la communauté *Occupy*, ces « formules prégnantes » perdent pourtant, chez Biberi et Voronca, toute relation à la vie pratique (et aux

---

[30] Je cite à ce titre un épisode où, au bord d'un fleuve, on assiste chez Voronca à la « découverte » d'une communauté à l'occasion de l'exécution d'un travail « mystérieux », « sévère et muet », un « jeu grave » : « Je me mêlai au petit groupe qui se penchait vers un trou creusé à l'entrée d'un pont. Un homme dont la tenue oscillait entre celle d'un ouvrier et celle d'un fonctionnaire manipulait les boutons d'un genre de petit poste de T.S.F., un casque d'écouteur aux oreilles... Sur une feuille à coté du poste, il inscrivait des courbes et des chiffres. […] Ce n'est pas un poste T.S.F., murmura quelqu'un à côté de moi, c'est peut-être pour enregistrer le niveau des eaux, ajouta un autre. J'avais pensé moi-même que ce devait être un ingénieur qui, avec un appareil, ressemblant à un poste de T.S.F., contrôlait la réaction des matériaux et des couches terrestres où l'on installait des conduites d'eau. Mais pourquoi les fils alors? […] Je me suis éloigné du groupe, la tête pleine de la vision de ces outils et de ces gens qui gardaient pour moi tout leur secret » (Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manal de fericire perfectă*, p. 220).

[31] *Ibidem*, p. 218.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 204.

besoins) et tiennent de rien autre que de la « poésie ». La foule devient le milieu nécessaire (le seul) pour la production poétique. On prévoit une dépendance entre l'« état poétique » et ce qu'on appelle un « état de foule » (« stare de mulţime »).

En ce qui concerne effectivement le modèle poétique, les deux auteurs font des options bien différentes. Pour Biberi, l'essence de cette poésie communautaire la constitue le rythme. Les mots reprennent la rythmique du corps singulier. On assiste à un transfert de rythme entre le langage gestuel et le langage articulé. Un concept de Marcel Jousse, celui de « geste rythmique »[33], est repris par Biberi afin de renforcer une relation particulière entre le travail et le discours que celui-ci conditionne. Il l'amène à la définition d'une « poésie active ». C'est un discours poétique exaltant et frénétique qui est ainsi postulé. Mais aussi un discours performatif, qui revient sur le geste « actif » qui l'avait inspiré et le formalise en manière d'être. Chez Voronca, la poésie « commune » se produit comme résultat d'un état de rêverie. Le rôle des mouvements corporels, de l' « agitation » dans la rue, est d'induire à la masse un état de « fatigue », qui se transpose comme état « rêveur ». Cette foule rêveuse se met à « imaginer » des mots. L' « invention » n'y est cependant qu'apparente. En réalité, on doit seulement se souvenir. « Se souvenir des noms. Voilà donc de quoi il s'agit. Se souvenir des noms, donneurs de joie »[34]. La masse fonctionne chez Voronca comme un révélateur, dans la mémoire très personnelle, de ces moments de vie passée qui s'associent au bonheur. Par le souvenir on reprend l'état, condensé dans un mot. Si on est suggestionné à « se souvenir des mots », ce n'est pas pour ressusciter des mots rares, exotiques. C'est pour restituer aux mots les plus communs une valeur positive de sens (qui est aussi personnelle, très intime).

> Il est évident que tout se réduit à un assemblage de chiffres, à la prononciation d'une formule heureuse. Peut-être ne sait-on pas encore les vrais noms, ou a-t-on perdu le sens des mots que l'on prononce. Puisque avec une notion aussi rudimentaire que celle de « chaise » par exemple, on peut éveilleur aussi bien un souvenir de désespoir qu'un souvenir de bonheur. La chaise d'un parc où l'on a bavardé avec la femme aimée. La chaise d'un condamné. Si dans toute chose il y a une capacité de bonheur, qu'on la recherche donc. Ce n'est pas comme une bouche qui pourrait articuler à la fois des paroles de haine et des paroles d'amour. Toute parole est une parole d'amour. Il s'agit seulement de s'en souvenir[35].

---

[33] Les deux titres que Biberi cite de Marcel Jousse sont *Etudes de psychologie linguistique. Le style oral rythmique et mnémotechnique chez les Verbo-moteurs* (1925) et *Une nouvelle psychologie du langage* (1926). Il cite également à ce sujet Marcel Mauss, avec *Manuel d'Ethnographie* (1947).

[34] Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 204.

[35] *Ibidem*, p. 204, 206.

La foule qui « parle » une « poésie action » chez Biberi trouve son corrélat chez Voronca dans la foule qui rêve une poésie « positive », faite par des mots qui s'associent à des moments singuliers de bonheur.

On doit encore remarquer que, si on imagine ici une proféation dans l'espace publique des discours liés à la vie individuelle, ces discours ne sont pas directement orientés vers le futur. Ils viennent, dans les deux cas, du passé. Chez Voronca, on invoque les vestiges d'une vie individuelle perdue, qui ne serait récupérable qu'à travers l'expérience de la multitude (ce qui veut aussi dire que la fonction de la foule est, avant tout, restitutive et patrimoniale à un niveau strictement personnel). Chez Biberi, la foule actualise le tribu. L'individu revit dans la masse un moment de vie primitive, où, toute l'existence mise en commune, menée publiquement, il ait brusquement la révélation de soi en découvrant la force de l'incantation. Plus précisément, il devient conscient de sa capacité de produire des effets dans le réel par la transformation de son rythme corporel en rythme incantatoire. C'est à cette expérience archaïque que revient la foule de *La Poésie, mode d'existence* – et ce « poète paléolitique »[36] qui s'incarne dans tout individu urbain de Biberi. Le fantasme d'une communauté politique, telle qu'elle se dessine chez les deux auteurs roumains, investit de cette manière une sorte de futur dans le passé, misant sur le discours incantatoire proféré à présent[37]. « La félicité d'autrefois – écrit Voronca –, comme celles de demain, deviennent aussi présentes. Nous prenons conscience des bonheurs anciens exactement comme s'il s'agissait de bonheurs actuels. Les minces parois qui séparaient les compartiments du temps tombent en poussière et l'hier, l'aujourd'hui et le demain se confondent »[38].

Réalisée à travers des discours individuels, des discours de soi sur soi, la communauté politique figurée par Biberi et Voronca prend la forme distinctive d'une communauté poétique. La production des mots est l'instrument qui inaugure une forme de solidarité ; elle justifie en même temps l'expérience communautaire. La masse s'accumule dans la rue *pour* clamer des mots incantatoires, *pour* produire des discours. « Réunissons-nous et parlons des hymnes de joie et le monde deviendra semblable à un hymne »[39] – incite Voronca. On prévoit de cette manière la démocratisation des capacités poétiques, leur extension à toute la masse humaine. Tout le monde, n'importe qui du corps collectif, une fois engagé publiquement dans la parole, devient poète (la poésie apparaît à son tour conditionnée de l'espace de la cité). Certes, c'est une communauté de poètes qui s'ignorent.

---

[36] Ion Biberi, *Poezia, mod de existenţă*, p. 29.

[37] On retrouve le même accent sur l'incantation chez Voronca: « Toute parole dite, toute ligne tracée, toute note chantée est une incantation » (Ilarie Voronca, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 228).

[38] *Ibidem*, p. 230.

[39] *Ibidem*, p. 226.

Une communauté d'affection

Si chez les deux auteurs roumains on ne peut pas omettre la production des mots d'aucune expérience de la foule, c'est parce que c'est à travers les mots qu'on y imagine la réalisation de ce qui fait le but même de l'accumulation des gens dans la rue : l'obtention d'un état heureux. La communauté politique prend comme support une communauté poétique, afin de se réaliser en tant que communauté émotionnelle. Dans les manifestations *Occupy* un état de « bien être » à présent apparaît comme stade premier, minimale de la manifestation de masse (et on peut avancer vers d'autres attentes pour le futur). Voronca et Biberi ne veulent pas aller plus loin. Il n'y a pas un autre désir fixé pour leurs foules que celui de devenir immédiatement heureuses, heureuses sur place. Chez Voronca les masses doivent être « ensoleillées », « surexcitées », « en extase » ; la foule est « accueillante » et « généreuse »[40]; elle constitue une « communauté heureuse ». Chez Biberi, l'état est de « contentement » (de mulțumire) et justifie une « communauté contente » (« comunitate mulțumită »).

Tout comme les mots qui la produisent, cette émotion ne peut pas être vraiment « en partage ». Elle n'est *commune* que dans la mesure où elle devient état exclusif de la foule. Les individus se procurent chacun son bonheur, l'invente (par le rêve) ou le récupèrent (par le souvenir) pour le restituer à leur présent. Mais ils vivent leur bonheur dans la présence « ensoleillée » des autres. Heureux au même moment, les corps se perçoivent reflétés, se reprennent comme dans un miroir, deviennent de simples milieux de réflexion. C'est une soma-esthétique qui est responsable du fonctionnement de l'« état de foule » :

> Tu aurais pu être quelque part sur une île déserte. Comme Robinson, par exemple, sans l'espoir d'un visage offert comme un miroir à ton propre visage. Et voici que dès le matin, tu n'as qu'à te pencher vers la rue pour voir que des milliers de faces et des milliers de mains reflètent ta face et tes mains. N'est-il pas délicieux de savoir que dans un instant tu pourras te mêler à cette foule, y prendre ta place comme une roue dentée dans un engrenage ? Une femme, cent femmes sont là qui pourraient unir leurs sourires au tien. Et n'est-il pas un miracle justement ce sourire de femme qui adoucit les lignes du matin ? Il se mêle tout à coup une odeur d'horizon marin et tu n'auras qu'à rejoindre la foule pour te trouver bientôt sur une plage d'estivales splendeurs[41].

Dans une réflexion de 2013, Georges Didi-Hubermann[42] reprend la distinction que faisait en 1998 Pierre Rosanvallon[43] entre trois catégories de « peuples

---

[40] Ilarie Voronca, *Les foules de l'avenir*, in *La poésie commune*, p. 13.

[41] Idem, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă*, p. 204.

[42] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Rendre sensible*, in *Qu'est-ce qu'un peuple*, p. 81.

[43] Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Peuple introuvable. Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998, apud Georgs Didi-Huberman, *Rendre sensible*, p. 81.

imaginaires » : le *peuple-nation*, le *peuple-opinion* et le *peuple-émotion*. Pendant que les deux premières seraient des modèles déjà épuisés, historiques, la formule du *peuple-émotion* tiendrait pleinement de notre présent. Car c'est de nos jours, croit Didi-Hubermann, que se produit cette importante mutation dans l'esprit collectif, qui amène en premier plan le corps de l'individu, antérieurement perçu comme un simple instrument associé à la cause commune. C'est parce qu'il est doué d'une attention accrue aux corps voisins, capable de les saisir dans leur spécificité, parce qu'il est sensible aux contacts et aux interactions dans lesquels l'entraînent les voisinages, que le corps arrive à fonctionner comme un constitutif de la communauté. L'empathie collective produite auparavant par la formulation idéologique de la cause commune est substituée par une émotion de nature somatique. Cette nouvelle communauté se présente comme une incarnation du désir, en même temps sensible et vague. Pauvre en contenus, restant sans construire des relations durables, elle se caractérise justement par le pathos de l'interaction. La formule de cette *masse* moderne, qui cherche son identité sous un mode pathétique parmi les corps singuliers, me semble, je le dis encore une fois, être le modèle le plus proche de la communauté fantasmée par Biberi et Voronca.

Une expérience de vie littéraire

Il n'est pas exclu qu'une circonstance de vie littéraire fût ce qui a suggestionnée chez les deux auteurs roumains l'imagination de ce mode d'être ensemble. Dans la pratique de sociabilité littéraire qui était en vigueur dans un cénacle roumain, *Sburătorul*, cénacle que Biberi et Voronca avaient également fréquenté, on retrouve une perception similaire du *commun*. Le groupe littéraire de *Sburătorul* s'était constitué à Bucarest sous l'autorité du critique E. Lovinescu (promoteur, dans l'espace roumain, du modernisme) et dans l'appartement familial de celui-ci. Un espace réduit (comme s'est en général le cas des espaces des cénacles, inconfortables – trop petits et trop bourgeois pour se prêter de façon adéquate à l'activité sociale) y était censé accueillir pendant les séances de lecture plus qu'une quarantaine de personnes. La vie de cénacle implique de cette façon une expérience somatique : les corps sont en proximité, se constituent des voisinages, sans interagir. Ils ont une certaine dynamique – on se lève à pieds pour parler, on s'assoit, on gesticule (chacun à sa manière), dans un ensemble qui reste statique. Suivre la description somatique d'une communauté cénaculaire amène à la représentation d'un corps collectif sans empathie, qui se sépare sur des rythmes individuels. Qui plus est, ces mouvements corporels ne sont pas prédéfinis, se cristallisent au four et à mesure dans ce milieu commun, une fois avec la définition d'une manière d'être (écrivain). Une autre chose qui est naturellement inscrite dans la formule du groupe littéraire est le fait qu'il est à proprement parler une communauté de rêveurs (on s'y rassemble, en effet, pour une évasion de la réalité), qui sont, en même temps, des producteurs de textes. Chacun son discours/ et rêve,

car chacun sa littérature/ manière d'écrire – dans une communauté qui ne mise aucunement (comme c'était le cas des avant-gardistes) sur une écriture commune. S'ajoute à ces données une insistance particulière que met Lovinescu sur l'orientation de sa communauté vers le renforcement de la différence individuelle. Dans un programme-cadre esquissé en 1919, sur lequel il revenait en 1926[44], le critique figure la communauté qui fonctionnait sous son patronage comme une communauté de solitaires. Il parle de la nécessité de l'écrivain de quitter son domicile pour se retrouver, toujours solitaire, au milieu d'un collectif. Le groupe fonctionnerait comme un révélateur des singularités ; la mise en présence des manières d'être des autres, la confrontation de toute une gamme de possibilités d'existences et de formules littéraires, produirait la plus efficace des distinctions. La communauté y est un instrument au service de la définition de soi, une ambiance où on évite à tout prix la ressemblance et les contaminations.

Voronca et Biberi ont fait leur première pratique du vivre-ensemble chez *Sburătorul*. Et cela leur est arrivé en pleine jeunesse, quand toute expérience est plus intense. Plus tard, ils ne pourront pas imaginer la communauté politique sous une autre réalisation que celle d'une communauté poétique. Et n'arriveront pas à la séparer du concret d'un vivre-ensemble (c'est sous ce signe surtout que la manifestation *Occupy* se rencontre avec la sociabilité de cénacle). L'appel à la construction d'un monde meilleur se formulera comme appel à la production poétique ; l'expérience communautaire se transcrira comme expérience esthétique.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

BARTHES, Roland, *Comment vivre ensemble*. Cours et séminaires au Collège de France (1976-1977). Sous la direction d'Éric Marty, texte établi, annoté et présenté par Claude Coste, Paris, Seuil, 2002.

BIBERI, Ion, *Poezia, mod de existenţă* [*La Poésie, mode d'existence*], Bucureşti, Editura pentru Literatură, 1968.

BIBERI, Ion, *Arta de a tră*i [*L'Art de vivre*], Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică Română, 1970.

BIBERI, Ion, *Arta de a scrie şi a vorbi în publi*c [*L'Art d'écrire et de parler en public*]. Avec une préface de Şerban Cioculescu, Bucureşti, Editura Enciclopedică Română, 1971.

BIBERI, Ion, *Lumea de mâine* [*Le monde à venir*], Bucureşti, Forum, 1946.

BOGZA, Geo, *Epistolar avangardist* [*Epistolier avangardist*]. Édition et postface de Mădălina Lascu, avant-propos de Ion Pop, Bucureşti, Tracus Arte, 2012.

BUTLER, Judith, « 'Nous, le peuple' : réflexions sur la réunion », in *Qu'est-ce qu'un peuple?*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2013, pp. 53-76.

CANETTI, Elias, *Masse et puissance*. Traduit de l'allemand par Robert Rovini, Paris, Gallimard, 1966.

DAVID, Jérôme, « Baudelaire à Bruxelles. Style de la flânerie et individuation esthétique », in *Le style en acte. Vers une pragmatique du style*. Sous la direction de Laurent Jenny, Genève, Metis Presses, 2011.

DELEUZE, Gilles, GUATTARI, Félix, *Mille Plateaux*, Paris, Minuit, 1980.

---

[44] E. Lovinescu, « Cei ce vin » [« Ceux qui viennent »], *Sburătorul literar*, 1926, 1.

DIDI-HUBERMAN, Georges, *Rendre sensible*, in *Qu'est-ce qu'un peuple*, Paris, La Fabrique des éditions, 2013, pp. 77-114.

LE BON, Gustave, *La psychologie des foules*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1895.

LOVINESCU, E., « Cei ce vin » [« Ceux qui viennent »], *Sburătorul literar*, 1926, 1.

ROSANVALLON, Pierre, *Le Peuple introuvable. Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998.

VORONCA, Ilarie, *La poésie commune.* Avec une préface de Jean Pierre Begot, Paris, Plasma, 1936.

VORONCA, Ilarie, *Mic manual de fericire perfectă. Petit manuel du parfait bonheur.* Traduction en roumain par Saşa Pană, Bucureşti, Editura Cartea Românească, 1973.

VORONCA, Ilarie, *Jurnalul sinuciderii* [*Le Journal du suicide*]. Édition et traduction de Vladimir Pană, Bucureşti, Tracus Arte, 2016.

.

POLITICAL COMMUNITY, POETIC COMMUNITY
(*Abstract*)

What we are aiming for is a comparative analysis of two representations of the political community in the texts of Romanian writers. Ilarie Voronca and Ion Biberi are, in turn, one an avant-garde poet, the other one a novelist, the author of the first Joycean Romanian novel. The community fantasies which they propose do exhibit a strong affinity, although dating from different epochs and developed within different cultural spaces: one in Paris, in the 1930s, the other one in Bucharest during the 1970s. Both have little in common with the representations of the era that produces them. Outlining the political community as a mass that is installed in the street, with an emphasis on body dynamics and the autonomy of individuals in the crowd, they relate better to recent "*Occupy*"-type manifestations. Instead of functioning as an empathetic environment, where individuals are in sync and all follow the same rhythm, the crowd becomes a revealing element of both the differentiation and of the positive irreductability. On the other hand, this crowd abandons the unique position of discourse (the "we" belonging to a common cause). Instead of slogans, it proffers spontaneous individual speeches, in turn singularized. The political community is illustrated as a community of poets, idealizing a literary life experience.

Keywords: multitude, Occupy community, poetic community, literary sociability, Ilarie Voronca, Ion Biberi.

COMUNITATE POLITICĂ, COMUNITATE POETICĂ
(*Rezumat*)

Ceea ce ne propunem e analiza comparată a două reprezentări ale comunităţii politice în textele unor scriitori români. Ilarie Voronca şi Ion Biberi sunt unul poet avangardist, celălalt romancier, autor al primului roman joycian românesc. Fantasmele comunitare pe care ei le propun manifestă o puternică afinitate, deşi datează din epoci diferite şi sunt elaborate în spaţii culturale diferite: una la Paris, în anii '30, cealaltă la Bucureşti, în anii '70. Ambele au puţine în comun cu reprezentările epocii care le produce. Figurând comunitatea politică ca mulţime care se instalează în stradă, cu insistenţă pe dinamica corpurilor şi pe autonomia indivizilor din mulţime, îşi găsesc mai curând un termen de raport în manifestările recente de tip *Occupy*. În loc să funcţioneze ca mediu empatic, în care indivizii se sincronizează şi se ritmează împreună, mulţimea devine revelator al diferenţierii şi al unei ireductibilităţi pozitivate. Pe de altă parte, această mulţime abandonează poziţia unică de discurs („noi"-ul unei cauze comune). În locul sloganelor, ea proferează discursuri spontane individuale, la rândul lor singularizate. Comunitatea politică se ilustrează ca o comunitate de poeţi, idealizând o experienţă de viaţă literară.

Cuvinte-cheie: multitudine, comunitate de tip *Occupy*, comunitate poetică, sociabilitate literară, Ilarie Voronca, Ion Biberi.

ADRIAN TĂTĂRAN

LITTÉRATURE, COMMUNAUTÉ ET UTOPIE :
ESQUISSE D'UNE LECTURE ANARCHISTE

> « Par un paradoxe qui est plus apparent que réel, c'est justement parce qu'ils sont des vaincus, des marginaux à contre-courant de leur époque, des romantiques obstinés et des utopistes incurables, que leur œuvre devient de plus en plus actuelle, de plus en plus chargée de sens… » (Michaël Löwy, *Rédemption et utopie*).

Sébastien Faure, écrivain, militant et pédagogue anarchiste, initie en 1925 le projet collectif de l'*Encyclopédie anarchiste*. Le but déclaré de l'entreprise est la rédaction d'un recueil compréhensif et synthétique des conceptions, de l'histoire et de la littérature anarchiste. La nécessité d'une telle démarche est multiple. D'une part, Sébastien Faure reconnaît aux anarchistes une façon particulière de « concevoir, de sentir, d'apprécier, de vouloir et d'agir »[1] qui réclame une expression adéquate. D'autre part, l'ouvrage servirait à la nécessité d'une présentation de l'ensemble de la pensée anarchiste, hors les travestis fictionnels, la méconnaissance et les déformations dont l'anarchisme à été victime[2]. Le premier volume, d'ailleurs le seul publié des cinq qui étaient prévues, est un dictionnaire où on trouve une description de l'anarchisme qu'on va prendre comme point de départ pour notre démarche. Il n'y a pas de doctrine anarchiste, écrit-il, mais plutôt un « ensemble de principes généraux »[3] et un noyau de pratiques dirigées contre le principe de l'autorité dans l'organisation sociale ; ce qui implique le refus de toute domination, oppression ou contrainte, fût-elle économique (le capital), politique (l'état), intellectuelle ou morale (la religion). À cela doit être ajouté le principe de l'autonomie individuelle et de la liberté comme « valeur-guide », ainsi que la contestation de toute position qui se réclame absolue et définitive.

Ce que l'anarchisme propose, au-delà de ces expressions diverses et parfois même contradictoires, est moins une idéologie, comme interprétation figée du monde et des relations sociales, qu'une *méthodologie*, donc une « réflexion générale » concernant l'adéquation nécessaire des moyens et des buts. Il s'agit

---

[1] Sébastien Faure (éd.)*, Encyclopédie anarchiste*, Limoges, E. Rivet, 1934, http://www.encyclopedie-anarchiste.org/, consulté le 26 avril 2016.

[2] « La méconnaissance de l'anarchisme ne relève pas de l'ignorance mais de l'hostilité des élites, qu'elles soient politiques ou intellectuelles, contre toute remise en cause du pouvoir sous toutes les formes. La dénonciation des idées anarchistes offre aussi l'avantage de rallier sans peine l'opinion publique » (Ronald Creagh, *L'imagination dérobée*, Lyon, ACL, 2004, p. 124).

[3] Cité par Jean Maitron, *Ravachol et les anarchistes*, Paris, Julliard, 1970, p. 7.

donc d'un noyau *éthique*, d'une évaluation constante et inachevée de la qualité oppressive ou libératrice des actions, articulée dans des contextes toujours différents. Un mouvement contestataire des structures sociales et étatiques est doublé par une pratique expérimentale guidée par les principes de la liberté individuelle, de l'association volontaire et de la solidarité communautaire[4].

Le terme de littérature anarchiste ou littérature libertaire, d'autre part, ne circonscrit pas un mouvement esthétique homogène, ayant un programme bien défini ou des moyens d'expression unitaires. Bien que l'expression soit « floue », la littérature anarchiste a déjà fait l'objet de quelques présentations et analyses compréhensives et bien documentées, surtout en ce qui concerne la littérature française. Les ouvrages de Thierry Maricourt[5], Uri Eisenzweig[6], Vittorio Frigerio[7] ou Caroline Granier[8] vont nous servir d'ailleurs de guide dans ce territoire encore très peu connu. Dans la plupart des cas, les exemples présentés dans ces analyses concernent « l'âge d'or » de l'anarchisme, la période de la « Belle Époque »[9] et la prodigieuse activité littéraire qui accompagne le développement du mouvement. Il s'agit de la littérature publiée par les auteurs anarchistes ou du moins anarchisants, tel que Georges Darien, Lucien Descaves ou Octave Mirbeau ; mais contient aussi des références concernant les articles des critiques littéraires, tel que Bernard Lazare, Jean Grave, Mécislas Goldberg ou Félix Fénéon. En effet, la littérature et la pensée sur la littérature issues des débats et des milieux militants ne sont point accessoires au phénomène anarchiste. Elles tiennent d'une réflexion critique spécifique concernant le rapport du discours et de la langue avec les différentes formes d'assujetissement et de violence sociale. Cela expliquerait aussi les

---

[4] Voir également à ce sujet l'article de l'anarchiste roumain Panait Mușoiu, « Metoda experimentală în politică » [« La méthode expérimentale en politique »], *Revista Ideei*, 1910, nº 100, pp. 137-145, https://revistaideei.wordpress.com/category/revista-ideei-1910/, consulté le 26 avril 2016. Bien que ses propos soient plutôt endettés dans cet article à une conception positiviste et déterministe de l'organisation sociale, le texte a le mérite de formuler du moins une approche qui insiste sur la nécessité du questionnement des propres présupposés dans la pratique politique, la vérification continuelle des hypothèses de travail par le recours à la « réalité » et la prospection constante des possibilités inhérentes à chaque situation.

[5] Thierry Maricourt, *Histoire de la littérature libertaire en France*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1990.

[6] Uri Eisenzweig, *Fictions de l'anarchisme*, Paris, Christian Bourgois éditeur, 2001.

[7] Vittorio Frigerio, *La Littérature de l'anarchisme. Anarchistes de lettres et lettrés face à l'anarchisme*, Grenoble, ELLUG, 2014.

[8] Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules » : Les écrivains anarchistes en France à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle*. Thèse de doctorat en lettres modernes, sous la direction de Claude Mouchard, Paris, Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis, 2003.

[9] Une présentation détaillée des événements, figures et du contexte de l'époque est à trouver dans un recueil de textes et témoignages, *Ravachol et les anarchistes*, publié en 1970 à Paris aux éditions Julliard. Les textes ont été recueillis par Jean Maitron, auteur d'ailleurs d'une compréhensive histoire de l'anarchisme français qui fait figure d'ouvrage de référence sur le thème : *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France (1880-1914)*, Paris, SUDEL, 1955.

nombreux points de convergence entre la pensée anarchiste et les pratiques des avant-gardes artistiques et littéraires.

L'espace de notre étude ne nous pertmet pas une analyse approfondie de la littérature anarchiste ou des relations que l'imaginaire anarchiste entretient avec la pratique des avant-gardes. On préfère dans un premier temps seulement esquisser le portrait du « minorat » de la littérature libértaire, afin qu'on en puisse illustrer une certaine unité d'expression et d'intention. Une telle esquisse serait relevante pour une lecture anarchiste de la communauté, implicitement renvoyant à une réflexion sur la pratique langagière, l'écriture et la littérature. D'ailleurs, la conception communautaire ne peut pas être séparée d'une conception du langage et de la critique sociale associée. L'anarchisme est tantôt un phénomène littéraire, tantôt un engagement social effectif : les deux ne sont que les expressions jumelles d'une même pratique de l'affranchissement individuel, de la subversion de l'autorité et de l'expérimentation des formules communautaires alternatives.

Le concept de « littérature mineure »[10], que proposent Deleuze et Guattari, peut nous offrir quelques points d'appui pour parcourir d'une manière systématique les principales caractéristiques de la littérature anarchiste qui, symétriquement, semble être une illustration exemplaire d'une pratique subversive et révolutionnaire du minorat artistique.

La littérature mineure désignerait « les conditions révolutionnaires de toute littérature au sein de celle qu'on appelle grande (ou établie) »[11]. Le minorat littéraire concerne principalement les façons particulières de l'usage du langage. Il n'est pas un qualificatif, fût-il de la qualité ou de la quantité de la production littéraire. En plus, on peut en inventorier trois caractères spécifiques.

Premièrement c'est la littérature d'une minorité – les anarchistes par exemple – qui se fait dans la langue d'une majorité[12]. L'usage de la langue est atteint ainsi d'un grand coefficient de « déterritorialisation », ou d'étrangeté. Le minorat rappelle donc la marginalité, la trajectoire exilique du discours. Il trace une ligne de fuite comme ligne d'abolition, de neutralisation du sens établi des mots, opposant à l'usage signifiant ou représentatif un usage intensif du langage[13]. Cela signifie la contestation des clôtures totalisantes et figées qui renouvelleraient la maîtrise des mots et les mots de la maîtrise. La conception du langage implicite dans ces propos est bien éloignée de sa considération comme un véhicule neutre et transparent de la communication. Celle-ci n'est rien qu'un « mythe » qui occulterait son exercice impératif et hiérarchique, de transmission d'ordres[14]. Nommer et ordonner sont ici synonymes, car le pouvoir dénotatif est un pouvoir

---

[10] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Kafka – Pour une littérature mineure*, Paris, Minuit, 1975.
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 33.
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 29.
[13] « Le langage cesse d'être représentatif pour tendre vers ses extrêmes ou ses limites » (*Ibidem*, p. 42).
[14] *Ibidem*, p. 43.

prescriptif. En revanche, la minorisation langagière dévoile et essaye de contrarier justement la fonction policière du langage[15].

Deuxièmement, il s'agit d'une littérature politique, sans que cela signifie qu'elle soit une littérature à thèse. Bien au contraire, cet aspect politique est à comprendre dans le sens que Deleuze et Guattari lui donnent : elle est l'expression du « branchement de l'individuel sur l'immédiat politique »[16].

Troisièmement, la littérature mineure ne se développe pas comme une littérature de « maîtres », mais tend plutôt vers une dynamique d'énonciation collective, à fonction « révolutionnaire ». L'œuvre n'est plus comprise comme l'instance achevée et figée d'une représentation offerte à la contemplation, qui convoquerait donc une communauté de spectateurs ordonnée à une vérité extérieure. Tout au contraire, elle est conçue comme faisant déjà partie de l'action collective, du mouvement réel et actuel de la vie commune, sans médiation spectaculaire. D'autre part, la signification du mot révolutionnaire dans ce contexte renvoie à la brèche que la littérature expose et propose comme (son) lieu propre de rencontre et de départ. La « solidarité active », qui est sa charge positive, est toujours produite « malgré le scepticisme »[17]. La brèche que la littérature expose comme place de rencontre, désigne aussi sa condition nécessairement inachevée, ouverte, sa vulnérabilité extrême, sa résistance à son propre accomplissement. L'écriture révolutionnaire est une façon d'habiter cette brèche, d'empêcher sa clôture. Une telle révolution est plutôt une dynamique de la suspension de l'avènement communautaire, une pédagogie subversive qui maintiendrait au cœur du familier le rêve de l'inconnu, de la fuite. Outre sa fonction de rupture, elle appelle donc aussi une pensée de l'utopie ; ou, pour éviter tout contresens, car l'utopie peut suggérer ici la clôture et la maîtrise, une pensée de l'ailleurs, de l'alternative toujours renouvelée.

Nous utiliserons donc les trois caractères de la littérature mineure comme guides de description des principaux noyaux qui spécifient l'expression et la perspective anarchiste en littérature : questionnement et subversion de l'usage représentatif du langage en faveur d'une utilisation étrange, intensive,

---

[15] Il n'est pas sans intérêt de mentionner ici qu'une des préoccupations constantes des écrivains et militants anarchistes était (est l'est encore) le renouvellement du langage. Le paradoxe auquel ils sont confrontés, écrire et parler dans une langue déjà faussée par les structures de la domination et ainsi risquer de les reproduire, les pousse à essayer d'en trouver de nouveaux usages et à rêver parfois la création d'un nouveau langage. De Jules Vallès à Sébastien Faure, dont le projet collectif de l'encyclopédie vise justement une redéfinition des significations et des usages des notions, jusqu'à l'excellent *Petit lexique philosophique de l'anarchisme. De Proudhon à Deleuze* (Paris, Le livre de poche, 2001) écrit par Daniel Colson, et aux romans d'Ursula K. Le Guin, les anarchistes font l'aveu de ce positionnement qui est en même temps épistémique, existentiel et éthique. Les solutions sont diverses, mais la situation qui les génère est la même et elle tient d'un minorat constitutif de l'expression littéraire anarchiste.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 33.

[17] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 31.

transversale ; pratique littéraire qui se reconnaît comme pratique politique, action et participation directe et directement relevante ; actualisation des potentialités communautaires et exposition radicale des brèches qui les constituent symultanémment comme chances et risques de l'inconnu.

La critique anarchiste prend la forme générale d'une exposition de la « crise de la représentation »[18]. Cela signifie un questionnement radical de la relation entre les mots, les images et la vérité qu'elles prétendent désigner, entre les institutions et les intêrets qu'elles défendent et entre la représentation en général des relations sociales et leur réalité effective. Les anarchistes sont bien conscients de la charge idéologique que l'usage du langage et, plus généralement, les échanges symboliques, portent. De même, ils identifient le péril que toute falsification du sens des mots et des images contient, qui est celui de l'aliénation du lien social et communautaire en tant que tel[19]. Il est important donc pour eux d'exposer cette médiation des signes et représentations, de la démystifier, dans toutes ses instances : représentation politique, comme délégation du pouvoir et dépossession effective de l'individu ; représentation économique sous la guise du capital, entraînant l'expropriation de la production et des biens ; représentation littéraire qui falsifie l'usage et le sens des mots, portant ainsi atteinte à la fonction sociale du langage. Comme pour Deleuze et Guattari, nommer, « parler pour » ou « à la place de » ne sont point simples opérations de désignation ou de représentation, mais des gestes effectifs d'exclusion et d'occultation qui masquent et normalisent la mise en place d'une structure de dépossession généralisée.

Le « refus de la représentation »[20] pourrait donc être considéré la marque spécifique de l'anarchisme. Joseph Proudhon résume ce positionnement théorique, langagier et existentiel sous l'expression du rejet de la « fiction qui fait violence à la liberté »[21]. Bernard Lazare, critique littéraire anarchiste et théoricien de l'art social, reprend à la fin du XIXème siècle le propos de Proudhon :

> J'estime qu'il n'est plus suffisant de combattre les modalités de toutes les fictions qui, réunies, forment cet état extérieur à l'individu qu'il opprime, mais qu'il faut combattre les principes mêmes sur lesquels ces fictions reposent[22].

---

[18] Nous empruntons l'expression et sa définition générale de Jesse Cohn qui en fait une très détaillée exposition dans son ouvrage *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation : Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Politics,* Cranbury, SUP, 2006, p. 11.
[19] « Cela est effrayant, car ce n'est pas seulement la langue qui se perd, mais tout ce qui unit véritablement les hommes et consolide leurs rapports. C'est la base de tous les sentiments naturels et vrais, la confiance, qui disparaît... » (André Leo, *La Guerre sociale*, 1871, apud Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 485).
[20] Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 484.
[21] Joseph Proudhon, *Idée générale de la révolution au XIXème siècle*, 1851, apud Uri Eisenzweig, *Fictions de l'anarchisme*, p. 203.
[22] Uri Eisenzweig, *Fictions de l'anarchisme*, p. 203.

Il faut donc dénoncer plus que les hypostases fantasmatiques et figées – nation, religion, état, capitalisme – qui prétendent de se substituer au réel. Il faut exposer le fonctionnement spectaculaire des représentations comme système de dépossession et de clôture[23], et briser le consensus fictionnel et son emprise sociale.

Mécislas Goldberg, critique et écrivain anarchiste, parle lui aussi du péril de cette falsification, qui fait que les signes prennent la place de la réalité qu'ils prétendaient exprimer. Cela indique, pour emprunter une formulation de Guy Débord, l'« inversion concrète de la vie, le mouvement autonome du non-vivant »[24]. Le renversement lui-même prend ainsi la forme de la loi régissant la reproduction sociale, qui fait que ces instances fantomatiques s'incarnent dans des pouvoirs institutionnels[25] :

> La patrie, la famille, la nature, la matière, la force, l'humanité, le devoir, etc., ces simples signes de rapport entre les choses sont devenus des faits génériques, des réalités d'ordre supérieur. Les fantômes verbaux hantent le réel, nivellent les particularités, froissent les volontés excentriques[26].

La résistance à la légitimité de toute représentation prônée par les anarchistes, fût-elle politique ou littéraire, se trouve exprimée d'une manière concise dans l'article publié par l'écrivain Georges Darien en 1892, « Le roman anarchiste », par la constatation que la « stérilité » de la littérature vient du fait qu'elle « a été avant tout *parlementaire*. Oui, en face du parlementarisme de la tribune, se dresse le parlementarisme du livre. Pendant cent ans, on a bavardé ici, on a bavardé là »[27].

Il y a donc une corrélation entre le refus de toute représentation politique et le questionnement de l'usage du langage et de sa fonction représentative et

---

[23] « Les mots, les mots vides de sens, sont les geôliers des peuples modernes ; les principes, qui sont tous des phrases ridicules et mensongères, des enfilades de mots creux, sont les tortionnaires des nations » (Georges Darien, *La Belle France*, cité par Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »,* p. 1254).

[24] Guy Débord, *La société du spectacle*, §2, http://cras31.info/IMG/pdf/debord_guy_-_la_societe_du_spectacle-2.pdf, consulté le 28 avril 2016 . Bien qu'une présentation de la relation entre la célèbre analyse de Guy Débord de la société du spectacle et la critique anarchiste de la représentation ne soit pas le but de notre exposé, les points de convergence sont bien évidents et peuvent éclaircir les enjeux de la critique libertaire. Par exemple, quand le spectacle est défini comme « un rapport social entre des personnes, médiatisé par les images » (*Ibidem*, §4), cela rappelle la dénonciation anarchiste de l'état comme structure fictionnelle oppressive, issue d'un certain rapport mystifiée entre les individus.

[25] Dans le contexte de la critique anarchiste de la réification des instances du pouvoir dans les lois sociales, qui se rabattent sur le vécu comme interdits, Julia Kristeva parle des « sociétés nécropoles » (Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXème siècle : Lautréamont et Mallarmé*, Paris, Seuil, 1974, p. 435).

[26] Mécislas Goldberg apud Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 1018.

[27] Georges Darien apud Uri Eisenzweig, *Fictions de l'anarchisme*, p. 204.

dénotative. L'anarchisme s'avère être plutôt une théorie et une pratique de la signification qu'une doctrine politique[28].

D'autre part, il y a chez les anarchistes le « sentiment d'une impuissance langagière »[29], un « pessimisme épistémologique inhérent au discours fondateur de l'anarchisme »[30]. Ce pessimisme vient justement de l'ébranlement profond de la « confiance positive » dans la nature transparente du langage et la conscience que le fonctionnement qui lui est propre engendre (toujours) l'aliénation et l'oppression. Exposer cet écart, creuser à même cette crise, tracer une trajectoire de fuite du discours qui aboutirait soit à son abolition, soit à l'asignifiant, font partie du moment nihiliste de l'anarchisme, marquant la dynamique de la rupture qui lui est propre, son propre désastre, sa propre faille. L'asignifiance renvoie à l'a-socialité de l'anarchiste, à son rejet de toute communauté, à son désir rebelle de fuite et de destruction qui reste, peut-être, une de ses images les plus connues.

« Il semble ainsi, écrit Julia Kristeva, que certaines tendances de l'anarchisme loin de s'arrêter à la contestation des structures sociales et étatiques, revendiquent une transformation profonde de la conception du sujet parlant lui-même… »[31]. C'est justement cet esprit radical (voire même nihiliste) de contestation, qui appelle le « fonctionnement transversal du procès de signifiance »[32], la subversion esthétique, la mise à sac des « clôtures symboliques et sociales ». Et, peut-être, pourrait aussi expliquer l'affinité avouée des poètes symbolistes pour l'anarchisme. Sans vouloir entrer dans les détails du rapport qu'entretiennent les deux mouvements, il serait nécessaire de rappeler ici la fascination *littéraire* que les attentats à la bombe des anarchistes de la fin du XIXème siècle éveillent parmi les écrivains symbolistes[33]. Lors d'une conférence en 1894 en Angleterre, Mallarmé décrit son programme esthétique comme reprise dans l'ordre du texte des moyens de la bombe[34]. Les mots du poète, dit-il, doivent fonctionner comme des explosifs pour illuminer d'une « lueur sommaire » l'incompréhensibilité même qui scelle les mots dans leur propre opacité intransitive, muette, vide. Il faut ainsi se défaire de l'illusion de toute représentation, pour en éclairer la nature purement spectaculaire, fictive. De cette manière, l'intensité du geste aboutit au silence, suivant une ligne de fuite qui neutralise dans l'hermétisme la possibilité du sens :

---

[28] « Le problème de l'action dans le domaine social est donc avant tout un problème d'effort signifiant plutôt que de subversion politique, effort qui implique directement son sujet puisqu'il le constitue tout en l'excédant » (Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique,* p. 436).

[29] Uri Eisenzweig, *Fictions de l'anarchisme,* p. 154.

[30] *Ibidem*, p. 119.

[31] Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, pp. 426-427.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 421.

[33] Une plus détaillé présentation de cette relation est à trouver dans l'ouvrage d'Uri Eisenzweig, que nous avons déjà mentionné, *Fictions de l'anarchisme* (pp. 161-207), ou dans l'analyse faite par Julia Kristeva dans *La révolution du langage poétique* (pp. 421-441).

[34] Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, pp. 433-434.

une littérature non-représentative. Reste à noter que l'attentat auquel « fait signe »
Mallarmé dans son texte est celui d'Auguste Vaillant, qui, le 9 décembre 1893,
jette son engin explosif dans le *Parlement*.

L'esthétique symboliste semble thématiser cette intensité dénonciatrice et la
rupture de l'anarchisme, mais en même temps s'en éloigne, suivant une ligne de
fuite qui échoue dans un « trou noir »[35], se refermant sur soi hermétiquement,
écrasant sous son propre poids, sous sa propre intensité, tout point de conjonction
possible, toute échappée en-dehors.

Par contre, la critique anarchiste de la narration réaliste[36], qui renvoie à la
subversion d'un ordre social qui se veut « représentable et racontable »[37], conteste
bien les clôtures du récit, fût-il littéraire ou social, mais en faisant cela, garde à
l'intérieur du propre récit la tension « meurtrière » entre le silence de son abolition
et la parole tendue vers l'autre, vers l'inconnu. D'ailleurs, on ne peut pas
comprendre l'anarchisme si l'on considère séparément son moment nihiliste, sans
le joindre toujours à sa positivité utopique. Jamais de rupture sans ouverture
aventureuse vers l'inconnu. C'est justement pour cela que le penchant iconoclaste
des anarchistes ne s'est pas traduit en silence, mais a été, bien au contraire, fécond,
autant par ses propres productions que par ses infiltrations. Il faudrait donc
introduire cette implorante nuance au sujet de la critique de la représentation et du
langage, telle qu'elle apparaît formulée par Caroline Granier :

> Cependant, si une certaine forme de réalisme est vivement critiquée, ce n'est pas
> tant parce que le discours réaliste a pour but de *représenter* « la réalité », mais parce
> que cette représentation de « la réalité » vise à se faire passer pour le réel même. On
> trouve en effet de nombreuses attaques contre le courant naturaliste venant des
> écrivains libertaires. Mais en s'attaquant au naturalisme, les anarchistes ne s'attaquent
> pas directement au langage dénotatif, qui vise à représenter, mais ils s'en prennent au
> mirage de la reproductibilité et de la vérifiabilité du discours réaliste (qui sera plus tard

---

[35] On emprunte ici l'expression que Deleuze et Guattari utilisent pour désigner une ligne de fuite qui
échoue (*Mille Plateaux*, Paris, Minuit, 1980, p. 176).

[36] Une des plus parlants exemples du divorce de la littérature anarchiste de l'esthétique réaliste est
l'œuvre d'Octave Mirbeau qui écrit, surtout vers la fin de sa vie, des récits fragmentaires, recueils
« éclatés » qui ne présentent apparemment aucune disposition narrative, aucun dénouement. De
surcroît, les héros de ses derniers textes, qui ne racontent à proprement parler rien, sont son auto dans
« La 628-E2 » et son chien dans « Dingo. » Un fragment ultérieurement éliminé de la première édition
de « La 628-E2 », intitulée « La mort de Balzac » est en soi une déclaration équivoque d'admiration
et un adieu sarcastique, même cruel. Mirbeau nous présente le récit des derniers moments du grand
écrivain, mais c'est justement Balzac qui s'absente de l'histoire. Il se soustrait à une description
visuelle, même les mouleurs échouent après sa mort à lui prendre l'empreinte du visage. Seule l'odeur
de la mort remplit la maison et signale la fin de son agonie et le début d'une décomposition accélérée.
Pour une analyse plus détaillée de l'œuvre d'Octave Mirbeau, nous recommandons l'ouvrage de
Robert Ziegler, *The Nothing Machine. The Fiction of Octave Mirbeau*, Amsterdam – New York,
Rodopi, 2007.

[37] Uri Eisenzweig, *Fictions de l'anarchisme*, p. 158.

un des traits fondamentaux du « réalisme socialiste »). Ainsi l'antithèse du naturalisme n'est pas pour eux le symbolisme, mais bien plutôt *un réalisme qui se dénonce lui-même comme illusion* [je souligne][38].

La littérature anarchiste ne prône pas le silence, bien que cela soit une de ses tentations les plus intimes. Par contre, elle oppose un usage pur spectaculaire de la langue à un usage intensif qui pousserait les représentations à leur limite d'abolition, qui « fait vibrer les images »[39]. Les auteurs anarchistes restent pour cela des marginaux, des étrangers, difficiles à classifier, à saisir dans une formule littéraire[40]. Ils sont « en dehors »[41].

C'est justement dans *L'Endehors* qu'apparaît en 1892, l'article de Georges Darien qui décrit le mieux la démarche spécifique des écrivains anarchistes. « Et nous sommes des briseurs de formules autant que d'images »[42], écrit-il. L'expression n'indique point la formulation d'un programme esthétique, mais bien un positionnement avant tout éthique et une certaine compréhension de la pratique littéraire comme pratique indissociable du politique. Afin d'éviter tout contresens, tant la signification de certains mots dans l'usage commun reste mystifiée, il conviendrait de proposer en guise d'explication un exercice de reprise typiquement anarchiste en ce qui concerne les termes de « littérature » et de « politique ».

La contestation anarchiste de l'état et du principe de l'autorité doit toujours être comprise en conjonction avec la critique de la représentation, de l'abstraction et de l'idéalisme. Les penseurs anarchistes « classiques », tels que Bakounine ou Kropotkine, tracent l'origine de l'état dans la superstition religieuse[43]. La structure étatique comme telle, hiérarchisée et réifiée dans une réalité extérieure à la société, ne se constitue pas effectivement comme une imposition purement extérieure, une autre réalité qui viendrait d'un dehors transcendant. L'état est l'objectivation de la dynamique que les relations sociales elles-mêmes prennent, comme le notait l'anarchiste allemand Gustav Landauer. Dans ce cas, il s'agit de la forme de la « servitude volontaire », pour utiliser une expression de La Boétie, qui traduit la

---

[38] Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 483.

[39] Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 43.

[40] Une très intéressante analyse de la place de la littérature anarchiste dans l'histoire de la littérature (ou plutôt de son quasi-manque de place) est aussi à trouver dans le livre de Jesse Cohn, *Underground Passages. Anarchist resistance culture 1848-2011*, Oakland – Edinburgh – Baltimore, AK Press, 2014. Cohn définit le positionnement spécifique de la narration anarchiste comme étant cet « espace hétérotopique entre la réalité et l'utopie », cette « zone d'obscurité que le roman devrait éclairer » (p. 160). Ces formulations vont dans le même sens que la remarque d'Ursula K. LeGuin, qui définissait son écriture comme « un réalisme étrange », ce qui fait que la littérature des anarchistes soit généralement hors des cartes de l'histoire littéraire, difficile à encadrer. « Ici sont les dragons » écrit Jesse Cohn (p. 160).

[41] *L'endehors* est d'ailleurs aussi le nom d'une des plus influentes revues anarchistes et littéraires de la fin du XIXème siècle.

[42] Georges Darien apud Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 1106.

[43] Voir aussi l'analyse faite par Jesse Cohn, *Anarchism*, p. 70.

dynamique de la dépossession spectaculaire du commun au profit d'une élite. Les individus sont convaincus à aliéner leur pouvoir commun dans les mains d'une élite théocratique et militaire et arrivent à confondre le code communautaire avec la forme du privilège des élites. Cette substitution réclame d'ailleurs une vraie « foi » dans la réalité des représentations que la dépossession produit, et agit dans le sens d'une normalisation de l'inversion du rapport vie-abstraction. L'individu est constitué par rapport à ce fonctionnement aliénant comme sujet ou comme spectateur. Ces deux rôles – étant en effet seulement les spécifications d'un même rôle – correspondent aux seuls deux moyens de participation politique et sociale qui lui restent : assujettissement ou contemplation. La politique, à son origine désignant la participation directe des individus, la production toujours renouvelée, dynamique de leur être-ensemble, s'établit maintenant par délégation spectaculaire comme séparée, extérieure à ces relations. Elle devient ainsi l'affaire d'une élite « représentative », qui en a le droit de production et de légitimation.

De même, la littérature tend à prétendre une relevance extérieure à la communauté et à sa dynamique langagière et sociale. Elle se constitue comme le domaine séparée d'une élite qui légifère sur la parole, en réclamant le droit exclusif de légitimation, de la même manière que l'élite « parlementaire » légifère sur la société, en faisant passer ses « représentations » pour des réalités. Les mots de l'écrivain sont ainsi des « mots d'ordre », tandis que son miroir est moins descriptif que disciplinaire. L'institutionnalisation de la littérature est complice au même système de domination et de spoliation que le politique. La république des lettres (des lettrés) est une nécropole.

D'autre part, pour les écrivains anarchistes il n'y a pas d'écriture neutre. L'esthétique ne peut pas prétendre à une signification séparée de la vie, car chaque méthode littéraire est déjà « une hypothèse morale »[44], une vision de la réalité. C'est justement pour cela qu'une réflexion anarchiste sur le problème de l'écriture « devient moins une esthétique qu'une éthique de la parole »[45].

La littérature ne doit pas se soustraire à la vie, soit par la prétention de l'objectivité, soit par un hermétisme qui deviendrait l'exercice esthétique d'une élite[46]. Pour les anarchistes il faut bien qu'elle redevienne la pratique – toujours expérimentale, toujours située, toujours précaire – de la mise en commun des significations, un laboratoire ouvert du sens, qui n'est toujours que le tracé potentiellement subversif de nos rencontres et de nos ruptures.

---

[44] Jesse Cohn, *Anarchism*, p. 108.

[45] Bernard Gallina parlant de Jules Vallès, ancien communard et écrivain anarchiste, cité par Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 493.

[46] « S'il n'y a rien, dans ces livres [en vogue], qui y ait été glissé entre les pages comme un pistolet sous des chiffons pour servir d'arme à des douleurs jusque-là éparses et résignées, l'auteur n'a été qu'un gymnaste, un jongleur, un cabotin » (Jules Vallès, « À l'ami Paul Alexis », apud Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »,* p. 1116).

Se servir de la langue en « étranger », pousser les significations vers un point d'incandescence qui troublerait leur fonctionnement notionnel, pour les ouvrir vers un usage intensionnel les collant à « vie »[47], au vécu, fait partie de la pratique effective des écrivains anarchistes, de leur engagement, de la dynamique minorisante et rebelle de leur écriture. Une langue de « littérature mineure » qui développe ce fonctionnement discordant et intensif, se sert « de la syntaxe pour crier, donner au cri une syntaxe »[48]. Les écrivains anarchistes comprennent leur propre écriture comme un cri. « Je hurle à la mort », écrit Georges Darien dans *La Belle France* ; « sans aucune périphrase et sans métaphore… »[49], ajoute-t-il. Jules Vallès lance sa revue, le *Cri du Peuple* et espère que ces lecteurs crieront « ce que je n'ai pas crié »[50].

Pour les anarchistes ce ne sont pas les mots, les images ou les institutions qui sont en soi à dénoncer. Car notre vie ensemble ne peut pas se passer des histoires que nous nous disons, que nous élaborons, que nous subissons. Elles sont autant d'hypothèses que nous formulons sur notre « être-en-commun », autant de possibilités que nous exprimons, autant de brèches que nous imaginons. Ce qui est à contester est justement leur fonctionnement magique, qui les transforme en « geôliers », masquant leur inhérente précarité, leur artifice, leur désœuvrement, sous la prétention de l'achevé, de l'œuvre, de la loi.

C'est justement pour cela que l'engagement de l'écrivain ne peut pas différencier entre la littérature, l'écriture et la politique. Briser les formules établies comme éthique de l'engagement tient dans la même mesure de la récupération du politique dans le fonctionnement effectif de la communauté, que de la reprise du langage par tous comme « énonciation collective ». Car la politique est, comme la littérature, « l'affaire du peuple »[51].

Cela ne signifie guère simplement un remplacement du pouvoir, un devenir majeur du mineur, une « dictature du prolétariat », le rêve oppresseur des opprimés ; mais justement faire le rêve contraire, celui d'une reprise qui s'offrait à tous dans leur différence, dans leur devenir mineur, dans leur propre trajet d'exile.

Pour les écrivains anarchistes, l'éthique de l'engagement qui sous-tend l'esthétique de la rupture[52], implique aussi un rêve de renversement de l'usage purement spectaculaire du langage et un appel à l'action directe : ressaisir le langage et ne pas se laisser déposséder de nouveau, « gager la littérature sur le

---

[47] « La vie entendue par les anarchistes se réfère à la situation immédiate, vécue par l'individu – elle est fugitive et insaisissable » (Caroline Granier *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 1097).
[48] Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 42.
[49] Georges Darien apud Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, pp. 1113-1114.
[50] *Ibidem*, p. 1114.
[51] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 32.
[52] « L'esthétique marxiste se présente en tant que gardien de la tradition réaliste. L'esthétique anarchiste est le gardien de l'esprit de rupture » (André Reszler, *L'esthétique anarchiste*, Paris, PUF, 1973, p. 113).

réel »[53]. Ils rêvent parfois, en utopistes, d'un nouveau langage qui collerait à la réalité, un langage direct dont la fonction fraternelle de rassemblement communautaire ne sombrerait jamais dans la dépossession et dans l'usage magique, meurtrier, spectaculaire[54].

D'autre part, se réapproprier le langage doit devenir une pratique subversive et collective : prêter aux mots des significations nouvelles, faire un usage hérétique, barbare, minorisant de la langue des maîtres, (se) creuser sans cesse des points de départ et de fuite. Georges Darien, dans l'avant-propos de son roman *Le Voleur*[55]*,* avoue que le récit qu'il est en train de publier ne lui appartient pas. Il a volé le livre pendant un de ses voyages. Les mots appartiennent à un voleur. C'est lui le vrai auteur. Darien ne fait que s'emparer de son histoire et la signer comme s'il était lui l'écrivain. De cette manière il tend un piège à ses lecteurs car, en lisant son livre, ils sont moins ses spectateurs et plutôt ses *complices*, ceux qui, d'une certaine façon, prennent partie au vol, deviennent eux-mêmes des voleurs et sont invités à s'emparer des mots d'un étranger[56]. D'ailleurs, par les stratégies d'écriture qu'il déploie, le roman de Darien pourrait être considéré illustratif pour une certaine approche littéraire qu'on daignerait considérer comme anarchiste : établir des liens de solidarité, de complicité entre l'auteur et le lecteur, mise en question ironique de la place de l'auteur et de son autorité dans l'exposition[57], positionnement équivoque du récit qui invite à une lecture critique, plurielle, soupçonneuse.

Les critiques anarchistes proposent donc un positon de « tiers inclus » face à la fausse alternative qui opposait l'art pour l'art et la littérature engagée comme littérature à thèse. Ils proposent une littérature révolutionnaire[58] comme pratique mineure, éloignée d'un matérialisme réaliste stérile et aussi d'une pratique idéalisant l'esthétique. Ils proposent une « littérature de combat » non-dogmatique, qui mettrait toujours en question et en jeu ses propres présupposés. Ce n'est pas une littérature de maîtres, qui s'évertue à produire des œuvres accomplies, mais un

---

[53] Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 1091.

[54] « Faire une langue neuve, qui soit bien la peau de la pensée nouvelle et colle juste sur sa chair » (Jules Vallès apud Caroline Granier *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 1105).

[55] Georges Darien, *Le Voleur*, Paris, P.-V. Stock éditeur, 1898, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_Voleur_(Darien), consulté le 21 avril 2016.

[56] « En fait, ce n'est pas tellement le livre qui est subversif, c'est le lecteur qui peut le devenir, le livre n'étant qu'une occasion de découvrir la subversion qui est en soi » (Denis Langlois, apud Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 1116).

[57] L'auteur est seulement le voleur qui dépossède un autre voleur, celui qui partage le butin de son « crime » avec ses complices, les lecteurs, eux-mêmes des voleurs : l'écriture comme « agencement collectif d'énonciation », selon l'expression de Deleuze et Guattari.

[58] Caroline Granier propose l'utilisation de l'expression « littérature de combat » pour désigner le positionnement éthique spécifique des écrivains libertaires, afin d'éviter les significations liées à un engagement idéologique qui orienterait la création (Voir Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 23).

exercice de reprise individuelle et de pratique langagière à valeur collective : politique et communautaire ; un « idéalisme critique » comme le nommait Jesse Cohn.[59]

À l'instar de Kropotkine et de Proudhon, Bernard Lazare propose le terme « art social »[60] qui désignerait une littérature de témoignage réaliste, comme *forme d'action* et dynamique prospective. Il s'agit de réunir dans la même forme fluide une description « à même les choses », à une fonction utopique comme extrapolation situationnelle du possible. Il faut ajouter au cela un refus de « l'œuvre », comprise comme accomplissement et maîtrise de l'écriture, et la dénonciation de tout « définitif », de toute fixation, surtout la sienne, comme la forme par excellence du fictif thanatique se renfermant sur soi.

Les idées sont à exposer dans leur finitude même et dans leur situation, pour les rendre lisibles et contestables. Dans l'écriture et dans la lecture, on risque toujours son point de vue, on l'expose à sa limite sans cesse, on le met en jeu. La fonction utopique de la littérature anarchiste ne tient donc pas d'un programme à réaliser, mais d'une disposition première vers l'autre, vers l'inconnu, qui tente un dialogue non-fondateur toujours à reprendre[61]. C'est un rêve de communauté, une exigence utopique toujours à réaliser, car son mouvement propre est justement le refus des lieux-commun, du projet, du système, de la maîtrise.

Le fonctionnement « utopique » de l'écriture et de la lecture anarchistes ne tient donc pas d'une production effective des textes utopiques, mais d'une certaine disposition de l'imaginaire, d'une pratique « littéraire » qui ne concerne plus seulement le texte ; d'une façon de rêver qu'Alain Pessin définit comme « rêverie anarchiste »[62]: « Ainsi est définie, par cette puissance de captation, *mais aussi de rupture et d'invention* de la vie, l'acte psychique de la rêverie »[63].

Les anarchistes, écrit Alain Pessin, sont des poètes nocturnes dont la rêverie actualise un « schème de la descente »[64], de la plongée, du renversement. Elle est doublement une rêverie de l'enfouissement communionnel et de la vocation du rejet ; un rêve de fuite, de l'exil. On pourrait dire qu'il s'agit d'un besoin de ressaisissement conçu et vécu comme le rêve de se perdre.

Une des plus anciennes hypostases des anarchistes est celle du trimardeur[65], du nomade qui prend (qui s'abandonne à) la route. Les anarchistes sont les « sans-

---

[59] Jesse Cohn, *Anarchism*, p. 170.
[60] *Ibidem*.
[61] « Nous n'avons point à tracer d'avance le tableau de la société future : c'est à l'action spontanée de tous les hommes libres qu'il appartient de la créer et de lui donner sa forme, d'ailleurs incessamment changeante comme tous les phénomènes de la vie » (Elisée Reclus, « Pourquoi nous sommes anarchistes ? », apud Caroline Granier, « *Nous sommes les briseurs de formules* », pp. 808-809).
[62] Alain Pessin, *La rêverie anarchiste 1848-1914*, Lyon, ACL, 1999.
[63] *Ibidem*, p. 11.
[64] *Ibidem*, p. 146.
[65] *Ibidem*, pp. 75-85.

gîtes », les désœuvrés, ceux qui errent et qui se font étrangers, rêvant l'ailleurs. Leur trajectoire n'a pas une destination, mais est plutôt l'exercice du *compagnonnage de la route*, d'une *fraternité en route*, rejetant tout établissement. L'anarchiste en trimard n'est pas quand-même l'image de l'errance absolue. Tant s'en faut. Une telle pratique, un tel rêve ne serait qu'une autre projection idéalisante et mystifiante d'un sens, une autre clôture pieuse, un autre « projet ». Plutôt, il est « l'étranger qui passe, *mais il est toujours saisi à l'instant – qui peut se prolonger – de la pause, instant qui précède le départ* ou achève l'arrivée… »[66] [je souligne]. Leur communauté, fulguration ou espacement d'un *nous* précaire et frêle, en train de se défaire, déjà toujours défait, est la communauté « négative », d'après la formule proposée par Georges Bataille et reprise par Maurice Blanchot : « la communauté de ceux qui n'ont pas de communauté »[67].

La fonction utopique de la littérature, telle que l'anarchisme la thématise, dépasse et conteste l'accomplissement d'un texte ou une expérience purement textuelle. Elle est une pratique de la rupture et de l'ouverture radicale qui témoigne d'un désir de vivre autrement et de la nécessité d'imaginer toujours des nouvelles possibilités du vivre-ensemble. Si l'utopie classique est premièrement une utopie textuelle, un rêve de fraternité qui se fige dans un mythe de la communauté[68] fortement prescriptif, totalitaire, l'utopie anarchiste est une utopie brisée, une utopie des fuyards du texte, des marginaux de la littérature et de la société. Alain Pessin la nomme « la voie noire de l'utopie »[69]. Elle invite à s'arracher à la convention des mots et des institutions, elle fait « fuir » les sens établis et les stéréotypies des abstractions en les réduisant à des expressions mineures. C'est un bouleversement des abris symboliques, qui (se) creuse des béances, pure tension d'une « ouverture sur le rien »[70]. Ce versant nihiliste est doublé par l'affirmation positive de l'inconnu comme aventure, comme esquive et comme création continuelle contre les pièges de l'accompli, de l'œuvre[71]. La fonction utopique de la littérature passe dans la pratique effective, comme recherche expérimentale « qui rejette le plan d'une société définitivement parfaite comme mythologie grossière »[72]. Il ne s'agit pas d'une grande rupture révolutionnaire qui

---

[66] *Ibidem*, p. 83. L'image de la suspension qui décrit cette formule du compagnonnage de la route, rappelle une autre « scène », cette fois désignant chez Nancy et Blanchot la « communauté littéraire » : « On y ajoutera le rappel d'un épisode lui aussi furtif et comme incongru qui a eu lieu plus haut dans le texte : Blanchot a comparé la 'communauté littéraire' à la réunion 'des participants hâtifs de la Pâque juive' (qui doivent, comme on sait, partager le repas *debout et en tenue de voyage*) » (Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désavouée*, Paris, Galilée, 2014, p. 87).

[67] Maurice Blanchot, *La communauté inavouable*, Paris, Minuit, 1983, p. 9.

[68] Alain Pessin, *L'imaginaire utopique aujourd'hui*, Paris, PUF, 2001, p. 130.

[69] *Ibidem*, p. 143.

[70] *Ibidem*.

[71] Alain Pessin parle également d'une transition que l'utopie anarchiste marque : les « utopies de verrouillage » sont remplacées par les « utopies d'aventure » (*Ibidem*, p. 216).

[72] *Ibidem*, p. 207.

s'accomplirait dans une re-totalisation d'un monde, mais d'une « stratégie interstitielle »[73] du partiel, d'une dynamique de micro-ruptures permanentes : ouvrir, trouver, créer des brèches comme « espaces des libertés inconnus »[74] ou « zones autonomes temporaires »[75].

La littérature anarchiste, engagée, mineure, « en-dehors », semble formuler, par son positionnement spécifique et par la réflexion inouïe qu'elle propose sur le rôle de l'écriture et la responsabilité de l'écrivain, par le rêve qu'elle fait des mots et de la vie, par l'exigence communautaire qu'elle met en jeu, une pratique invoquée par Jean-Luc Nancy comme « communisme littéraire »[76]. Elle désigne bien cette « communauté du mythe interrompu », ou son « communisme sans communauté »[77] en tant que pratique de la rupture qui suspend tout accomplissement fusionnel.

L'anarchisme n'est, à proprement parler, qu'une communauté littéraire, une pratique du littéraire dans ce sens même de la déchirure qui « tourne de toutes parts la communauté au dehors »[78], la met en route. Il dénonce comme fictions les récits de rassemblement, les contes qui promettent un abri. En faisant cela, l'anarchisme, en tant qu'écriture et pratique, expose la nature brisée de toute communauté, il fait l'aveu de « l'inavouable » dont parlait Blanchot. Cet inavouable est d'ailleurs aussi son exigence même : le besoin de s'accomplir dans l'inaccompli.

En même temps, la littérature anarchiste est un refus de la littérature, son écriture est une déchirure exposant le littéraire lui-même, s'exposant comme littéraire. Elle revoie toujours à un vécu, à une pratique de la « comparution », où les êtres singuliers se partagent sur leur limite, qui est la limite de leur différence et de leur être en commun. Jamais, avertit Nancy, leur être n'est un commun séparée, une essence absolument immanente et comme extérieure. Le commun de la communauté n'est que ce qu'on peut chaque fois mettre en commun sur cette limite jamais à franchir qui est la limite de notre singularité et de notre finitude. Le commun n'est jamais une mise en scène d'un être figé, d'un récit de rassemblement, mais bien au contraire, il est cette existence qu'on partage en route, toujours située, toujours singulière et sauvage. La communauté, comme la

---

[73] *Ibidem*, p. 189.
[74] Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désavouée*, p. 155.
[75] Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z. Zone autonome temporaire*, traduit de l'anglais par Christine Téguier, Paris, Éditions de l'éclat, 1997, http://www.lyber-eclat.net/lyber/taz.html, consulté le 30 avril 2016.
[76] « …quelque chose qui serait le partage de la communauté dans et par son écriture, sa littérature » (Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désœuvrée*, Paris, Christian Bourgois éditeur, 1999, p. 67).
[77] *Ibidem*, p. 177.
[78] *Ibidem*, p. 152.

littérature, est le rassemblement des inconnus avant le départ. Pas une explication réciproque, mais un mouvement d'exposition, précaire, intense, risquant[79.]

Une écriture engagée signifie justement cette pratique tendue vers l'autre – l'autre de son écriture, l'autre de sa destination inconnue – où s'inscrit l'exigence communautaire, sa déchirure. La littérature anarchiste propose donc moins un exercice de style, qu'une résistance : la résistance à l'usage magique des mots et à sacralisation de la communauté. Elle est l'inscription non exemplaire de cette interruption dont la fonction utopique inscrit cette béance, ce partage, comme l'avènement d'une communauté qui ne fera jamais œuvre, qui ne réussira jamais, une « communauté par retrait » et même « par séparation »[80.] Ce n'est pas un projet politique, si l'on comprend cela comme une pensée d'une autre totalisation. Puisque l'anarchisme ne propose pas une autre figuration d'un récit communautaire, un système des finalités, mais une éthique et une méthodologie expérimentale, une pratique de « l'articulation » (énonciation) collective, qui est simultanément une reprise individuelle, une rupture et l'exposition à cette rupture. Sa « politique » n'est pas prescriptive, son écriture n'est pas idéologique et sa littérature n'est plus « littéraire. »

Nancy parle de la singularité de chacun comme « voix » ; cette singularité qui n'est pas une identité, qui ne (se) représente pas, mais se présente à sa limite d'exposition, de comparution. Cette voix n'est pas un discours, mais la reprise d'un « cri », d'une intensité comblant toute image : pas une transmission de significations, mais la contagion d'une passion de la singularité.[81] La voix de la littérature, de la communauté est justement cette voix plurielle « qui s'articule dans l'interruption et de l'interruption elle-même »[82], en tant que dialogue non-fondateur

---

[79] « Quand l'homme comprend, passionnellement, que la vie doit tendre, non plus à la compréhension de l'existence, mais à sa manifestation, aucun dogme ne l'empêche d'agir, aucune défaillance ne le menace. Les sociologues ont inventé des lois sociales, les politiciens ont créé des programmes de société, les moralistes ont forgé des règles de conduite. L'adoration de la vie ne peut admettre aucune loi fixe de l'existence, aucune forme rationnelle du devenir. Tout est en mouvement, il faut que tout – à tout prix – puisse se manifester, se ressaisir, sombrer, féconder, disparaître. L'émotion de vivre, qui dépasse toute expression, qui est calme comme le ciel et embrasse la mort et la naissance, le rire et la larme, conçoit l'apparition de nouvelles foules, l'écroulement des empires, l'accalmie et la tempête. Les hommes menés par elle ne déraisonnent pas pour convaincre les peuples d'une vérité, d'une forme rationnelle. Ils ne disent pas que comprendre c'est tout, car ils ont appris que le savoir est bien peu de chose. Au contraire, ils admettent les choses qui orientent, les confusions qui précisent, les errements qui permettent de se ressaisir » (Mécislas Goldberg, apud Caroline Granier, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules »*, p. 1019).

[80] Pour une exposition plus détaillée de ces notions apparemment contradictoires, voir aussi l'essai de Gustav Landauer, « Through Separation to Community », in Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*. Édité et traduit de l'allemand par Gabriel Kuhn, Oakland, PM Press, 2010, pp. 94-108.

[81] Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désœuvrée*, p. 81.

[82] *Ibidem*, pp. 156-157.

(*an-archique*)[83] et non-mythique. Jamais une seule Voix[84] parlant pour tous, ni la cohésion de toutes les voix dans une seule, mais l'agencement précaire et suspendu des voix plurielles et singuliers qui se parlent, qui se communiquent leur singularité même, leur non-commun. Une telle écriture ne peut plus avoir ou prétendre une légitimité mythique, celle que lui donnerait le récit fondateur d'un pouvoir ou d'une institution littéraire. Elle est « illégitime, jamais autorisée, risquée, exposée à la limite »[85]. Car en reconnaissant la seule exigence communautaire comme exigence de l'interruption, elle ne peut plus être considérée comme « un anarchisme de complaisance »[86], écrit Nancy ; mais bien anarchique à proprement parler, oserons nous ajouter.

Le communisme littéraire dont parle Nancy et son exigence communautaire semblent se spécifier comme anarchisme littéraire, prônant un affranchissement vers l'inconnu, la nécessité d'une pensée et d'une écriture déliées, défaites de leur accomplissement textuel, siège clos d'une légifération qui n'est qu'une langue morte (et de la mort). Il y a selon Nancy une tâche indissociablement philosophique et communautaire, donc littéraire et politique, celle « d'exposer l'inexposable en »[87]. C'est justement la tâche de l'engagement de la pensée, du « gagement » de la littérature au réel, au risque, au désœuvrement. Il ajoute ensuite :

> Le „communisme littéraire" indique au moins ceci : que la communauté, dans sa résistance infinie à tout ce qui veut l'achever (dans tous les sens du mot), signifie une exigence politique irrépressible, et que cette exigence politique exige à son tour quelque chose de la « littérature », l'inscription de notre résistance infinie. *Cela ne définit ni une politique, ni une écriture, car cela renvoie au contraire à ce qui résiste à la définition et au programme, qu'ils soient politiques, esthétiques ou philosophiques* [je souligne][88].

Une analyse plus en profondeur des infiltrations anarchistes dans la pensée de la communauté, telle que Nancy ou Blanchot nous proposent, n'est pas quand-même notre but à présent. Aussi, il serait fallacieux de clamer une influence dans le sens fort du mot. Plutôt, le rapprochement nous sert pour éclaircir des points de convergence et nous aide ainsi à les découvrir comme points de passage, de

---

[83] Une traduction presque littérale de l'anarchisme serait « ce qui n'a pas de fondement, commencement ou sans origine ». L'ancien mot grec ἀρχή signifie, dans une de ses acceptions, fondement.

[84] L'auteur est le voleur qui présente à sa bande de complices le butin d'un vol, en les invitant à se réapproprier eux-mêmes des mots. Son articulation, son énonciation, sa voix sont seulement ce qui, « chaque fois, forme un point d'exposition, *trace une intersection* de limites sur laquelle il y a exposition » (*Ibidem*, p. 223).

[85] *Ibidem*, p. 173.

[86] Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désœuvrée*, p. 173.

[87] *Ibidem*, p. 230.

[88] *Ibidem*, p. 198.

traduction. Ce que nous proposons c'est une « lecture » elle-même inaccomplie, anarchique, essayant de formuler d'une manière expérimentale des possibles trajectoires de réflexion et de recherche.

L'anarchisme, nous avons essayé de montrer, ne se constitue pas comme un corps unitaire d'ouvrages et d'interprétations. Il est plutôt une méthode expérimentale de faire et de défaire les choses, de les rêver, soit qu'on parle de la littérature, de la politique ou de la pensée. Ne plus parler la langue des maîtres, ouvrir la langue à des nouveaux usages, éliberer l'imaginaire afin de pouvoir repenser les relations humaines sans l'intermédiaire des formes établies et surétablies, contester l'autorité comme modèle social, font tous partie d'une rêverie anarchiste qui fascine et inquiète en même temps. L'enjeu de la littérature anarchiste n'est plus un simple exercice esthétique, mais une pratique à proprement parler éthique ; une réappropriation du langage comme pédagogie de la reprise individuelle et ouverture d'un espace communautaire expérimental. La subversion, la ruse, la marginalité en font bien partie. Nous pouvons d'autant plus identifier une certaine vision anarchiste et son exigence communautaire qui inspirent, traversent et corrodent les territoires établis de la littérature et de la politique. C'est plutôt une « rivière d'anarchie »[89] qui ne peut pas être fixée, ayant un fonctionnement hérétique, minorisant et transversal. Du symbolisme au dadaïsme et au surréalisme, l'infiltration anarchiste traverse aussi la contre-culture, contamine le poststructuralisme français, inspire des insurgences antiautoritaires et nourrit l'esthétique contestataire et radicale des mouvements punk et métal. C'est justement pour cela qu'on ne devrait pas penser l'anarchisme comme une expression culturelle, esthétique ou politique strictement déterminée historiquement, mais plutôt comme une brèche du positive dans le corps clos du récit, de l'histoire, exposant la possibilité d'une chance. La « crise de la représentation » n'est pas dans ce contexte une crise d'un centre vacant, à saisir pour un nouveau fondement du pouvoir, à occuper par le récit « correct ». L'anarchisme est surtout une anticipation subversive d'un équivoque et héraclitien devenir autre. Il assume ses propres contingences et ses dépendances contextuelles et aussi la tâche commune d'une reprise, comme chance et pratique éthique.

---

[89] « A river of Anarchy » écrivait Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, London – New York, Harper Perennial, 2008.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

BEY, Hakim, *T.A.Z. Zone autonome temporaire*. Traduit de l'anglais par Christine Téguier, Paris, Éditions de l'éclat, 1997, http://www.lyber-eclat.net/lyber/taz.html, consulté le 30 avril 2016.

BLANCHOT, Maurice, *La communauté inavouable*, Paris, Minuit, 1983.

COHN, Jesse, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Politics*, Cranbury, SUP, 2006.

COHN, Jesse, *Underground Passages. Anarchist resistance culture 1848-2011*, Oakland – Edinburgh – Baltimore, AK Press, 2014.

COLSON, Daniel, *Petit lexique philosophique de l'anarchisme. De Proudhon à Deleuze*, Paris, Le livre de poche, 2001.

CREAGH, Ronald, *L'imagination dérobée*, Lyon, ACL, 2004.

DARIEN, Georges, *Le Voleur*, Paris, P.-V. Stock éditeur, 1898, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_Voleur_(Darien), consulté le 21 avril 2016.

DELEUZE, Gilles, Félix GUATTARI, *Kafka – Pour une littérature mineure*, Paris, Minuit, 1975.

EISENZWEIG, Uri, *Fictions de l'anarchisme*, Paris, Christian Bourgois éditeur, 2001.

FAURE, Sébastien (éd.), *Encyclopédie anarchiste*, Limoges, E. Rivet, 1934, http://www.encyclopedie-anarchiste.org/, consulté le 26 avril 2016.

FRIGERIO, Vittorio, *La Littérature de l'anarchisme. Anarchistes de lettres et lettrés face à l'anarchisme*, Grenoble, ELLUG, 2014.

GRANIER, Caroline, *« Nous sommes les briseurs de formules » : Les écrivains anarchistes en France à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle »*. Thèse de doctorat en lettres modernes, sous la direction de Claude Mouchard, Paris, Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis, 2003.

KRISTEVA, Julia, *La révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXème siècle : Lautréamont et Mallarmé*, Paris, Seuil, 1974.

LANDAUER, Gustav, « Through Separation to Community », in Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*. Edité et traduit de l'allemand par Gabriel Kuhn, Oakland, PM Press, 2010.

MUȘOIU, Panait, « Metoda experimentală în politică » [« La méthode expérimentale en politique »], *Revista Ideei*, 1910, 100, pp. 137-145, https://revistaideei.wordpress.com/category/revista-ideei-1910/, consulté le 26 avril 2016.

MAITRON, Jean, *Ravachol et les anarchistes*, Paris, Julliard, 1970.

MARICOURT, Thierry, *Histoire de la littérature libertaire en France*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1990.

MARSHALL, Peter, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, London – New York, Harper Perennial, 2008.

NANCY, Jean-Luc, *La communauté désavouée*, Paris, Galilée, 2014.

NANCY, Jean-Luc, *La communauté désœuvrée*, Paris, Christian Bourgois éditeur, 1999.

PESSIN, Alain, *L'imaginaire utopique aujourd'hui*, Paris, PUF, 2001.

PESSIN, Alain, *La rêverie anarchiste 1848 – 1914*, Lyon, ACL, 1999.

RESZLER, André, *L'esthétique anarchiste*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1973.

ZIEGLER, Robert, *The Nothing Machine. The Fiction of Octave Mirbeau*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2007.

LITERATURE, COMMUNITY AND UTOPIA: OUTLINES OF AN ANARCHIST READING
(*Abstract*)

Known mostly for its social critique, for its preaching of insurgency or for its so-called utopian imagining of the future stateless communities, anarchism has always been involved in the literary and theoretical discussions of its time. It should be of no surprise then that anarchism has developed with and out of its extremely prolific literary production. Of course, we cannot speak of literary anarchism as of one unitary or coherent body of work. However, we can speak of it in the sense of a deleuzian minor literature. The study tries to illustrate, on one hand, the specific understanding that anarchism has regarding literature as a method and as an ethic engagement; and, also, its understanding of literature in relation to community. The examples are taken mainly from 19th century French anarchist literature and critique. The paper does not aim to an exhaustive presentation, but rather wishes to formulate some possible further research directions. On the other hand, using some of the concepts presented by Jean-Luc Nancy concerning community and literature, we propose a reading of anarchist theory and literature, underlining the possible contact and translation points with Nancy's perspective and direction of thought.

Keywords: anarchism, anarchist literature, utopia, community, minor literature, politics.
.

LITERATURĂ, COMUNITATE ŞI UTOPIE: SCHIŢA UNEI LECTURI ANARHISTE
(*Rezumat*)

Cunoscut mai degrabă pentru critica sa socială, pentru îndemnurile la insurgenţă sau pentru imaginarea viitoarelor comunităţi aşa-zis utopice, anarhismul a fost mereu implicat în discuţiile literare şi teoretice ale timpului său. Nu ar trebui deci să fie o surpriză faptul că anarhismul s-a dezvoltat alături de o bogată producţie literară proprie. Bineînţeles, nu putem vorbi de literatura anarhistă ca de un corp de opere coerente şi unitare. Totuşi, putem vorbi de anarhism în sensul deleuzian de literatură minoră. Studiul încearcă să ilustreze, pe de-o parte, înţelegerea specifică pe care anarhismul o are în ceea ce priveşte literatura, în sensul ei de metodă şi anagajament etic; şi, de asemenea, înţelegerea literaturii în relaţie cu comunitatea. Exemplele folosite sunt luate în marea lor parte din literatura şi critica anarhistă franceză a secolului al XIX-lea. Lucrarea nu-şi propune o prezentare exhaustivă, ci mai degrabă doreşte să formuleze câteva posibile direcţii de cercetare ulterioare. Pe de altă parte, folosindu-ne de câteva din conceptele prezentate de Jean-Luc Nancy în ceea ce priveşte comunitatea şi literatura, propunem o lectură a literaturii şi teoriei anarhiste, care să sublinieze posibilele puncte de traducere şi contact cu direcţia de gândire deschisă de Nancy.

Cuvinte-cheie: anarhism, literatură anarhistă, utopie, comunitate, literatura minoră, politică.

„GRUPUL CRITICATAC PRIVEŞTE COMUNITATEA CU OCHI RĂI”

Interviu cu ALEX CISTELECAN realizat de ALEX GOLDIŞ

Alex Cistelecan (n. 1979). Eseist, filosof. Doctor în teorie politică la LUISS University din Roma, lector la Universitatea „Petru Maior” din Târgu Mureş. Autor al volumului *Viaţa ca film porno. Protocoalele Lacan* (2007), a editat, împreună cu Veronica Lazăr, *Ghid practic de teorie critică* (2010), împreună cu Aakash Singh Rathore, *Wronging Rights? Philosophical Challenges for Human Rights* (2011) şi, împreună cu Andrei State, *Plante exotice. Teoria şi practica marxiştilor români* (2015). Este unul dintre cei mai activi traducători ai noii gândiri critice italiene (Giorgio Agamben, Antonio Negri, Emanuelle Coccia, Vittorio Possenti), membru fondator al asociaţiei Proiect Protokoll şi coordonator al platformei CriticAtac, „grup de critică socială, intelectuală şi politică” cu orientare de stânga.

Alex Goldiş (n. 1982). Critic şi istoric literar. Lector la Facultatea de Litere a Universităţii „Babeş-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca. Autor al volumelor *Critica în tranşee: de la realismul socialist la autonomia esteticului* (2011) şi *Sincronizarea criticii româneşti postbelice în deceniile opt şi nouă: teorii, metode, critici* (2013). A fost redactor la *Echinox*, *Verso*, *Cultura*, *Vatra*, *Steaua* şi a colaborat la cele mai importante reviste culturale din ţară. Pentru *Critica în tranşee: de la realismul socialist la autonomia esteticului* a primit în 2012 premiul CriticAtac acordat cărţilor care „tratează teme sociale, politice şi ideologice relevante pentru societatea românească de azi”.

Alex Goldiş: Aţi formulat, în articolele dvs., rezerve atât faţă de gândirea postcolonială, cât şi faţă de cea decolonială. Există o grupare teoretică actuală de care vă simţiţi apropiat?

Alex Cistelecan: Din fericire, mai există şi alte direcţii de gândire în teoria contemporană, în afară de post- şi decolonialism, deci nu-i vorba că n-aş avea de unde alege. Deşi, în ce o priveşte mai ales pe cea din urmă, mărturisesc că oarecum simpla ei existenţă relativ populară şi faptul că e luată în serios ca *theory* mi se par ceva simptomatic pentru un fenomen mai de amploare, şi anume epuizarea vestitei *Theory* ca paradigmă generală a filosofiei continentale, rol pe care îl ocupă de vreo cincizeci de ani încoace. Poate că toate marile şcoli şi curente filosofice sfârşesc, în cele din urmă, într-o moarte mai degrabă ridicolă decât tragică (fie prin instituţionalizarea şi rigidizarea lor totală, fie – dimpotrivă – prin radicalizarea lor

eretică), deci n-ar trebui să ne mire sau deranjeze prea tare dacă şi *Theory* păţeşte la fel. Or, prin *patchwork*-ul său aleatoriu şi inconsistent de „gândeme" poststructuraliste, prin radicalizarea idealismului deja inerent acestei platforme de gândire şi, nu în ultimul rând, prin rudimentaritatea atât de stridentă a construcţiei sale teoretice şi stilistice, cred că într-adevăr, într-un sens, în decolonialism supravieţuieşte şi moare în chip amuzant întreaga *Theory*, măcar în măsura în care aruncă o lumină foarte bizară, foarte decredibilizantă, asupra celorlalte versiuni de teorii continentale contemporane. Ceea ce mă obligă să mă contrazic deja cu prima propoziţie de la care am pornit – nu, într-un fel, nu simt că ar fi prea multe de ales din teoria actuală – dar despre toate astea plănuiesc să scriu mai pe larg în curând. Paradigma de la care mă revendic în mijlocul atâtor decepţii a rămas teoria marxistă, sub al cărei farmec descopăr că mă aflu deja de vreo 7-8 ani, cam de când am rupt-o cu teoria lacaniană destul de abrupt şi totodată cam inoportun, în măsura în care eram fix în mijlocul unei teze doctorale despre „o teorie lacaniană a birocraţiei". (Am susţinut teza, nu-i vorbă, şi în continuare mă felicit pentru această demonstraţie surprinzătoare chiar şi pentru mine de abilităţi sofistice – cum să construieşti şi argumentezi plauzibil ceva în care nu mai crezi deloc –, dar tocmai această aplicabilitate infinită şi acest formalism atotgenerator al lacanianismului e ceea ce m-a speriat). Dar nici în interiorul marxismului n-am rămas neapărat „la locul meu", ci am alunecat cumva de la abstract la concret, de la idealism la materialism: de la o primă febleţe pentru *Wertkritik* şi dantelăriile conceptuale ale teoriei formei-valoare (Postone, Kurtz dintre contemporani), la analiza mai empirică, istorizantă şi sociologizantă a marxismului politic şi a materialismului istoric în general. Ceea ce mă face să nici nu pot da prea multe „nume mari" de autori actuali. Ellen Meiksins-Wood şi Perry Anderson ar fi contemporanii mei preferaţi – dar cel din urmă nu e neapărat un materialist-istoric ortodox, iar cea dintâi, din păcate, a murit de curând. Dintre descoperirile mele recente cele mai spectaculoase, aş face *name droping* cu Sebastiano Timpanaro şi Ernest Mandel – dar şi ei sunt de prin anii '70. Să mai spun de Lukács?

A. G.: Se poate vorbi de un deficit al gândirii teoretice de stânga în societatea românească? E marginalizat intelectualul de stânga în mediile intelectuale (mediul academic, diferite platforme de publicare etc.)?

A. C.: Sunt două chestiuni diferite aici şi aş începe cu cea din urmă, pentru că pare mai simplă. Cred că există un dezechilibru evident între prezenţa şi mobilitatea în spaţiul public a intelectualilor de dreapta şi a celor de stânga. Dar n-aş spune că e vorba de marginalizare. Până la urmă e normal ca, pe măsură ce societatea devine tot mai articulată ideologic – şi ultimii ani, de la Băsescu încoace, asta au însemnat, cel puţin la dreapta: o articulare tot mai clară din punct de vedere ideologic –, instituţiile şi revistele să devină tot mai compacte şi mai monocolore.

Altfel spus, e, dacă nu firesc, măcar inevitabil ca revistele şi instituţiile de dreapta să promoveze aproape exclusiv intelectuali de dreapta şi să se producă astfel o despărţire a apelor. Ce nu-i la fel de firesc şi inevitabil este ca stânga să aibă atât de puţine instituţii, resurse şi platforme de publicare similare. E o discrepanţă uriaşă între puzderia de ONG-uri şi institute şi centre de dreapta, cu finanţări solide şi cu un *revolving door* mereu deschis spre sfera politică şi antreprenorială, şi peisajul dezolant de la stânga, cu câteva ONG-uri veşnic semi-precare, cel mult două mici edituri, un departament universitar cucerit în nişte împrejurări cu totul contingente şi câteva site-uri prost finanţate sau nefinanţate şi care apar şi dispar în funcţie de disponibilitatea gratuită a câtorva oameni (de obicei aceiaşi). Ca să ne mai îndulcim puţin amărăciunea, putem spune că acest tablou nu-i specific doar României – stânga e şi din punct de vedere instituţional în reflux în mai toată Europa. Ba, în comparaţie cu restul Estului (Ucraina, Ungaria, Polonia), încă nici nu stăm chiar atât de rău.

Ceea ce mă conduce la prima întrebare, mai generală: dacă există un deficit al gândirii teoretice de stânga în societatea românească. Există, desigur, dar la fel ca în orice societate. Nu cred că există sau a existat vreodată o societate pe deplin conştientă politic şi articulată ideologic, o societate fără falsă conştiinţă şi care să-şi fie cu totul transparentă ei înseşi. E oarecum în firea lucrurilor, ca să zic aşa, decurge din chiar mecanismul asocial de socializare specific societăţii capitaliste un efect de progresivă ocultare a societăţii în dimensiunea ei materialist-istorică, aşadar ca totalitate (subiect şi structură totodată) aflată în mişcare şi în contradicţie. Din această perspectivă, putem spune, aşa cum îi plăcea lui Žižek să spună, că teoria marxistă împărtăşeşte cu psihanaliza o aceeaşi condiţie paradoxală, de a fi teoria care explică de ce practica ei nu e posibilă – cel puţin deocamdată. Acelaşi mecanism obiectiv pe care teoria marxistă îl plasează la baza mecanismului de reproducere a societăţii capitaliste (fetişismul mărfii, reificarea relaţiilor de bază ale societăţii ca totalitate contradictorie) e şi cel care explică de ce această teorie nu poate fi spontan înţeleasă şi asumată de societate, de ce, în raport cu ea, societatea se plasează în poziţie de falsă conştiinţă şi e, astfel, mereu în întârziere faţă de propriile ei posibilităţi materiale de emancipare. O falsă conştiinţă care nu e depăşită decât fie prin mijloace violente (avangarda revoluţionară), fie paşnice, prin mersul obiectiv al istoriei, însă doar atunci când e prea târziu. Dar dincolo de această condiţie pare-se transcendentală (de fapt istorică: specifică lumii capitaliste) de necoincidenţă dintre societate şi înţelegerea ei teoretică sau conştiinţa ei politică, trebuie să precizăm că există şi aici grade, nuanţe şi evoluţii: într-un fel arăta politizarea societăţilor occidentale din anii 1920 sau de după război, de pildă societatea italiană, în care aproape jumătate din populaţie era conştientă politic şi poate chiar activă într-o formă sau alta în PCI şi sindicatele afiliate acestuia, şi cu totul altfel arată o societate a cărei politizare ia direct calea delirului, cum se întâmplă astăzi în SUA. Or, acest regres al conştiinţei politice a societăţii se înregistrează cam peste tot: consensul social era mult mai la

stânga acum cincizeci de ani practic în toate cele trei blocuri existente atunci (capitalist, comunist si nealiniat). Dacă e să fim malițioși, putem pune măcar parțial acest regres pe seama performanței politice și istorice efective a celebrei *Theory*, a paradigmei teoretice a „noii stângi": este efectul refuzului său al categoriei de totalitate, denunțată ca focar de totalitarism (idealismul specific acestei paradigme, care învinuiește concepte, ideologii și mentalități pentru mersul greșit al istoriei, greșit pentru că nu concordă cu un alt set *ready made* de concepte, ideologii și mentalități) și care a făcut-o incapabilă să perceapă tocmai dimensiunea totalizantă și structurală a capitalismului, a celui actual mai mult decât oricând. Deci, într-o anumită măsură, putem spune că vinovat pentru „deficitul de gândire teoretică din societate" este, de fapt, deficitul de societate din teoria actuală de stânga. Dar doar într-o anumită măsură, pentru că, din perspectivă materialistă, nu putem credita teoriile cu prea multă incidență și influență asupra istoriei concrete. Mai degrabă, atât deficitul de conștiință politică și teoretică din societate, cât și deficitul de societate din teoria actuală de stânga, ar trebui explicate prin tipul de articulare și reproducere ale capitalismului actual, a cărui hiper-expunere sau spectacularizare integrată presupune un efect simetric, dar mai profund, de opacizare a societății ca întreg. Or, din această perspectivă de regres general, stăm foarte bine, în sensul că stăm foarte prost.

A. G.: .Aveți în vedere în programul personal de traduceri și o miză „educativă", de formare a unor reprezentări comunitare?

A. C.: Cel puțin pe moment nu mai lucrez la nicio editură, prin urmare programul meu de traduceri, în măsura în care mai există, depinde strict de comenzile editurilor, nu de vreun proiect personal de educare a maselor cititoare sau de „formare a unei reprezentări comunitare", orice ar însemna asta.

A. G.: Cum privește comunitatea CriticAtac și cum îi definește formula de „sociabilitate"? Care sunt limitele angajării lor politice?

A. C.: Cred, sau sper – căci vorbesc aici în nume personal, nu ca purtător de cuvânt al platformei – că grupul CriticAtac privește comunitatea cu ochi răi. Altfel spus, și poate cu unele excepții – de pildă Vasile Ernu, care îmi pare mult mai apropiat de o perspectivă comunitaristă – cred că în opoziția dintre comunitate și societate suntem ferm de partea societății. E o dispoziție mai apropiată de așa-numita „vechea stângă", suntem și noi, împrumutând formula colegilor de la *Jacobin*, un fel de „new old left", ceea ce înseamnă că ne interesează totalitatea socială, în structura ei profundă de clasă și în dinamica ei obiectivă dată de imperativul reproducerii și acumulării capitalului. E ceva problematic în turnura recentă și

veritabila fetişizare actuală a comunităţii – în fond, veche şi ea de vreo 50 de ani. Pe de o parte, comunitatea e ceva banal – cu toţii trăim, cel puţin în mod imediat, în nişte triburi, desigur. Pe de altă parte – şi aici apare funcţia strategică a acestui concept – supralicitarea acestei noţiuni banale este chiar expresia regresului politic şi social al timpurilor noastre, a dispariţiei „transcendenţei istorice" de posibilă emancipare universală şi de înlocuire a acesteia cu „pragmatismul" politicilor publice realiste, *object* sau *goal oriented*. Pe scurt, discursul comunitar este prin definiţie schema ONG-istică de înţelegere a societăţii, efectul pulverizării şi moralizării chestiunii social-politice. E cu totul paradoxal şi cu atât mai semnificativ că, pe măsură ce societatea globală devine tot mai integrată, tot mai totală, tot mai „clasificată" – prin chiar structura şi mecanismele de reproducere ale capitalismului actual –, la nivelul imaginarului social-politic noi nu mai putem vorbi decât de comunităţi, de insule izolate şi quasi-ermetice de societate, a căror identitate trebuie salvată şi protejată prin politici publice punctuale, eliberate de cadrele rigide ale vechilor ideologii generalizante şi utopizante. Dar şi aici, n-aş spune că acest nou cult al comunităţii e doar un mecanism, poate deliberat, de mistificare ideologică: această fragmentare socială, această opacizare a chestiunii sociale în ansamblul ei sunt totodată şi nişte efecte obiective ale capitalismului actual, expresia contradicţiei structurale a acestuia şi a modului său de „socializare". Cum spunea Lukács în polemica sa cu Bloch, în care susţinea tocmai cauza realismului ca expresie a „totalităţii sociale", „în perioadele în care capitalismul funcţionează într-o manieră să spunem normală şi diferitele sale procese par autonome, oamenii îl gândesc şi resimt ca pe ceva unitar, pe când în perioadele de criză, când elementele autonome [ale capitalismului] sunt articulate împreună într-o unitate, oamenii îl experimentează ca dezintegrare". Or, noi suntem în acest al doilea moment, de criză, în care unitatea şi articularea tot mai strânse ale capitalului sunt resimţite ca o acută şi ireversibilă fragmentare, tribalizare, comunitarizare a societăţii sale. Expresia subiectivă a acestui paradox sau contradicţii obiective este o dispoziţie de un fel de „cinism naiv" sau „naivitate cinică" extrem de răspândită astăzi: cinism în tot ceea ce priveşte chestiunea social-istorică, posibilităţile de acum expediate ca iremediabil utopice de emancipare generală, şi credulitate în tot ceea ce priveşte chestiunile supranatural-anistorice (de la revenirea vechilor credinţe religioase la spiritualismul *new age* sau oriental, şi până la poziţia de „conştiinţă nefericită" şi „suflet frumos" de pe care clasa de mijloc priveşte şi dăscăleşte astăzi chestiunea publică). Discursul comunitar e paradigma însăşi a acestui cinism naiv.

Toate astea ţin în fond de formula de „sociabilitate" de care vorbiţi. Sunt chiar expresia formulei asociale de socializare capitalistă, a medierii impersonale, mecanice a întregului social sub incidenţa imperativului de reproducere şi acumulare a capitalului. Pur şi simplu, societatea e tot mai mult „în sine", tot mai integrată, tot mai co-dependentă, tot mai sincronică, fiind în acelaşi timp tot mai puţin „pentru sine", tot mai puţin conştientă şi stăpână pe propriul ei destin. Şi, ca

să răspund şi la întrebarea despre limitele angajării politice a grupului CriticAtac: cred că suntem dispuşi să susţinem şi să ne angajăm în orice proiect social sau politic care încearcă să acopere acest hău dintre societatea „în sine" şi „pentru sine" – orice efort care să încerce fie şi o modestă socializare a acestui destin în fond comun tuturor care e capitalismul. Faptul că, în ciuda acestei deschideri sincere şi dezinteresate, nu am găsit nici o mişcare sau partid politic în care să ne angajăm întrutotul spune, din păcate, multe despre limitele mobilizării şi politizării societăţii româneşti, dar, din fericire, confirmă măcar paradoxul şi hăul de care vorbeam şi de la care pornim.

A. G.: Cum se poate salva comunul din comunism – poate servi memoria vie a comunismului din fostele ţări socialiste ca laborator al ideilor contemporane asupra comunităţii?

A. C.: Fireşte că experienţa regimurilor aşa-zis socialiste poate şi trebuie să servească la elaborarea oricărui proiect viitor de emancipare politică şi socială. Dar depinde cu ce grilă conceptuală abordăm această experienţă. Dacă o înţelegem din perspectiva discursului antitotalitar, care este discursul din păcate hegemonic în ce priveşte comunismul est-european, atunci din toată această experienţă nu înţelegem decât ceea ce ne permite sau sugerează conceptul însuşi – „totalitarismul" – şi anume că e foarte periculos şi nasol atunci când statul încearcă să-şi încorporeze societatea civilă şi să intervină în sfera „privată", „non-politică", a condiţiilor materiale de reproducere şi dezvoltare a societăţii. Altfel spus, din această abordare ieşim doar cu ce am intrat în ea, şi anume că liberalismul e singura alternativă – fie el în formulă mai blândă, social-liberală, sau mai isterică, hayekiană, pentru că în fond graniţa dintre ce anume este politic şi supus libertăţii şi ce anume este economic, privat şi deci supus constrângerii este totuşi una alunecoasă. Şi, implicit, mai desprindem de aici că această pretenţie exagerată a statului sau a partidului de a modela societatea în ansamblul ei, dată fiind tocmai disproporţia sa, nu poate fi decât rezultatul unei ideologii la rândul ei exagerate, criminale – şi uite aşa obţinem structura completă a idealismului antitotalitar, în care un concept extrem de rarefiat (statul obez şi societatea sufocată) plus o ideologie sau mentalitate trăznite explică cincizeci de ani de experienţă istorică. Nu, la drept vorbind, din perspectiva acestei grile conceptuale, experienţa regimurilor din estul Europei nu prea foloseşte la nimic, decât la confirmarea ipotezei de pornire. De aici cumva şi tiparul textelor despre comunism scrise în această paradigmă, şi care inevitabil combină monoton o aceeaşi teză moralizantă şi atotcuprinzătoare („comunismele" din Est ca expresii criminale, totalitare, ale unei ideologii criminale şi totalitare) cu o acumulare nesfârşită de anecdotic şi fapt divers, care, în lipsa unei viziuni propriu-zis materialiste sau istorice, nu se mai pot

coagula în nicio structură sau relație de profunzime sau tipar explicativ de ansamblu.

Sau putem aborda experiența regimurilor din Est dintr-o perspectivă materialist-istorică, ceea ce s-a făcut de la bun început și se face în continuare, ceva mai departe de lumina reflectoarelor atenției publice. E o perspectivă din care experiența „comunismelor" est-europene trebuie judecată în lumina structurii lor sociale concrete, a relațiilor de clasă și de proprietate, și în lumina posibilităților și constrângerilor istorice specifice timpului lor, perspectivă din care putem desigur desprinde – și s-au desprins – informații prețioase pentru orice proiect de emancipare posibilă. Bibliografia e nesfârșită aici – practic toată istoria marxismului din secolul XX.

Cât privește chestiunea cu „comunul" și „comunismul", „cum putem salva comunul din comunism", mi se pare o problemă complicată în mod inutil. Știu povestea – „comunitatea de nemărturisit", „comunitatea absentă", „comunitatea ce va să vie", ideea că trebuie să salvăm o idee de *comun* care să fie însă totodată lipsită de reprezentare, fără conținut, pentru că orice conținut am încerca să-i dăm ar fi o pozitivare ilicită, o esențializare, un gest metafizic și deci potențial totalitar… Noua formă de manifestare a vechilor antinomii ale rațiunii burgheze. Chestiunea e mult mai puțin abstractă și mult mai imediat-materială: nu-i vorba de a inventa sau salva un concept de comun, e vorba de a ne da seama că acest comun există deja și e mobilizat, desigur într-o formă parțială și denaturată, în chiar mecanismul de bază al capitalismului actual. Că ne place sau nu, împărtășim deja un același destin, suntem prinși într-o aceeași structură globală de constrângeri și dependențe, și minimul pe care-l putem face e să ne dăm seama de această realitate și să încercăm să ne reapropriem acest comun. Nu trebuie imaginate noi utopii, noi umanisme – simpla socializare a mijloacelor de producție ar trebui să fie de-ajuns. Vorba lui Troțki, nu înveți să călărești decât urcându-te pe cal: comunul care trebuie „reinventat" sau „regăsit" nu poate fi o construcție teoretică prealabilă practicii sale, ci poate lua ființă – și conștiință – doar prin înfăptuirea sa.

A. G.: Există vreun raport între mizele ideologice ale comunității și practicile artistice și estetice?

A. C.: Ar fi bine să existe.

Abstract

Alex Cistelecan (b. 1979) is one of the most important Romanian translators from recent Italian philosophy. He is also a philosopher, an essayist and a member of the leftist platform CriticAtac, "a group of social, intellectual and political criticism". In a dialogue with Alex Goldiș, he has answered a few questions about his stance on the theories and conceptualizations of community, as they are conveyed by contemporary thinking. The interview evokes the social commitment of the group CriticAtac and its representation as a critical community, as well as the current relevance of the notion of "common" as it is involved in the communist project.

Keywords: community, CriticAtac, the common and communism, the criticism of postcolonial thought, Marxism.

LOREDANA CUZMICI, *Generaţia Albatros – o nouă avangardă* [*The Albatros Generation – A New Avant-garde*], Iaşi, Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2015, 381 p.

In her book titled *Generaţia Albatros – o nouă avangardă* [*The Albatros Generation – A New Avant-garde*], Loredana Cuzmici analyses the time-expanded work of several writers associated, as reviewers or merely collaborators, with the literary journal *Albatros*. Although its very short-lived existence only spanned between March and June 1941, thus summing up 7 issues, the journal remains up to this day a milestone of Romanian literary history, not necessarily for the intrinsic value of its writers, but especially for the cultural contexts that both shaped its profile and urged its untimely demise. In the course of 1941, the neo-avant-garde wave emerging in the pages of *Albatros* had to negotiate its ideological terms, traditionally inclined to the Left, with the (extreme-)Right movements then at lead in the Romanian political and cultural life. The posthumous fate of *Albatros,* as seen through the subsequent works of its writers, would be no less contradictory. The post-war years witnessed the rapid ascent and institutionalization of the Left, but the communist orthodoxy established in the literary life, as elsewhere, dealt in an ambiguous manner with the *Albatros* writers, regarding them alternately as harbingers of the new world and as a nest of "aesthetic reactionaries". To make matters more twisted, some former *Albatros* writers aligned with the new dogma, their writing being sometimes irretrievably caught under its rhetorical pangs, while others used the space of exile to criticize publicly both the regime and their remaining peers who had fallen under its spell.

It is indeed curious that only a handful of monographs, more or less partial, with little, if any, critical appeal, have been devoted to this challenging topic, beside the usual literary dictionaries whose treatment of the matter is understandably sketchy. Therefore, Loredana Cuzmici must be acknowledged for having recomposed the big picture and for having traced in detail the meandering history of *Albatros* writers, both in their shared principles and their individual, diverging paths.

The researcher is right to assume that the given topic is "ideology-dependent" and, thus, should be approached by combining "extrinsic and intrinsic" methods, by switching from contextualization to close reading. She also points out correctly that the history of *Albatros* undergoes three stages of reception – namely: 1941, 1947-1989 (with several sub-stages), respectively, contemporary – which must be treated separately. However, rather dazzlingly, she undermines her first assertion, by openly opting for what she calls "subjective criticism", "pseudo-criticism" or "first-person criticism", out of a too great dismay for the "demon of theory" and for the "utopia of objective, vigilante criticism". Neither does she remain entirely faithful to the second point mentioned. Rather than focusing on bigger cultural paradigms, the book chapters are organized traditionally around writers themselves. As a consequence of that, the researcher will need to unfold in every particular case the changing attitudes towards Left, Right, subjection or subversion, reform or reaction.

The first chapter of the book deals with the specific interval of the journal's publication (1941) and approaches collectively the writers involved. Within the larger context of "war generation writers", Loredana Cuzmici distinguishes the literary nucleus of *Albatros* by its "militant avant-garde formula", prone to the deconstruction of high literature and to a reconversion of art to reality. This late, second-term avant-garde is, however, more "eclectic" and "tame" than its interwar prototype, both in stylistic terms, which prove softer views upon tradition, and in ideological principles, which never seem to confirm the "Leftist myth" woven around the journal. Loredana Cuzmici observes that *Albatros* writers range from "young communists" to "self-declared extreme-Right partisans", but rather contradictorily, she then concludes that the journal does not issue "explicitly ideological signals". As a matter of fact, the researcher seems rather keen to de-ideologize *Albatros* writers,

although the very manner in which she depicts them – as "ostentatiously literary in a violently politicized society", as literates evading "from history" into the "aesthetic" – remains sensibly informed by neoliberal, Right views.

The following chapters abandon the collective approach in favour of case studies, each of them conceived as smaller-sized monographs. In every case, Loredana Cuzmici operates chronologically, follows closely the writers' intricate literary biographies and analyses their works, with a certain preference for thematic methods. As a principle, her main concern is to assert every time the literary value – which is a case to be made especially when writers would subject to socialist realism – and, subsequently, to rehabilitate names unjustly forgotten by our literary history.

Such is the case, first, of Mircea Streinul, an author whose openly nationalistic and extreme-Right views can't hinder entirely the partial, but nevertheless significant aesthetic worth of his prose. While Streinul died right before the advent of the communist regime, Ben. Corlaciu's wider work raises much more complex axiological debates. Driven by literary ambition and by the need of being accepted, Corlaciu seems to have written "in favour of all regimes he has witnessed". If, during war, heis evidently influenced by Nazi propaganda, after 1945, Corlaciu starts to support Communism, while his later exile would turn him back to a more democratic right. Loredana Cuzmici weighs upon Corlaciu's successive formulas of writing, from modernist poetry to socialist-realist prose and opinion texts. As expected, she deems the latter "sad documents of literary failure" and considers that several of Corlaciu's poems, written outside the break of socialist realism, "can survive without contextualization".

The greatest poet of the *Albatros* group, Geo Dumitrescu, is analysed in the fourth chapter of the book. Although covering two decades, his militant publishing is easier to overlook – or, at least, to be regarded, with Ierunca's words, as "idealistic naïveté" – because Dumitrescu's lyrical value, and the extent of his literary legacy, are undebatable. His poems can be read within the frame of various currents (from avant-garde to Romanticism and even postmodernism), whereas his core adhesion to a formula of realism and directness has stood the test of time, when confronted with the falsified "realism" of the 50s and in what concerns Dumitrescu's influence upon poetic generations after the 80s.

The most famous exile of the group, Virgil Ierunca, is discussed in the fifth chapter of the study. The vocal speaker of Free Europe and tireless moral arbiter of our post-war literary life has had a mixed reception in Romania which oscillated between "criticism and high praise". Undoubtedly, Loredana Cuzmici sides with the latter. She observes that, even if Ierunca is "a writer without a work", whose essays barely have a "system", his "biographical-sociological criticism" and "moral" line of argumentation are no less relevant even if they fall outside purely aesthetic considerations. With his call for "social responsibility", expressed in an often vehement tone, Ierunca is depicted here as a sort of apostle of democracy.

On the other hand, the aesthetic beats again the ideology in the sixth chapter of the study. Its protagonist, Dinu Pillat, is analysed mainly through his much-delayed 2010 novel *Aşteptând ceasul de apoi* [*Waiting for the Doomsday*], which dwells upon Romanian intellectuals' fascination with the extreme Right. However, Loredana Cuzmici argues that Pillat's narrator is "unaccusable" and his narrative goes beyond the "borders of immediate history", focusing instead on the process of "ideological de-formation". It can be thus considered a novel of "interiority and atmosphere" and read in terms of "retro-modernism".

Finally, the last analytic chapter reassesses a very little-known volume of short stories published in 1971 by Marin Sârbulescu, a symptomatic example of "the double intention of language" that defined Romanian literature under Communism. Although apparently nurtured by socialist realism, the former *Albatros* collaborator has produced here, in fact, an "avant-garde work" characterized by "*à rebours* attitudes and vision".

In the concluding remarks, Loredana Cuzmici comes full circle to the point she had made in the introduction – but less developed all along – that the *Albatros* generation was defined by "the context" and that all its members' works bear, one way or another, the imprint of historical conditions

in which they were written and published. However, Loredana Cuzmici's own focus was less on that "context" and more oriented towards literary-critical goals. In what regards the latter, the researcher has helped reassess several writers (Streinul, Corlaciu, Sârbulescu) and has reconfirmed the literary-historical value of the *Albatros* group as a whole.

Adriana STAN
University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Iuliu Hațieganu",
Cluj-Napoca

OVIDIU BURUIANĂ, *Liberalii. Structuri și sociabilități politice liberale în România interbelică* [*The Liberals. Liberal Structures and Liberal Political Sociabilities in the Interwar Romania*], Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2013, 694 p.

Providing a critical analysis of previous works devoted to Romanian liberalism and striking a balance with abundant scholarship on Romanian Conservatism, Ovidiu Buruiană's book, *Liberalii. Structuri și sociabilități politice liberale în România interbelică* [*The Liberals. Liberal Structures and Liberal Political Sociabilities in the Interwar Romania*], succeeds in adjusting to the topic's challenges through an uncompromising concentration on the complex device of *political sociability*. Simply put, the author is interested to devise a mechanism that gears up an idiomatic figure (the Romanian Liberal) and the progression of a political community through modern history (the Romanian Liberal Party, later on called The National Liberal Party – PNL).

Unlike fellow historians, Ovidiu Buruiană prefers to unfold the logic of political figures. The "figural" interpretation should be understood not only in terms of interest for the portrait of the generic "Liberal", but also in terms of focus on the specific *Form(s)-of-life* ("Lebensform" or "Lebensformen" in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*) that prop(s) up the expanded liberal community. As everywhere in Europe, the liberal allegiance in general should not be confused with explicit party membership; on the contrary, it should rather be looked for in implicit stances such as liberal families, tradition, profession, and proximity. Profiting from the perspectives introduced by the volumes edited by Jean-Michel de Waele (2003) and Pascal Delwit (2003), Ovidiu Buruiană enlarges upon the recurrent theme of the party's unity, which, according to the aforementioned references, seems to individualize Central and Eastern-European liberalisms. Whereas in these regions of Europe the parties are stamped by organizational fragility, and whereas the concept of "party" itself has been proven reluctant to operationalization, it is perfectly comprehensible why the stake of the present research is to discern beyond the myth of the Liberals' party discipline. For that matter, the author of the present volume is trying to figure out how ideological "certainty" is being constructed among the Romanian Liberals within the given cultural and social framework of interwar period. Then, what are the "certainties" that get reinforced within the frame of a liberal Form-of-Life in the interwar Romania?

Aiming so high, the historian must say farewell to the traditional tools of historiography and devise an analytical dispositive that puts together a view on the development of political culture in Romania and a fine grip of sociological categories. Therefore, the first chapter is devoted to liberal ideas and liberal identity during the specified period. Ovidiu Buruiană departs from the thesis of "received liberalism", and seeks for a Romanian specification of the Western political tradition. The second chapter deals with issues of party organization: status, relationship between central

headquarters and local organizations, hierarchy, alternative liberal societies such as The Liberals' Circle of Studies, the women's group, and the Youth's group. The third chapter represents a minute analysis of clichés put into circulation mainly by Ştefan Zeletin's books, *Burghezia Română. Originea şi rolul ei istoric* [*The Romanian Bourgeoisie. The orogin and Its Historical Role*] (1925) and *Neoliberalismul. Studiu asupra istoriei şi politicii burgheziei româneşti* [*The Neoliberalism. A Study on the History and Politics of the Romanian Bourgeoisie*] (1927). Assuming that the social classes are not closed realities, especially in the context of "fluid modernity", Ovidiu Buruiană rejects the hypothesis according to which there is a determination between *bourgeoisie* and *Romanian Liberalism*. Historically and sociologically speaking, the existence of a Romanian bourgeoisie is highly debatable (pp. 259-262). For instance, "bourgeoisie" meant for the interwar statistics those "heads of family who are able to organize and conduct work" (p. 262). Consequently, a Liberal theorist such as Mihail Manoilescu notices that, in comparison with the Western bourgeois (who is, by and large, an apocalyptical spirit), the Romanian bourgeois still conceives of oneself as a teacher of masses, as a vector of political literacy. In reality, the Romanian Liberals did not construct and deliver their ideological certainties through mere reliance to a social class. As everywhere in the Eastern and Central-European space, they relied on "enrobed elites", on "state intellectuals" who were highly dependent on the discourse of power, both as producers and as consumers.

The fourth chapter brings to the fore the complex entanglement of politics, biology, ethnology, and economy. Briefly put, the political community of the Romanian Liberals is presented as a complex family-tree. Thus, the common interests (formulated under contextual conditions) are given a transcendent determination in the blood-ties. Thus, it is not the transcendence of abstract political ideas the engine that pushes forward the party machine. In this context, Ovidiu Buruiană addresses the theories of communal families ("*zadruga*"), introduced by Philip E. Mosely (*Communal Families in the Balkans: The Zadruga*, 1976) and developed by Karen Barkey (*Bandits and Bureaucrats. The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 1994). Compared to the "tribe" – a label that is actually recurrent in all the documents describing the lifestyle of the Brătianus, *zadruga* is a community with quasi-religious habits that defines the Balkan political culture. Its agents (members of the enlarged family) are apt to organize themselves publicly into a circuit of loyalty. Working as a "prebendary, neo-patrimonial elite", *zadruga* represents a superior political structuring, enhanced by a sort of corporate identity. On a smaller scale, it seems to actualize the Renaissance ideal of the *body politic*.

The fifth chapter tackles with the "medialization" of the liberal Forms of Life (party life and family life). Ovidiu Buruiană is interested chiefly in the press, but also in pamphlets, calendars, electoral publications and editions of political speeches. Generally, the liberal propaganda observes the rule of concentric diffusion. Well-informed case studies are devoted to newspapers such as *Viitorul*, *L'Independence Roumaine*, *Naţiunea*, *Ordinea*, *Universul* and *Democraţia*. The sixth chapter focuses on the marginal figures, that is, on the few dissidents and dissident factions that were active among the Liberals. It is quite natural that, being structured according to a "corporeal" philosophy, the liberal community should dismiss the very idea of dissidence. "The triple legitimacy – the party's tradition, the leader's omnipotence and the administrative elites' capacities – as well as the lack of a credible political competitor entailed the fact that the Liberal Party did not experience significant instances of dissidence before 1930" (p. 582).

As previous research has shown, the Romanian Liberals' "doctrine" should be defined by addressing issues of social class (the financial bourgeoisie), geographical space (The United Principalities, thus the small Romania before 1918), historical evolution of the Romanian nation, and of economy (Vintilă Brătianu's idea of self-sustainability phrased as "prin noi înşine" ["through ourselves"]). Yet, not the ideas but the Liberals' particular way of articulating political identity, thus "certainty", is here a question of interest. The imitation of the leader's messianic figure and its reduplication in the marginal spaces operates as a factor of communitarian cohesion. While the socialization provided by family life also delivered within the liberal community a pattern of acceptable imitation and reduplication, it is no wonder that the Brătianus became the object of hero-

worship. The religious piety encircling the Brătianu family acts as a conducting wire. Traditional paternalism is transferred to modern electors through the harmless figures of family life.

The author notices several times that both the "mysticism" of substantiated ideas and the charismatic leadership characterize the Romanian society, which, in spite of institutional modernization, is still indebted to obsolete cultural codes (pp. 21-26, 496). Following Max Weber's ideas and their recent elaboration in the works of Charles Lindholm, Chiara Bottici, and Jaepil Choi, Ovidiu Buruiană considers that, for the Romanian Liberals, the theme of self-characterization is one of the strongest discursive traits. This becomes extremely relevant for the history of Romanian liberalism, especially if one relates it with the changes of approach occurred throughout Europe at the turn of the century, when sociologists such as Moisei Ostrogorski (1902) and Robert Michaels (1911) warned on "the oligarchic drifting" of 19th century traditional parties.

Nevertheless, "the mysticism" of an embodied liberalism during the interwar period should not be understood as a stance of doctrinarian transcendentalism, but as the theorization of a perennial framework within which the Romanian Liberal Party evolves. Its observance of hierarchical "organization" and party "discipline" has become a commonplace consideration among historians. But, albeit its specificity, Romanian liberalism should be also canvassed within the context of "liquid modernity", which makes doctrinarian differentiation a strategy of pushing back the Liberals' sense of dissolution: the dissolution of the personality cult, the dissolution of former political privileges and electoral rationale, the dissolution of traditional political networking, the dissolution of a patented rhetoric and so forth. For instance, when he discusses I.I.C. Brătianu's personality cult, the author draws a subtle line between its posthumous career and the party's nostalgia after previous political power (p. 486). Owing to Svetlana Boym's distinction from *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), I cannot but notice that the Liberals' memory and its rituals evince not only the traits a "restorative nostalgia" but also the ones of a "reflexive nostalgia". The latter is discernible in the intense medialization of all political emotions, in the cultic approach of the Brătianus' lifestyle, and in the transfiguration of Florica domain into an emotional geography. This nostalgic recalling of both founding fathers and decisive historical moments represents the Liberals' way of fighting against the modern idea of time, against the corrosive process of symbolic dissemination.

Thus, it is not by chance that the Liberals' political sociability hosts several paradoxical instances. While liberalism stems from the core values of freedom and individuality, the Romanian version of the doctrine appears to stem from the maximalist meaning of concepts such as "nation" and "state". Similarly, if liberalism meant essentially to rely on the idea of human progress and universal brotherhood, Romanian liberalism delivered itself to a sectarian spirit, which fed from the cult of the dead, from funeral ceremonies, and from the obstinate appeal to past events. In the same manner, even if from a theoretical viewpoint Romanian liberalism prophesied democracy, the party members had to admit that granting the peasants the right to vote was a measure whose effects in terms of electoral mathematics should be rather avoided. Also, for the Romanian Liberals, egalitarianism actually meant a disciplinarian spirit applied equally to common people, and not equal rights and liabilities for all Romanian citizens.

Written with a mature sense of data incorporation, keeping a reasonable distance from its subject(s) and showing an appetite for complex interrogation, Ovidiu Buruiană's book represents a solid groundwork for further research on political sociability.

Roxana PATRAŞ
"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi
Department of Interdisciplinary Research

SANDA CORDOŞ (ed.), *Spiritul critic la Cercul literar de la Sibiu* [*The Critical Spirit in the Sibiu Literary Circle*], Cluj-Napoca, Accent, 2009, 275 p.

An anthology of 26 presentations selected from the conference held in 2008 in Cluj-Napoca, at the Faculty of Letters, on the critical spirit and the topicality of the Sibiu Literary Circle, the volume edited by Sanda Cordoş establishes the relevance and substantiality of the concept of "interpretive communities", while it also discloses its inescapable theoretical and practical vulnerability.

On the one hand, as Cordoş emphasizes in the *Argument*, the Sibiu Literary Circle, which included critics and essayists such as Ion Negoiţescu, Nicolae Balotă, Ovidiu Cotruş, Radu Enescu, Cornel Regman, Eugen Tudoran, and poets, novelists, playwrights and translators such as Ştefan Aug. Doinaş, Ion D. Sîrbu, Radu Stanca, Eta Boeriu, is "the longest lasting literary-critical group of Romanian culture" (p. 7) and the only one that "has a collective conscience and aims for a particular cultural direction" (p. 8). Therefore, the Circle is distinguished by its "catalytic" dimension owing to the "genuine emulation and effervescence" awakened among congeners and future generations (p. 8). Homogeneity, longevity and a specific "force of radiation" are the central features Nicolae Balotă uses in his essay, *Literary Circle in the 21ˢᵗ Century*, in order to define the group. Although "historically determined", the founding principles of the Circle (anti-nationalism, anti-regionalism, anti-orthodoxism, Europeanization, democratization) are, in Balotă's opinion, "anti-historically oriented", becoming "absolute standpoints" (p. 12). However, the last surviving member of the Circle considers that this "vocation of the absolute" should not be equated exactly with "aestheticism", i.e. "absolutizing the aesthetic value", just because his colleagues plead constantly for conjugating aesthetic and moral values as an antidote to the "amorality" of Romanian culture and society. Repudiating both the Fascist or Leninist-Stalinist movements (to which they adhere only accidentally) and the literature of crisis glorified in 20th century Western Europe, the members of the Sibiu Literary Circle lived the utopia of achieving a "Romanian Classicism", believed in "the redemptive value of art", developed a kind of "literary mysticism", which tends to be more and more "paradigmatic for the new literary configuration ready to be constituted in the 21ˢᵗ century" (pp. 17-18). Balotă's perspective is akin to the plea of the American professor of Romanian origin, Virgil Nemoianu, for understanding the "philosophical and aesthetic harmony" promoted by the Circle beyond the strictly literary-cultural system. His study, *Literary Circle between Idyllicism and Critical Spirit*, shows how, by intertwining the idyllic model (as a "symbol of moderation") with the "inclination to criticize" (generated by the dissatisfaction that the "hard and crude" historical reality undermines the transformation of Transylvania into a "spiritual and aesthetic province"), the Sibiu Literary Circle provides a social model not at all utopian, valid even to solve the discontinuities or ruptures the contemporary world is facing. The literary group offers a theoretical and practical example of how a community could cross the regional, national and continental boundaries, might join avant-garde and existentialist visions, the Mediterranean and Christian Antiquity, the German "illuminated" romanticism, and the tradition of French classical and modern culture, or it can place the "aesthetic and intellectual values" above any ethnic, psychological or social differences, in order to adhere to a "liberal and conservative democracy" (pp. 26-34). The belief that an "aesthetical doctrine" could prompt a broader, social-ideological, impact characterizes the ample synthesis *An Euphorionist Critical Perspective*, offered by Dan Damaschin (one of the most persistent and active editors and researchers of the group), but also the analytic surveys signed by two critics usually associated with Romanian postmodernism: Andrei Bodiu (*To Think Different, To Think Against*) and Caius Dobrescu (*Can Aestheticism Be Equated to Liberalism? Infrapolitics at Thomas Mann and – especially – at Ion Negoiţescu*). Moreover, many of the case studies, some of them implying an obvious encomiastic intention, emphasize the ability of the Sibiu Literary Circle to enforce a "style", a "school", a "model" or a creative and interpretative "standard". Representatives of the Romanian new critical generation such as Crina Bud, Xenia Karo-Negrea, Daniel Cristea-Enache or Antonio

Patraş, praise the literary critic Ion Negoiţescu, a "Dionysian hermeneutist", respectively the novelist Ion D. Sîrbu, a former socialist, later an enemy of communism, while the esteemed Cluj-Napoca professor and literary critic Ion Pop evokes the figure of the "major poet" Ştefan Aug. Doinaş. On the other hand, Laura Pavel approaches the comparative criticism and theory developed by Nicolae Balotă, in her essay entitled *The Canon and the Critical Fiction*, arguing that Balotă's "anthropological hermeneutics" goes beyond an aesthetically based approach on literature. Thus, the Sibiu Literary Circle earns the position of a social, spiritual and interpretative community; while not ideal, it is at least a fascinating community, able to turn into a disciple any reader who can perceive its critical spirit.

On the other hand, there is also a consistent number of convincing articles that relativize or challenge the Circle members' capability to institute stable, uniform and homogenous principles or a genuine artistic influence. For instance, young researcher from Sibiu Andrei Terian demonstrates in *"The New Critical Direction" of the Sibiu Literary Circle – the 1966-1969 Moment* that the critical impact of the movement in the 1940s was "nostalgically" overvalued, being, in reality, "almost zero" (p. 104). Only the late 1960s consecrated the group as promoter of a "new critical direction". At that time, the former members of the Sibiu Literary Circle had coagulated around a cultural magazine from Oradea, *Familia*, and took active part to the main critical debate of the communist era. Their opponents were the young critics of the sixties, followers of the interpretative model of the most important Romanian literary critic and historian G. Călinescu, namely the so-called "ineffable", "spontaneous", "creative" and "stylistically charming", but completely devoid of "theoretical foundation" and "aesthetic-philosophical framework" literary criticism. However, as Terian emphasizes, although Balotă, Negoiţescu, Regman and Cotruş postulated the overthrow of an outdated cultural model, due the political circumstances, they could only return to Titu Maiorescu and Eugen Lovinescu's theoretical projects, two critical patterns configured before Călinescu. Thus, the promised renewal of the critical methodologies failed. The same perspective is supported by another young literary critic, Alex Goldiş, who highlights in his article, *The First Postwar Critical Debate. "New Criticism" vs. Sibiu Literary Circle*, that, "without innovative or original theoretical programs", investing all their energies in restoring the rather "unpretentious theory of the aesthetic autonomy", the "new critics" of the 1960s managed to reinstate, even if in part, "the normality in the Romanian literary life". That is why, the members of the Sibiu Literary Circle had to admit that "directional criticism", based on complete ideological commitment or on clearly defined and emulative theory, "has never been possible during totalitarianism" (p. 135). Furthermore, the literary critic belonging to the 1980s generation, Al. Cistelecan, challenges and denies the critical spirit of the Sibiu Literary Circle. From his perspective, the "euphoric hermeneutists" Eugen Todoran and Nicolae Balotă, the "voluptuous interpretations" embraced by Ion Negoiţescu or Cornel Regman's excessive rhetorical style exceeded classical literary criticism, enacting a sort of "textual eroticism" (pp. 180-182). The illusions, inconsistencies and contradictions of the Sibiu Literary Circle are focused by some other contributors, from among whom we note Mihai Iovănel (*Cornel Regman. Dogmatism and Post-dogmatism*) and Sorina Sorescu (*Ion D. Sîrbu's Biographical Ambivalences. Between Sibiu Literary Circle and Socialist Realism*).

Such polemical standpoints confirm the main virtue of the volume edited by Sanda Cordoş. Instead of providing stereotypical commemorative tributes, *The Critical Spirit in the Sibiu Literary Circle* undertakes a truly critical radiograph both of the artistic or social reformation power and of the cultural or ideological limitations inscribed in the history of an interpretive community.

Cosmin BORZA
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca Branch
"Sextil Puşcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History

ANCA MANOLESCU, *Modelul Antim, modelul Păltiniş. Cercuri de studiu şi prietenie spirituală* [*The Antim Model, the Păltiniş Model. Circles of Study and Spiritual Friendship*], Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2015, 333 p.

"It's curious. For those who want to move through life *understanding* both what surrounds them and themselves, culture is (still) the right means, the necessary training. [...]. But when it comes to relating oneself to the transcendent, this education of understanding has ceased appearing to be necessary for several centuries now. It seems to be confusing and even to cloud the "simple faith" that is required of all. When gazing at the highest point of the real, religious man is cautioned that the tools of high culture are of little use to him, that he had better leave them aside and remain a tepid believer, avoiding to be tempted by the "perils" of knowledge. Should he listen?". It is with that question, formulated in Socratic manner, that Anca Manolescu's recent book, published in 2015, opens. The problem of the relationship between reason and faith, an age-old subject of contention that dates from the beginnings of Christian thought, appears to be resumed into debate in the most different thematic contexts, this time being approached in an anthropological register. Should one discursively tackle religious problems "in the manner of fishermen," as Gregory of Nazianzus demanded, or should they be approached through intellectualist contemplativeness, as theorized by Clement and Origen? Scholastic synthesis had the last word in this regard, inaugurating what Mircea Eliade was to call the separation between the sacred and the profane. It is certain that in secularized modernity, as Anca Manolescu notes, the two "continents" of culture and of religion are far apart, each with its own language and themes, in the context of a generalized and increasingly divergent plurality. What is, in these circumstances, the situation of the intellectual concerned with the rapport with the transcendent, with what might generically be referred to as "the meaning of existence"? To be a good religious man, should he discard his specific profile, his exploration of ideas, his qualities and his skills, as if they were an "inappropriate outfit"?

The book does not adopt a polemical stance, nor does it undertake a purely theoretical approach to the issue of the divorce between reason and faith in late modernity, but conducts a foray into an alternative model of thought, the one represented by the concrete example of study circles, where "philosophizing" and religion converge towards common meanings. The atmosphere, "their existential fabric", the dialogical routes, the type of group cohesion, conviviality, cohabitation models, shared research practices, relationships with the outside, the typology of masters – all these arouse the author's interest. In other words, she is interested in what a "being-unto-knowledge" is like, seeing such a human as the medium where "knowledge observes itself, where it investigates and explains itself". This is not a discourse on knowledge, but a portrait of knowledge that has become interrelational discourse, in its most vibrant reality, populated by different characters, places, circumstances and languages. Although it is a scholarly undertaking, based on a variety of philosophical, theological, historical, philological and sociological sources, ranging from classical texts to spiritual journals, biographies and correspondence, sometimes unpublished before, the book is targeted at specialists, but at intellectuals of sundry backgrounds, who can sense the limits of their own areas of interest, whatever these might be. The modern intellectual and the Socratic man meet, thus, through a transversal reading of the history of ideas, just like study circle members communicate at the level of "hard reality", through confluences and similitudes, whether we speak of Constantin Noica, Andrei Scrima or Origen, Epicurus and other thinkers of the late Antiquity. The same unity of essence draws them together, through the verticality of their inner selves.

What may be vexing, at first glance, in Anca Manolescu's study is the heterogeneity of the texts and of the illustrative profiles she has commented on, as these transgress historical, geographical and cultural boundaries, in a seemingly disconcerting openness. The two central examples – represented by the Antim Circle and by the School of Păltiniş, one religious, the other philosophical, which are reconstructed on the basis of the testimonies given by Andrei Scrima in *Timpul Rugului Aprins* and

by Gabriel Liiceanu in *Jurnalul de la Păltiniş* and in *Epistolar* – are placed in dialogue with the groups of Origen, Pythagoras, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Iamblichos, Apollonius from Thyana, Evagrius, etc. What do they all have in common, the author asks, what continuity is there between Antim and the old Christian circles, what did Păltiniş retrieve from the ancient schools of philosophy, especially since Noica, as is well known, was pursuing "not divine transcendence", but the "firmament of high culture"? Beyond an identical intellectual effervescence, animated by the "easy air of friendship", by the similarity of the type of hermeneutics and contextual relationships, philosophy and religion basically have the same object and the same goal: the expansion of Being in its relation with a higher Truth, with a view to so-called "happy life". Antim would be the religious version, while Păltiniş – the secular version of such an "outing into openness". We find here the ancient meaning of *theoría*, explained by Anton Dumitriu in *Philosophia mirabilis* and other texts: "placement into Being", different from the discourse about Being characteristic of modern philosophy.

Against the horizon of this "openness" looms the entire analytical discourse devoted to the various study circles, animated, in turn, by the desire to identify a "crossings and bridges" between various paradigms, in order to accede to a possible universal fund of high culture and spirituality. Release into "the regime of freedom", beyond religious, cultural or "highly specialized" boundaries is the first characteristic of these study groups. The Antim circle gathered together writers, theologians, scientists, philosophers, etc., each seeking, through their formation, support, analogies, "symbolic matter" for understanding faith. The Păltiniş School enjoyed the interest of an audience that also e from a heterogeneous environments. According to the tradition of spiritual study circles of all time, there are no differences by gender, rank, denominational affiliation or of any other kind: "For such people, the universal had no religious colour, it did not have to cloister itself within the limits of a single school, doctrine, tradition or religion". Prestigious intellectual groups of the 20th century, such as the Eranos Circle or the circle that was set up by Henry Corbin in Paris, pursued the same kind of "crossings and bridges", in the spirit of the old Renaissance aspiration towards the unity of knowledge. Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and, above all, transdisciplinarity, based on the ideal of "transhumanism", gained shape against a similar background. Romanian transmodernism found in the model of the School of Păltiniş a precursor of this orientation, according to Theodor Codreanu (*Transmodernismul*, Iaşi, Junimea, 2005, p.186). The total criticism of G. Călinescu, G. Ibrăileanu and M. Ralea, Mircea Eliade's hermeneutics of religions times of Blaga's cultural model anticipated the same trend.

What is significant for the purposes of such openings is the recurrence of the particle "trans" throughout the study, along with the insistence on the concept of "interval" or "threshold", as symbolic space with ontological and epistemological value. Collegiality establishes a "trans-personal" link, groups members play "transindividual" roles, in order to adhere to the "transrational" transcendent. The "Burning Bush" lies, according to the testimony of André Scrima, not in contingent history, but "in the area of those meanings that traverse history and maintain its vertical openness", in Corbin calls "subtle time". The meeting place of the members of study circles pertains to the "atopic" symbolism of the threshold, as a non-geographical space converted, through a "level rift," into spiritual experience. The group itself is "a space of alterity in the midst or close to the city", a "transcending marginality", a place left ajar between the elite and the general public, with a discourse like "an interface, like a threshold" and with twofold characteristics: "universality and immediacy". The master, in turn, is a "transindividual, liminal" being, beyond any pigeonholing category. This is, however, a threshold that unites, lays down bridges towards a plurality of meanings, discernible through a transversal reading, at the limit of different types of discourse.

Anca Manolescu's anthropological study is a transdiscourse, too, placed at the interface between disciplinary spaces, interpretive horizons and expressive structures, generically gathered under the sign of "creative memory". The "being-unto-knowledge", itself a limit-concept, expresses itself through an alternation of narrative plans, voices and perspectives, interpretable on at least four interwoven levels of reading: conceptual, critical, fictional and essayistic. The philosophical discourse

from the first level, centred on the question of the relationship between knowledge and faith, is accompanied by long essayistic disquisitions on the meeting places of the group members, their typology, the relationship between orality and writing, etc. A certain fictional aura is sometimes inserted in the structure of the discourse, through the art of the portrait or the creation of atmosphere, oscillating between picturesqueness and evanescence. At this level, the book can be read as a novel of ideas, as a metadiscourse predicated on a variety of "dossiers of existence", each with its own style. André Scrima, for example, is like a character from the 18th century, "from that age of the Old Court Libertines, familiar with all the centres of rare knowledge". The Antim group was constituted around a mysterious monk, Ioan cel Străin [John the Stranger], portrayed through the same symbology of otherness. The formation and dissolution of the group is evoked, by reference to the sources, in an objective register, not devoid of Romanian accents. The philosophical and essayistic undertaking is doubled, in a programmatic way, by the real stories of the characters, under the aegis of a fictionality that is inherent to the confessional discourse commented on. Equally obvious, however, is the careful and critical intervention of the author's gaze, which maintains an oftentimes ironical distance from the object. While she recomposes critically, from her point of view, the variety of testimonials, the author operates classifications and distinctions, in order to accurately capture all the nuances of discourse. A generous space is reserved, in the study, to the typology of expressive "stylization" in the texts referring to the study circles. There are examples of realistic exemplarism, where lucidity and irony enhance the apologetic tone, as in the case of the evocations of André Scrima and Gabriel Liiceanu; allegorical exemplarism, illustrated in the texts dedicated to the "therapists" gathered around Philo of Alexandria or the members of the circle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, where the triumphant, opinionated tone prevails. All these interpretive insights converge towards a group portrait of the spiritual circle, reconstituted at the interface of subjective perspectives, in all their diversity.

What is the situation of the "being-unto-knowledge" today, manifesting itself in the space of dialogue and orality, through vertically oriented "social interaction"? Does the circle of study and spiritual friendship have any reverberations in actuality? Unlike George Steiner, who contended that the master and apprentice institution would survive into the era of digital civilization (*Maeştri şi discipoli*, translated by Virgil Stanciu, Bucureşti, Compania, 2005), Anca Manolescu notices that today study circles grouped around a spiritual master have vanished from the life of the city, replaced by simple circles of colleagues, devoid of a tutelary authority. In other words, the circle descends from the old "speculative castle" into quotidian mundaneness. The "inconveniences" and the "handicaps" of our time also include, however, valuable incentives: for instance, the fact that the participants in this new type of circles have become more offensive, more creative, under the imperative of discovering meaning on their own, through a direct confrontation with the texts of tradition. Inserted in the daily mundane, spiritual concerns are prompted to retrieve their verticality starting from the present moments, in the "natural manner of a Socrates". This research is itself rooted, at least in part, in this tendency to transpose the speculative approach into the "daily mundaneness" of lived ideas.

Magda WÄCHTER
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca Branch
"Sextil Puşcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History

IULIA POPOVICI (ed.), *Sfârşitul regiei, începutul creaţiei colective în teatrul european. The End of Directing, the Beginning of Theatre-Making and Devising in European Theatre*, Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2015, 325 p.

Le mérite principale de l'anthologie éditée par le critique de théâtre Iulia Popovici, lancée l'année passée dans le cadre du Festival International de Théâtre qui a eu lieu à Sibiu, tient du fait qu'elle arrive à cartographier un phénomène de plus en plus prégnant dans la spectacologie contemporaine, sans avoir pour autant la prétention ni de le présenter de manière exhaustive, ni de se prononcer sur ses limites esthétiques et extra-esthétiques : la fin des hiérarchies dans le théâtre européen. La sélection des textes se fait précisément d'après le refus des auteurs à indiquer, de manière prescriptive, la finalité artistique/ politique/ sociale de la création collective dans le théâtre européen. Les auteurs signalent la mutation qui s'est produite dans le processus de production, l'analysent, la contextualisent et l'exemplifient, sans pour autant formuler des sentences.

La dispersion de l'autorité dans l'acte de création, comme les mutations qu'a supportées le concept de l'auctorialité ont créé les prémisses d'une évolution multiple, à tel point complexe et subtile qu'il devient plus adéquat de la questionner que de la définir. Or, *Sfârşitul regiei, începutul creaţiei colective în teatrul european*. *The End of Directing, The Beginning of Theatre-Making and Devising in European Theatre* a toutes les qualités pour devenir une référence dans la bibliographie de spécialité : elle articule des questions et des curiosités et suggère également des réponses, à partir des expériences particulières des auteurs, différentes surtouts du point de vue géographique.

Malgré le titre, qui prévoit sur un ton un peu tragique la fin de la domination du metteur en scène sur les scènes européennes contemporaines, le volume ne se constitue pas dans un nécrologue, mais radiographie un phénomène vivant, évolutif, qui implique et intègre l'art régisorale dans de nouvelles conditions de travail.

On y fait l'usage de deux notions différentes, qui correspondent à deux aspects du phénomène discuté. Il s'agit, d'une part, de la question de la « création du spectacle », qui amène à l'esquisse de la figure de l'« auteur de théâtre », qui s'occupe lui-même de la mise en scène de ses pièces, et parfois, y joue aussi. La personnalité de celui-ci, en apparence schizoïde, intègre des fonctions et des responsabilités différentes, à contrepoint de la hiérarchie traditionnellement acceptée dans le processus scénique. De l'autre part, on discute le problème de la genèse et de la prolifération de ce qu'on appelle *Devised Theatre*, avec ses diverses variations sémantiques et formelles selon l'espace culturel duquel se revendique le produit théâtral. Cependant, ces deux modalités de production s'entrecroisent ; souvent elles se superposent même, parce que la grande majorité des manières de travail citées, ci-inclus les interviews avec les producteurs, supposent un travail collaboratif, qui suppose l'implication directe, et ne tient pas compte de la hiérarchie des acteurs/ performeurs.

Le volume est structuré sur deux sections. La première inclue quatre études qui suivent dans le théâtre européen les pratiques artistiques qui font l'objet de l'anthologie, s'appuyant sur des cas pris dans des zones culturelles différentes, choisis en fonction de leur relevance, mais sans l'ambition d'une absolue représentativité. La deuxième partie se constitue comme une collection d'interviews avec de divers « auteurs » de spectacle, avec une seule exception, celle d'un essai sur la création théâtrale de Sylvain Creuzevault. Cette partie seconde du volume approfondit et particularise les incursions générales et théoriques dans le théâtre européen contemporain discutées dans la première section.

Le texte signé par Duška Radosavljević, utilisant un filtre comparatif, offre une vision ample sur l'évolution des formes de création collective et sur les métamorphoses de l'auctorialité dans le contexte européen. Le placement de ce texte en ouverture du volume est stratégique. Synthétique, il se propose, entre autres, de familiariser le lecteur avec les particularités des modes de productions théâtrales, d'une manière presque didactique. L'une des observations les plus importantes est liée à la fragilité sémantique du terme *devising*, compris en fonction du statut du texte de spectacle dans

l'espace culturel qui adopte le concept. Duška Radosavljević part des commentaires de Andy Field concernant la personnalisation inévitable de la notion de *devised* par la grande majorité des artistes qui pratiquent des méthodes collaboratives et arrive à signaler la confusion que suscitent certaines interprétations trop restrictives du terme. « Dans l'ensemble, abandonner le terme „*devising”* dans le théâtre contemporain et dans le discours performatif pourrait être bénéfique surtout parce que son inflation dans la Grande Bretagne a entraîné dans toute une série de fausses interprétations. D'abord son opposition implicite et dichotomique par rapport au théâtre de texte tend à créer des confusions pour les européens du Continent [...]. Encore plus important, l'usage excessif du texte dans le contexte britannique a produit la fusion des notions de *devising* et de troupe jusqu'à rendre implicite l'idée que c'est la troupe qui fait le théâtre *devised* et que seulement de manière exceptionnelle on arrive à travailler avec les pièces et des dramaturges. Si on prend pourtant en compte la dissolution de la dichotomie "théâtre de texte" – „théâtre *devised*", on devrait se rapporter à cette pratique plutôt comme à une méthodologie créative ubïque, et non pas comme à un type de spectacle qui ne se construit pas à partir d'un texte » (p. 21).

L'idée qui s'articule clairement dans l'essai de Duškăi Radosavljević se retrouve, dans des formulations moins explicites, dans le reste du volume : il est risquant de nous rapporter au pratiques réunies sous le signe du *devising*, de la « création collective » ou du théâtre « d'auteur » comme à des modèles déjà donnés, universellement valables et inflexibles. La qualité de telles formules artistiques consiste dans le fait même qu'elles ne tiennent pas compte de l'organisation du processus de création théâtrale sur des bases hiérarchiques, selon le principe de la division rigoureuse des responsabilités à l'intérieur de l'équipe artistique, réunie autour de la figure autoritaire d'une seule personnalité. Duškăi Radosavljević souligne donc l'existence d'un facteur politique dans la genèse et l'évolution, depuis les années 1960 jusqu'à nos jours, de la démocratisation du processus artistique et de la définition de l'idée d'auctorialité.

Les essais signés par Andrea Tompa, Jean-Pierre Thibaudat et Iulia Popovici représentent des radiographies de la figure du metteur en scène-dramaturge dans trois espaces géographiques et culturelles différents : la Hongrie, la France et la Roumanie. Toutes prégnantes que seraient les différences formelles et les conjectures sociales qui avaient générés les mouvements théâtraux dans ces territoires, les trois cas présentent des similitudes étonnantes au niveau des méthodologies testées par les créateurs de théâtre. Peu importe qui est l'auteur de spectacle visé – Pintér Béla, Pommerat ou Gianina Cărbunariu, il s'approprie des rôles multiples dans le processus de création et renverse de l'intérieur les principes traditionnels d'organiser une troupe de théâtre. Il est intéressant, de ce point de vue, de retenir une des affirmations de Andrea Tompa concernant le metteur en scène-acteur-dramaturge Pintér Béla: « Découpé directement du théâtre d'amateurs, dans une tradition alternative (qui provient des danses folkloriques hongroises), où ces pratiques sont habituelles, Pintér a longuement lutté pour se faire accepter en tant que dramaturge. Comme acteur, son talent n'avait jamais été mis en question [...]. Il a été d'ailleurs assez vite accepté comme metteur en scène aussi. Mais en tant que dramaturge, les critiques mainstream lui ont recommandé qu'il apprenne à écrire ou, sinon, qu'il invite un vrai écrivain à travailler avec lui [...]. L'idée de l'acteur-metteur en scène ou celle l'écrivain-metteur en scène sont quelque chose assez difficile à digérer » (p. 35).

La dernière phrase laisse percevoir la difficulté que ressent le spectateur éduqué et nourri avec des formules artistiques sages, traditionnelles, de s'adapter aux mutations radicales qui se produisent au cœur même de l'*establishment* théâtral. En Roumanie, où la figure du metteur en scène dominait, jusque il y a très peu de temps, depuis le sommet de la pyramide hiérarchique, la scène contemporaine, la dissolution de l'autorité de celle-ci, sa décomposition dans plusieurs autorités constitutives, tout comme la démocratisation du processus de travail représentent un choc encore plus grand. Comme le dit clairement Iulia Popovici, le statut du théâtre indépendant roumain est plutôt marginal, en opposition avec le *mainstream* revendiqué par les institutions, pendant que la précarité des moyens de production se fait responsable, indirectement, non seulement des tendances thématiques et esthétiques des œuvres produites à l'intérieur de ce système, mais aussi de l'apparition de « l'écrivain-metteur en scène ». Né d'une nécessité concrète et prosaïque, celui-ci doit survivre et

est obligé de se découvrir le spécifique dans un monde hostile, habitué à reconnaître comme sérieux et important seulement ce qui est attesté par la tradition. Par conséquent, le créateur de théâtre réagit par l'assimilation et la représentation des causes politiques et sociales qui impliquent sa marginalité.

Les deux interviews qui constituent la deuxième section du volume esquissent une image assez agréable du metteur en scène-dramaturge, à travers les voix des artistes qui ont assumé les deux rôles, de manière programmatique ou par nécessité : Joël Pommerat, Rodrigo García, Kornél Mundruczó, Wojtek Ziemilski, Armin Petras (Fritz Kater), Nurkan Erpulat, Gianina Cărbunariu, Bogdan Georgescu et Catinca Drăgănescu. Le fil rouge de ces confessions auto-réflexives le représente, d'une part, le besoin des artistes de se détacher des formes théâtrales conventionnelles à l'ombre desquelles ils avaient commencé leurs carrières, et, de l'autre part, leur générosité par rapport à leur propre équipe. Leur besoin et leur désir de renoncer aux privilèges du metteur en scène en faveur d'une procédure ouverte et démocratique – sont les thèmes récurrents de tous les interviews. Le lecteur peut ainsi se convaincre du fait que ce personnage complexe, le créateur de théâtre, n'est point une figure autoritaire et que le processus de création ne devient pas, sous son influence, un acte discrétionnaire. Par contre, le metteur en scène-acteur intègre dans sa manière de travail des techniques qui tiennent de *Devised Theatre* et insiste sur la nature collaborative de la production des spectacles.

L'anthologie coordonnée par Iulia Popovici offre ainsi aux hommes de théâtre roumains (et pas seulement à eux) la possibilité de se familiariser avec un phénomène contemporain. Bien que l'efficacité du volume ne pourra en vrai se mesurer que suivant les discussions qu'il va susciter parmi les professionnels, il a certainement les qualités pour convaincre ses lecteurs de l'importance de la transformation systématique des modes de production dans le théâtre contemporain.

Alexandra DIMA
"Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca
Faculty of Theater and Television

IOAN STANOMIR, *Junimea şi pasiunea moderaţiei* [*Junimea et la passion de la modération*], Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2013, 135 p.

Placé intellectuellement sur les positions du libéralisme-conservateur, Ioan Stanomir revient – à distance d'un siècle des événements – au *junimisme*, dont l'imaginaire idéologique et politique est « revisité » dans le volume *Junimea şi pasiunea moderaţiei* [*Junimea et la passion de la modération*], Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2013). Professeur réputé de droit constitutionnel et spécialiste dans l'histoire des doctrines juridiques en Roumanie au XIXème siècle, l'auteur a été consacré par une thèse concernant l'évolution du „langage constitutionnel” dans les Principautés jusqu'à 1866 (publiée sur le titre *Naşterea constituţiei. Limbaj şi drept în Principate până la 1866* [*La Naissance de la constitution. Langage et droit dans les principautés jusqu'à 1866*], Bucureşti, Nemira, 2004 ; l'auteur a publié par la suite d'autres synthèses sur le même sujet : *Libertate, lege şi drept. O istorie a constituţionalismului românesc* [*Liberté, loi et droit. Une histoire du constitutionnalisme roumain*], Iaşi, Polirom, 2005 ; *În jurul Constituţiei. Practică politică şi arhitectură legală* [*Autour de la Constitution. Pratique politique et architecture légale*], Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2006). La présente étude fait partie d'un projet plus ample et de long parcours, qui a accompagné et complété la réflexion sur la pensée juridique roumaine au XIXème par une analyse approfondie des modèles de conduite conservatrice élaborés à la même époque, dont on peut énumérer : *Conştiinţa conservatoare. Preliminarii la un profil intelectual* [*La Conscience*

conservatrice. Préliminaires à un profil intellectuel], Bucureşti, Nemira, 2004 ou *Spiritul conservator. De la Barbu Catargiu la Nicolae Iorga* [*L'Esprit conservateur. De Barbu Catargiu à Nicolae Iorga*], Bucureşti, Curtea Veche, 2008. Dans ces réflexions, Ioan Stanomir poursuit une préoccupation constante pour la formation d'un esprit critique et rationalisant, en parallèle avec le processus de modernisation de la culture nationale émergente.

S'inscrivant dans le même champ de réflexion, *Junimea şi pasiunea moderaţiei* prend comme objet la société intellectuelle roumaine la plus importante dans la deuxième moitié du XIXème siècle. Junimea, dont l'acte de naissance date de 1863, a réuni des jeunes étudiantes qui revenaient en pays après avoir complété leur formation à l'étranger. Animés par le projet d'une refondation de la culture roumaine dans une visée critique et conservatrice, ils ont constitué la principale force intellectuelle dans l'espace public et politique pendant près de trois décennies, jusque vers 1890. Avec une telle durée de vie et un prestige sans égal dans son époque, Junimea a engendré un courant influent, avec des conséquences profondes sur la structure de la société roumaine. Ioan Stanomir n'est pas intéressé par l'histoire politique du mouvement, mais uniquement par la récupération de son idéologie, dans le but d'une meilleure appréhension de sa « grammaire sociale ». La démonstration pivote autour du concept de « modération », à travers lequel l'imaginaire politique est envisagé comme « éthos de l'équilibre et de la prudence », s'éloignant du modèle dichotomique des forces révolutionnaires vs. progressistes, qui sera proposé une cinquantaine d'années plus tard par E. Lovinescu.

En tant que variante autochtone du conservatisme européen, *le junimisme* ne se réduit pas à l'idéologie d'une classe sociale (l'aristocratie), dont il garde les intérêts. Ce qu'il y a de plus profond dans l'action de ce groupement intellectuel, c'est la philosophie de vie communautaire, à l'écart du radicalisme de la Révolution Française. Dans le sillage des textes de Burke, Guizot ou Tocqueville, le patriotisme *junimiste* se fonde sur « l'alliance entre la raison, la liberté politique et la modération. À l'antipode de l'autarchie et du délire patriotard, *le junimisme* valorise ce noyau de décence ignoré par les grands projets totalitaires du XXème siècle ».

Réfléchissant sur *le junimisme*, Ioan Stanomir propose plus qu'une reconstruction historique – une discussion actualisante sur le sens et les effets à distance d'une action politique et d'un modèle de conduite publique. Un des enjeux les plus importants pour l'auteur de ce livre est la réinterprétation contemporaine de cette « lucidité patriotique » mobilisée par Junimea et de retrouver à présent un rapport pertinent à ce passé significatif. Autrement dit, il s'agit pour Ioan Stanomir de traverser en sens inverse l'histoire de la culture roumaine, tout en contournant l'expérience totalitaire, pour renouer avec l'exemple de la société moldave : « Aristocratique dans un sens supérieur, inaccessible à la esprit de *political correctness* dominant aujourd'hui, Junimea marque le divorce du modèle proposé par la génération des révolutionnaires de 1848, et l'entrée dans l'âge victorien de la culture et de la réflexion idéologique autochtone. Et ce n'est pas par hasard qu'entre 1866 et 1914, l'activité de l'association se confonde au règne de celui qui a imprimé à la Roumanie cette gravité glaciale que l'on découvre dans les discours de P.P. Carp ou de Titu Maiorescu. L'époque de Junimea est celle de Carol le Ier, dont la fin de la vie représente la fin d'un parcours qui s'achève dans les tranchées de La Première Guerre Mondiale ».

L'auteur ne se fait pas pourtant de fausses illusions. En sous texte de sa démonstration, on saisit une réflexion sceptique à l'égard des conséquences réelles de ce mouvement qui n'a laissé à la postérité que le souvenir d'un projet d'évolution sociale. Car, force est de reconnaître, qu'un siècle plus tard, la société roumaine n'éprouve plus l'utilité de la raison et de l'esprit critique. En invoquant soit la mystique nationaliste, soit la mythologie du prolétariat, la droite nationaliste-fasciste et la gauche communiste ont condamné la modération *junimiste* sous l'accusation de trahison et de réaction. Aussi, l'actualisation de ce modèle, longtemps accueilli avec indifférence sinon avec hostilité, reste-t-il une des priorités du débat public contemporain. La conclusion de l'étude de Ioan Stanomir, appuyée par une solide démarche d'herméneutique politique, peut s'avérer toujours utile aujourd'hui, pour la compréhension des problèmes qui agitent la société roumaine : « En acceptant la liberté politique, mais tout en refusant l'égalitarisme niveleur, en acceptant les réformes, mais en repoussant l'innovation ambitieuse mais sans fondement préalable, en acceptant l'autonomie

individuelle, mais en cultivant le sentiment de la solidarité organique, ce libéralisme-conservateur prépare, sur le plan des idées et sur celui de la pratique politique, la synthèse sur laquelle se construit au XXème siècle la pensée si différente en apparence, d'un Raymond Aron, Michael Oakeshott ou Ronald Reagan ».

Doru George BURLACU
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca Branch
"Sextil Puşcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History

DANIEL PUIA-DUMITRESCU, *O istorie a Cenaclului de Luni* [*A History of the Literary Circle of Monday*], Bucureşti, Cartea Românească, 2015, 458 p.

Reliable works were published on the eighties generation of Romanian poets, focusing on the "The Monday Literary Circle" (organized in Bucharest between 1977 – 1983), but the topic addressed by the young critic Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu comes from yet another angle. It is not only a literary reconstitution, but also a social, historical, political one, offering today's perspective on the participants at the literary circle back then, extracted from the Security Archives files and from the press of that time.

Our interest for this research is to observe the functioning of the *interpretive community* concept in the case of an important Romanian literary circle of the '80s, as it is stated in Puia-Dumitrescu's book. The controversial concept linked to the reader-response criticism of the '70s, *the interpretive community*, belonging to the American theorist Stanley Fish, circumscribes the idea that the literary text acquires significance within general cultural concepts that direct individual interpretation. According to him, the interpretive communities give the reader "strategies that are preexistent to the act of reading" and therefore, interpretation is not given by the intrinsic meanings of the text. In order to follow the pertinence of these circumscriptions in the case of the Monday Literacy Circle, we will consider two perspectives. The anthropological view, as proposed by Victor Turner, looks at a community as taking part of an existential threshold through intra-community collaboration. In this regard, we noted that the development steps of this literary circle revealed by the testimonies of the interviewed participants represent coalition forms of an interpretive community and may be looked at as rituals. The other perspective is an historical one, its hypothesis being the idea that the Monday Literacy Circle of the '80s answered to a broad social and political context, that fruitful association with literary purposes was catalyzed by a decisive political background, the social engagement being crucial in this cultural project. The author`s hypothesis is that the totalitarian Romanian system accepted such organizations precisely in order to create the illusion of freedom of speech, but, in fact, the vulnerability of such a community was the intended objective.

The 460 pages of the study are structured into three chapters preceded by an introduction that contains arguments for using sociological techniques. The details are accompanied by a grand motivation for the methodological selection. Although compelling, his justifications for the choice of methods seem redundant to us, as seem the ample repeated quotes which explain the concept of study and qualitative method. The study follows three stages: the research of the CNSAS Archives, the interviewing of the Literacy Circle members or retrieving some interviews from various documents of that era or from the books of the literacy circle participants, the student press and some cultural magazines analysis on the researched theme. The first chapter is relevant for the proposed historical perspective, it outlines the socio-political coordinates in which the researched Literary Circle operated and it also illustrates the circumstances of a group of writers in a totalitarian system which

becomes a target supervised by the system. The author pertinently mentions the terms in which it is officially required for the acts of culture to progress, being designed to serve the propaganda ideology and to work mimetically (see the lists of "forbidden words"). The extract from *The framework-regulation of organizing and functioning of the literary and artistic circles and groups* explains the background of the researched event. The presented plan of measures seems eloquent, as it targeted the education of the youth meant to combat the capitalist, retrograde, bourgeois mentality, the idealistic theories or the emigration trends.

The study reviews the means of censorship manifestation in the case of literary creations: demanding to eliminate some paragraphs, changing the title, replacing some expressions considered unsuitable for the potential publication of a text. Monday night reality, that the literary circle members lived and testified about in a solidarity of the stated word, makes this manifestation an *interpretive community* historically determined, with a dynamic that responds to a wider social circumstance. The informative notes related to the interpretable content of the published or about to be published volumes of authors such as Mircea Dinescu, Dan Deşliu, Ileana Mălăncioiu, Mihai Sin, Stelian Tanase, Mariana Marin are eloquent in this regard. Some names in this list appear in the files examined by the researcher in the category of writers with improper attitudes who were granted additional attention. For instance, in connection with Bogdan Ghiu, we find that he is an objective with a writer`s interests who has an entourage of shady individuals. We also note here the context created by Viorel Padina`s act of rebellion with *Appeal to Europe* whose failed intention was to send him to the *Radio Free Europe*, as well as Mariana Marin`s letter to the friends in Iaşi, aired on April 7, 1989 at the same radio station.

In the details about the Literary Circle's organization and activity, we noticed the existence of ritual elements associated with this form of communion. From the researcher`s reconstruction, a rather coherent ritual with its rules is outlined. The student president (we find out that there were four consecutive students over the years of operation of the Literary Circle) had the task to arrange the meetings, to schedule the readings (following a real marketing project to obtain a memorable effect, as Bogdan Ghiu testifies), to finely direct the activity, to mediate the relationship between the coordinator and the members, to organize the analysis of texts. The meetings began every Monday evening at 7 o'clock with the reading of unpublished young poets, followed by text commenting similar to live dissections, which stretched for at least two hours. The readers, viewers and interpreters are all active participants in the construction of meaning, sometimes even in the construction of the text. The apparent anarchy of hot interpretations of the texts read for the first time wove an interpretative model, the one Fish speaks about. The comments were invariably closed by Nicolae Manolescu, who was invested with the role of mentor that used to speak the last, was not to be interrupted by anyone, at whose sign dissonance quenched and who imposed a valid model of reading. This *communitas* (Victor Turner) brought together young poets who presented their original productions to their first public that decisively validated their value as text creators. The lecture of their own texts, probably coming after weeks of waiting, constituted a threshold which had its ceremoniousness: preparing the role, supporting it, validation of the initiates by their initiators. Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu`s interviewees, former participants in the Literary Circle meetings, define the meetings as a "school of text analysis" (Matei Vişniec), "laboratory" (Doru Mareş), form of life, a space of freedom without censorship, space for "autonomy from the rest of the social life" (Romulus Brancoveanu), a "state of mind" (Ion Buduca). The author discusses here Wittgenstein's position on communities as a group with its own traditions and religiosity, a form of life with its own social network. Trying to figure out the structure of this group, the author talks also about circles of influence: the first belongs to the "initiators" and constitutes the "hard nucleus" of the group (p. 189), the core group consisting of the best commentators who impose their views: Traian T. Coşovei, Florin Iaru, Radu Călin Cristea, Ion Bogdan Lefter, Viorel Padina, Ion Stratan, Magda Cârneci, Alexandru Muşina, Bogdan Ghiu. The second line belonged to the "initiates", the third one to the "ordinary members", and the fourth was that of the participants whose name and number was not constant.

Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu`s study has the virtue of having come into the possession of some truths about the literary circle that created a new poetic paradigm, giving us valid points of view not only on the writers` world of the '80s, but also on the life under Communism in those years. His merit is to have found a balanced voice situated between the confusing opinions of a disputable point of view and the documentary voices skillfully interviewed.

Laodamia DASCĂL
"Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca
Faculty of Letters

CONTRIBUTORS

Alina Branda, Ph.D. Associate Professor at the Faculty of European Studies, "Babeş-Bolyai" University.
Author's coordinates: "Babeş-Bolyai" University, 1, Emmanuel de Martonne Str., 400090 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: alinabranda@yahoo.com

Alex Ciorogar, Drd. Assistant at the Faculty of Letters, "Babeş-Bolyai" University.
Author's coordinates: "Babeş-Bolyai" University, 31 Horea Str., 550024 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: alex.ciorogar@gmail.com

Andrei Doboş, Drd. Assistant at the Faculty of Letters, "Babeş-Bolyai" University.
Author's coordinates: "Babeş-Bolyai" University, 31 Horea Str., 550024 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: andrei.dobosh@gmail.com

Thomas Franck, Drd. Assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Université de Liège.
Author's coordinates: Université de Liège, Place du 20-Août, 7 4000 Liège Belgium. Email: thomas.franck@ulg.ac.be

Camelia Grădinaru, Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Interdisciplinary Research – Human and Social Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iaşi.
Author's coordinates: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, 11 Carol I Str., 700506, Iaşi, Romania. Email: cameliagradinaru2013@gmail.com

Andreea Mironescu, Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Interdisciplinary Research – Human and Social Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iaşi.
Author's coordinates: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, 11 Carol I Str., 700506, Iaşi, Romania. Email: andreea.mironescu@uaic.ro

Doris Mironescu, Ph.D. Lecturer at the Faculty of Letters, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iaşi.
Author's coordinates: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, 11 Carol I Str., 700506, Iaşi, Romania. Email: dorismironescu@yahoo.com

Roxana Patraş, Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Interdisciplinary Research – Human and Social Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iaşi.
Author's coordinates: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, 11 Carol I Str., 700506, Iaşi, Romania. Email: roxana.patras@yahoo.ro

Laura Pavel, Ph.D. Professor at the Faculty of Theater and Television, "Babeş-Bolyai" University. Researcher, "Sextil Puşcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History, Romanian Academy.
Author's coordinates: "Babeş-Bolyai" University, 4 Mihail Kogălniceanu Str., 400084, Cluj-Napoca. "Sextil Puşcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History, 21 Racoviţă Str., 400165 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: laura.pav12@yahoo.com

Sorina Postolea, Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Interdisciplinary Research – Human and Social Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iaşi.
Author's coordinates: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, 11 Carol I Str., 700506, Iaşi, Romania. Email: roxana.patras@yahoo.ro

Chris Tănăsescu, Ph.D. Coordinator of Digital Humanities Resources at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa.
Author's coordinates: University of Ottawa, 100 Laurier Ave E, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N7, Canada. Email: margento.official@gmail.com

Adrian Tătăran, Drd. Assistant at the Faculty of Letters, "Babeş-Bolyai" University.
Author's coordinates: "Babeş-Bolyai" University, 31 Horea Str., 550024 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: adrian.rabelais@gmail.com

Olivier Tholozan, Ph.D. Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law and Political Science, Aix-Marseille University.
Author's coordinates: Aix-Marseille Université, Jardin du Pharo, 58, bd Charles Livon 13284 Marseille Cedex 07, France. Email: othozan@gmail.com

Ligia Tudurachi, Ph.D. Researcher, Institute of Linguistics and Literary History Sextil Puşcariu, Romanian Academy.
Author's coordinates: The Institute of Linguistics and Literary History Sextil Puşcariu, 21 Racoviţă Str., 400165 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: ligia.tudurachi@gmail.com